

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee -**  
**10th June 2009**

**Annual performance review 2008-09**

**Report of the Policy and Partnerships Manager**

**1. Executive Summary and recommendation**

**1.1 The issue**

**1.2** Cheltenham Borough Council's Business Plan 2007-2010 was agreed in March 2007 and set out our three year aims and their supporting ambitions. The aims were informed by Cheltenham's Sustainable Community Strategy, which was itself informed by community consultation and the Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA). The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out Cheltenham's twenty year vision and the nine longer term community aims that all partners of the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership will work towards.

**1.3** The nine community aims are:

- Promoting community safety;
  - Promoting sustainable living;
  - Promoting a strong and sustainable economy;
  - Building healthy communities and supporting older people;
  - Building stronger communities and supporting housing choice;
  - A focus on children and young people;
  - Investing in environmental quality;
  - Investing in travel and transport; and
  - Investing in arts and culture.

Along with the nine community aims, we have an aim to focus our internal work:

- Being an excellent, efficient and sustainable council.

**1.4** Our Plans 2008-09 was agreed at council on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008 and set out the performance measures by which the council would be assessed. Whilst a full annual report will be taken to full council on 29<sup>th</sup> June, this report invites discussion on performance issues of interest to the committee.

**1.5 I therefore recommend that:**

**1.5.1 The committee note the performance report and discuss any implications of relevance to the work of the committee.**

## 1.6 Summary of implications

1.6.1 Financial None arising from this report

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1.6.2 Legal None arising from this report

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## 1.7 Implications on corporate and community plan priorities

1.7.1 This report sets out performance information relating to the delivery of corporate priorities in 2008-09.

## 1.8 Statement on Risk

1.8.1 The business planning process helps the council manage risk in a number of areas, but particularly through creating a strategic framework for the management of projects and initiatives.

1.8.2 If we do not respond to performance information, then we may not direct change an improvement in a positive direction.

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## 2. Introduction

2.1 This annual review of performance provides information on the following:

- Business plan milestones
- Business plan indicators
- Summary of performance by aim and ambition (relevant to the committee)

2.2 In addition, I have provided information on the following which will be of interest to members of the committee:

- Annual Audit letter
- IDeA corporate peer review May 2009
- Use of Resources assessment 2008-09
- Data from Customer Relations and Freedom of Information work

### 3. 2008/09 Business Plan milestones

In 2008/09 we planned to deliver 138 milestones.

- 103 were successfully completed (75%);
- 17 were incomplete at year end (12%);
- 10 were deferred (7%);
- 8 were cancelled (6%).

For information, the seventeen milestones that were incomplete on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 are:

- Aim 2 Expand commercial waste recycling to include glass, paper, cardboard and food waste;
- Aim 2 Complete the MYEnergy project & implement future recommendations to reduce employee use of electricity;
- Aim 2 Play Space & Amenity Space – gather the evidence & draft the Supplementary Planning Document;
- Aim 5 St. Paul's regeneration – acquisition of privately owned interests;
- Aim 5 St. Paul's regeneration – complete demolition;
- Aim 5 Implementation of the county wide Choice Based Lettings system;
- Aim 5 Elections participation – work with communications, policy & democratic services to develop a communications plan;
- Aim 5 Elections participation – full implementation of plan ;
- Aim 7 Council signs up to master plan funding of the relocation of the council's offices;
- Aim 7 Undertake consultation & agree our Green Space Strategy (people, places & wildlife);
- Aim 10 Progress partnerships to deliver sharing of services with other authorities/ service providers;
- Aim 10 Draft / implement constitutional changes arising from the local government white paper;
- Aim 10 Carry out a revised equality impact assessment programme for 14 of our priority services;
- Aim 10 Use the results of the impact assessment to develop service level equality objectives and targets and identify resources for improving equality practice;
- Aim 10 Senior Manager (Assistant Director) pay review;
- Aim 10 Single Status – Ballot of employees on proposals;
- Aim 10 Competency based recruitment in place;

#### 4. 2008/09 Indicators

	No. of LAA & Business plan NIs	No. of key LPIs	No. of other NIs	Total (no.)	%
Below target	2	8	5	15	16%
On target	3	6	1	10	11%
Above target	9	8	5	22	24%
No data	8	6	13	27	29%
No target (Baseline year)	13	0	32	45	49%

- 24% of indicators that have targets performed above target, whereas 16% performed below target;
- 48% of all key indicators cannot be analysed at this time due to unavailability of data or because no target was set. The reason for this is that data is produced by another organisation and 2008/09 being the first year of the new National Indicator set.

#### 5. 2008/09 Aim/ambition performance

##### 5.1 Aim one: community safety (social and community)

###### Business plan summary

All milestones are complete and the indicators are performing well.

###### Overview

The council works in partnership through Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime and the fear of crime; From April to the end of March 2009, crime has dropped 5% compared to the previous financial year. The trend over the past three years shows that the partnership has achieved reductions in most crime categories since 2003/4 including:

- Theft of vehicles – down 59%
- Criminal damage – down 24%
- Wounding – down 17%

(source IQuanta)

However the partnership is aware that certain crimes can increase; for instance there was a significant increase in domestic burglaries in late 2008 which prompted a coordinated response from the police and other partners was down 7% in the last quarter of the year.

## **5.2 Aim four: healthy communities (social and community)**

### **Business plan summary**

All milestones are complete and we have exceeded our targets for adult participation in sport.

### **Overview**

In 2008, the council secured funding from Sport England through the Community sport and physical activity network (CSPAN). The CSPAN is a multi agency steering group that helps to develop projects to improve the health and well-being of residents in Cheltenham. Through the CSPAN a successful funding bid has recently been made to Sport England which has secured £24,000 of funding to develop a number of community projects over the next two years. This external funded is in addition to £48,000 of match funding from a range of local sources including Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucestershire PCT and the Cheltenham School Sport Partnership.

Some of the early outcomes from this work include establishing a Wheelchair Football Club and an adults disability football club linked to our local football club and a project to encourage KS4 girls participate in physical activities due to data telling us that their participation in physical activity dips at this stage. The Active People survey shows that participation rates in Cheltenham are increasing from 22.5% in Nov 07 to 24.9% in Nov 08.

## **5.3 Aim five: stronger communities & housing choice (social and community)**

### **Business plan summary**

- Ambition 5A (regeneration structures), 2 out of the 3 milestones are complete with the third (joint training with VCS) being cancelled in the year.
- Ambition 5B (ALMO); CBH have completed the decent homes programme though the work to agree a new management agreement was not completed in year and has been deferred until March 2010.
- Ambition 5C (affordable homes), 99 homes were built in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury against a target of 80 homes.
- Ambition 5D (St. Pauls); although good progress was made, the regeneration programme was not completed as originally planned in the year and has been deferred into 2009-10.
- Ambition 5E (older people); milestones complete and indicators on target
- Ambition 5F (Choice-based lettings) was not implemented in the year and has been deferred until December 2009.

### **Overview**

In 2008, the council has worked to improve its engagement activities with local residents. Working within the new neighbourhood policing model, the council has piloted a neighbourhood management approach in south Cheltenham that is being evaluated with the view to rolling this out across the borough in 2009. Some successes of the pilot included a reduction in the times anti social behaviour is identified as a community priorities, the Youth Service committing to trial detached youth work on Friday evenings and joint walkabouts between borough council community rangers, PCSOs and elected members.

The council in the delivery of Cheltenham's first Citizens Day in 2008 which celebrated Cheltenham's communities. The day proved a significant success with hundreds of people attending and enjoying the events, displays and stands. The free, fun activities were provided to help attract and provide interest for all members of the family.

The council has worked to strengthen its relationships with the VCS in Cheltenham, and has supported the creation of a round table meeting and is a signatory to the Gloucestershire Compact. For instance we have worked to ensure that partnership small grant rounds are Compact compliant in terms of offering equal opportunity for the VCS to bid for funding.

The council has continued to enable the delivery of affordable homes through the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Housing Market Partnership which has delivered 90 affordable homes since 1 April 2008.

Cheltenham Borough Homes, the council's ALMO completed the £63m decent homes programme for 3,000 homes, 24 months ahead of the 2010 cut-off date and the council is currently negotiating a 10 year extension to the management contract. Tenant satisfaction with their landlord has increased from 80% in 2006 to 85% in 2008 (NI160).

#### **5.4 Aim six: children & young people (social and community)**

##### **Business plan summary**

All milestones are complete.

##### **Overview**

The council has worked with the County Youth Service to enable the use of two of our sports pavilions for informal youth work. In 2008, the council has built three multi-use games areas (MUGAs) in local parks which provide additional sporting opportunities for local children and young people.

The council has restated its commitments to child protection and has signed up to the Gloucestershire Common Assessment Framework provisions. The council also works in partnership through Cheltenham Children and Young People's Partnership and the Gloucestershire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership to deliver the every child matter outcomes.

#### **5.5 Aim nine: arts and culture (social and community)**

##### **Business plan summary**

- All milestones are complete. In terms of indicators both the AGM website visits (down 87,500 from a target of 335,000) and actual visits (down 6,200 from a target of 68,000) were below target. An unrealistic target was set for website visits which has been rectified for 2009/10 and is being monitored closely. The arts and crafts site is being revised and new technologies are being investigated.
- The leisure@ indicators have performed particularly well both in terms of less service failures and actual footfall (up 22,800 from a target of 150,000)

## Overview

Following the devastating floods in the summer of 2007, the council reopened leisure@cheltenham in September 2008. The improved equipment and facilities have received positive feedback from customers and the centre has had 8,000 more customer visits than expected.

In July 2008, the council formally endorsed the proposed art gallery extension and confirmed an allocation of £2 million towards the building, supplementing £500,000 already earmarked for the scheme. The council has also supported the opening of the AG+M on Sundays; this has been a success with nearly 3,000 people visiting in the previous 6 months. The council has also contributed £200k to improve the Playhouse theatre, signed up to a new management agreement with Cheltenham Festivals who increased ticket sales by over 10% last year to a new total in excess of 150,000.

## 6. Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2007-08

6.1 The annual audit and inspection letter received by the council in March 2009 provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the council. Our direction of travel which is concerned with the council's improvement journey and the direction this is taking. That direction is currently positive. The letter summarises progress as follows:

6.2 *"The Council continues to make progress in priority areas which include areas that have been identified as priorities by the community. Recent performance indicators (PIs) show that the Council performs well overall with above average number of PIs in the top 25 per cent of councils. Overall satisfaction with the Council is amongst the best in the country. The Council is working effectively to contribute to wider community outcomes including priority areas such as reducing crime, carbon reduction and supporting the local economy. Overall the Council is improving value for money ensuring that a range of quality services is delivered while maintaining relatively low overall costs."*

## 7. IDeA Corporate Peer Review May 2009

7.1 In May 2009, the council played host to a peer review team from the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA) which provided the opportunity to assess the progress we have made, our future prospects for improvement and our capacity for further improvement.

7.2 The team were on site for four days and carried out a series of interviews and focus groups with staff, elected members, partners, stakeholders and local residents. The team presented their findings on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May and although we have not yet received their final report I have included a summary of the presentation.

### Areas of success:

- Lot to be proud of – significant ambition and achievements;
- Committed staff and councillors;
- Strong service delivery;
- Proactive and positive approach to partnership working in Cheltenham;

- Strong partnership governance mechanisms;
- Good systems and processes in place;
- Improved financial planning.

#### **Areas for consideration**

- Priorities and focus – spreading ourselves too thinly?
- Challenging financial outlook and the need to make difficult decisions;
- Pick up the pace on commissioning and shared services;
- Opportunity for the CSP Board to develop a more strategic agenda;
- Develop culture and ambition of scrutiny;
- Ensure satisfactory cross-group working relationships;
- Good processes but unsure about their effectiveness.

### **8. Use of Resources 2008-09**

**8.1** In last year's use of resources assessment, KPMG (the council's auditors) concluded the following "performed at level 3 - consistently above minimum requirements and performing well."

**8.2** From 2008/09 a new Use of Resources assessment has been introduced as part of the wider development of Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAA). Instead of the previous five themes, there are now three themes:

- Managing finances
- Governing the business
- Managing Resources.

**8.3** The changes proposed are designed to:

- focus on financial issues within a single scored theme, based upon best financial management practice;
- recognise that use of resources is broader than financial resources, embracing the use of natural, physical, human and technological resources; and
- deliver a proportionate approach that assesses key resource issues.

**8.4** KPMG's assessment is that for 2008/09 the "bar has been raised" so that in some areas, councils will have to produce a higher level of performance than in 2007/08 in order to maintain the same Use of Resources score. For example, the requirements at level 3 are more output and outcome focused than previously. This will challenge authorities to improve further.

### **9. Customer relations overview 2008/09**

#### **9.1 Local Government Ombudsman – 2008/09**

Based on provisional statistics received in April 2009, in advance of our Annual Letter due in June, the Ombudsman received 12 complaints about Cheltenham Borough Council which were forwarded for investigation. The LGO has made



itself much more accessible to the public, it is therefore unsurprisingly that the number of complaints has increased slightly from 10 last year to 12 this year. These complaints are broken down against service areas as follows.

Waste management	1 ( <i>resolved by local settlement</i> )
Housing	2 (1 housing allocations / 1 housing repairs) <i>no maladministration</i>
Anti-social behaviour	1 ( <i>no maladministration</i> )
Non-local government	1 (still open)
Public finance	1 ( <i>LGO discretion not to pursue</i> )
Building control	1 ( <i>LGO discretion not to pursue</i> )
Planning applications	5 (3 of which are still open) <i>LGO discretion not to pursue</i>
	<u>12</u>

**Please note:**

- A change in the way the LGO operates means that the statistics about complaints received in 2008/09 are not directly comparable with those from 2007/08.
- 4 of these complaints are still open and therefore no decision has been made by the LGO.

The Council has again reduced the number of days it takes to respond to the Ombudsman. In 2008/09 the Council's average response time reduced to 18.8 days from 22.3 days the year before.

## 9.2 Information Requests (made under the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations)

The Council responded to 252 requests for information in 2008/09 which is significantly up on the previous year (an increase of 97 requests) of which 234 were requests under freedom of information provisions. Although the reasons why people and organisations are requesting more information cannot accurately be ascertained, officers believe that the national media's usage of FOI keeps the process to the forefront of people's minds. For instance, we have recently received FOI requests associated with expenses and salaries.

The FOI requests are broken down by group and service areas on the attached table along with requests for information under Environmental Information Regulations and the Data Protection Act.

## 9.3 Complaints, comments and compliments

The Council logged a total of 166 complaints in 2008/09 (166 at stage 1, 6 at stage 2 and 7 at stage 3) – this is 22 less complaints than last year. Across the Council 129 compliments were logged which is 6 down from last year. The complaints and compliments logged are broken down by group and service areas on the attached table.

A customer relations framework has been produced covering complaints, customer feedback and information requests. This will be rolled out once finally approved.

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**Background Papers**

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**Accountability** Leader of the Council

**Scrutiny Function** Social and Community

**Summary of information requests received for  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009**

	DPA	EIR	FOI	Request Total
<b>Chief Executive's Group</b>				
Policy and Performance	0	0	20	20
<b>Corporate Services</b>				
Human Resources	0	0	16	16
Customer Access and Service Transformation	3	0	40	43
Finance and asset management	0	0	35	35
Legal services	0	0	24	24
<b>Social and Community</b>				
Wellbeing and Culture	0	0	16	16
Community Services	2	12	32	46
<b>Environment</b>				
Built environment	0	0	18	18
Operations	0	1	22	23
<b>Cheltenham Borough Homes</b>				
Housing	0	0	11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>252</b>

**Summary of customer interactions logged on the corporate complaints system for  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009**

	Number of Stage 1 Complaints`	Number of Stage 2 Complaints	Number of Stage 3 Complaints	Number of Compliments
<b>Chief Executive's Group</b>				
Policy and Performance	2	0	1	0
<b>Corporate Services</b>				
Human Resources	0	0	0	0
Customer Access and Service Transformation	15	2	3	2
Finance and asset management	3	0	0	0
Legal services	1	0	0	0
<b>Social and Community</b>				
Wellbeing and Culture	46	0	0	20
Public Protection	9	0	0	41
Community Services	6	0	1	2
<b>Environment</b>				
Built environment	35	1	1	45
Operations	49	3	1	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>129</b>

**Footnote:**

One resident of Cheltenham raised two concerns which were considered to be outside of the corporate complaints policy and procedure and were not logged as complaints in the corporate complaints system hence do not appear in the figures reported. One of these concerns was referred to the Local Government Ombudsman who decided not to pursue the matter in September 2008. These concerns related to complaints that were already logged and considered within the complaints system.