Cheltenham Borough Council
2010 – 2015 Corporate Strategy

Draft for Social and Community overview and scrutiny committee

20th December 2009

Objective 3 - Strengthening our communities

Strengthening our communities includes our work on:
- Community safety
- Healthy lifestyles
- Community engagement and customer satisfaction
- Housing

1. What's the situation?

Community safety

In terms of data relating to community safety, the Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership's strategic assessment suggests the following needs:
- Although crime continues to fall and is down 4% since April compared to the same time period last year fear of crime is an issue with only 52% of people feeling safe at night.
- Acquisitive crime such as burglary, vehicle crime and theft of cycles have all seen recent increases which may be related to the impact of the recession.
- Anti social behaviour and / or the perception of it is still a key issue for local residents.
- Six of the neighbourhood policing priorities related to under-age drinking in the last 12 months, 4 in Whaddon INA and 2 in Leckhampton INA.
- Data shows that serious violent crime dropped by 17.0% (53 to 44 cases) between 2007/08 and 2008/09. Assault with injury however rose by 10.4%. There were 749 domestic violence victims, of which 23.8% were repeat incidents. Harassment incidents dropped by 24.5%.

Gloucestershire County Council produced a comprehensive needs analysis for children and young people in the county in 2008 and 2009 from which the following community safety needs have been drawn:
- The 2008 online pupil survey concluded that 12.7% of Cheltenham pupils had been seriously bullied which was the second lowest compared to the other districts. However 9% of Cheltenham pupils did not answer this question and looking at those who answered 'no', the lowest rate was in Cheltenham suggesting that it had the highest rate of those experiencing some level of bullying.
- There were 716 crime victims who were aged under 19 in 2007-08 (19% of the county's total).
- From the online pupil survey only 66% of pupils felt safe when playing outside compared to 68% county-wide.

Healthy Lifestyles

In terms of health needs data from the Cheltenham area health profile 2009 (NHS Gloucestershire) suggests that the health of people in Cheltenham is generally better than that of England. Cheltenham appears to have better than average rates of physical activity and healthy eating, and lower than average obesity rates for both children and adults, as compared with Gloucestershire as a whole. However, Cheltenham contains some dramatic inequalities in terms of income, location and health. These include:
- Levels of deprivation and area-based health inequality
- The number of lone-pensioner households
- The number of overcrowded households
- The number of adults that binge drink
- The rate of premature deaths from cancer
- Levels of mental health

In terms of needs, the data suggests that key targeted preventative interventions that are likely to impact on the gap in life expectancy in Cheltenham include those aimed at:
- Smoking cessation;
- Increasing physical activity levels;
- Raising cancer awareness;
- Encouraging healthy eating;
- Suicide prevention; and
- Improving mental health.

Housing needs

The Cheltenham housing needs assessment report Nov 09 says an estimated 1,213 households are in current housing need. To reduce this backlog over five years and meet newly arising need for each year, it is estimated that there will be a need for approximately 929 affordable housing units to be provided per year.

In terms of demand for social housing we know that immediately prior to the implementation of Choice Based Lettings, the number of households on the housing register was in excess of 3000 at any given time, with on average, 100 new applications being made each month. At the time of writing (November 2009), the housing register was in a state of flux, with existing applicants re-registering under the new Scheme. It is anticipated, however, that housing demand is likely to increase, with the application process now becoming more accessible and the allocations system more transparent than ever before.

The number of housing enquiries within Cheltenham First Stop continues to be high – in excess of 4000 per year, with in excess of 200 households on course to proceed to a homelessness application during 2009/10. Almost all homelessness is currently prevented, however, with homelessness acceptances for the six months to end of Sep 09 being just six, which is the lowest in the county and amongst the lowest in the country by household population, and represents a 91% drop in acceptances over the same period to Sep 08.

The three main causes of homelessness are:
- Friends and family no longer willing to accommodate young family members;
- Households being given notice to quit private rented accommodation;
- Relationship breakdown, (including domestic violence).

Much of the homelessness prevention activities are therefore focused in these areas:
- Developing initiatives to reduce the blockage of supporting housing whereby people ready to leave accommodation based services cannot secure accommodation;
- Improving access into the private rented sector;
- Developing initiatives to enable young people to stay with family members longer;
- Improving options for survivors of domestic violence.

In the six months to September 2009, 147 households have chosen to take up a prevention option in preference to being accepted by the local authority as homeless. This is 3.5 times the number of homelessness preventions by the Housing Options Service for the same period two years previously.

2. What does our community want?

From the place survey

Community safety

Reducing levels of crime came out second top in the list of priorities for improvement (behind road and pavement repairs). Although 16% feel that anti-social behaviour is a problem in their local area and 27% feel that drunk and rowdy behaviour is a problem (which are both higher than county and district averages), 27% of people felt that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with community safety issues which is better than elsewhere in the county apart from Cotswold district and compares to a county average of 25%.

Healthy lifestyles

Although 83% of people assessed their own health and wellbeing as being good which was higher in Cheltenham than elsewhere in the county, only 28% believe that older people receive the support they need to live independently.

Community engagement and customer satisfaction

Although general satisfaction with the local area is fourth lowest in the county at 84.5% it exceeded our business plan target of 81% and is equal to the county average of 84.5%. Satisfaction with the way the council runs things was only 48% and although this was higher than for the county or average for England this still represents a 10% fall from the 2006-07 survey. In addition only a third of respondents feel that the council provides value for money although this is slightly better than the average for Gloucestershire.

Satisfaction with individual council services remains higher than for the council as a whole: Satisfaction with museums (62%), theatres (76%), parks & open spaces (86%) is higher in Cheltenham than anywhere else in the county. However satisfaction with cleanliness is 3rd lowest in the county at just 57% and recycling is currently lowest in the county at 60%, perhaps indicating a demand for increased recycling services.

Only 58% of respondents felt that they belonged to their immediate neighbourhood and 25% feel that there is a problem with people not treating each other with respect and consideration. However, 82% felt that people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Housing
Various consultation exercises with sections of the community have demonstrated that the key priorities are; increased choice, greater transparency in service delivery, more accessible services, and ultimately the delivery of more affordable accommodation. With the exception of increasing affordable accommodation, significant steps have been taken to match these priorities through the recent implementation of Choice Based Lettings.

From our work at Cheltenham First Stop, we know that our customers prefer a preventative solution. The figures showing that only 6 households were accepted as homeless in the 6 months to end Sep 09, compared with 147 households choosing to take up a prevention option over the same period is a clear indication of this. In particular, confirmation that homelessness prevention activities are in tune with what the community wants, is evidenced by the fact that only 2 cases out of 276 in the 2 years to end of March 2009 have subsequently re-approached this local authority and been accepted as homeless.

We also know that affordability is a major issue for our customers; households who are threatened with homelessness are willing to compromise on future security of tenure (that would be available through social housing), provided that the alternative accommodation remains affordable.

But affordability and choice in the private rented sector is likely to become less favourable to low-income households in the future, when changes to the Local Housing Allowance are implemented in April 2010, and as the housing market generally recovers from the recession and excess accommodation is sold by private landlords, thus depleting the pool of available private rented accommodation, with those households relying on government subsidy to help pay the rent usually being the first to suffer.

3. Therefore what are our outcomes and what difference will we have made over the five years?		
Outcomes	**What are we trying to do**	**What difference will we make**
Communities feel safe and are safe	We will work in partnership to reduce overall crime and priority crimes (eg burglary) and fear of crime	• Increase the percentage of people saying they feel safe during the day and at night. • Decrease the total volume of recorded crime per annum
	We will work in partnership to keep our children and young people safe and reduce anti-social behaviour	• Decrease the number of anti-social behaviour incidents • Decrease our community's perceptions of anti-social behaviour • Reduce the number of crime victims who are aged under 19
	We will keep the public safe by ensuring standards of food safety, hygiene, health and safety are maintained	• Increase the number of food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law
	We will provide a coordinated approach through our licensing and community safety work to reduce the effects of alcohol abuse particularly in the town centre	• Reduce incidences of alcohol related violence
People have access to decent and affordable housing	We will secure more affordable housing	• Increase the number additional homes provided • Increase the number of affordable homes delivered
	We will reduce homelessness	• Decrease the number of households living in Temporary Accommodation
	We will support independent living	• Increase the extent to which older people feel that they receive the support they need to live independently at home • Increase the percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living
People are able to lead healthy lifestyles	We will promote greater engagement in sporting activities	• Increase adult participation in sport
	We will promote healthy active lifestyles	• Increase the number of people engaged in CSPAN projects
	We will work in partnership to reduce health inequalities	• Decrease the gap in life expectancy at birth between quintile 1 and quintile 5 in cheltenham
	We will increase opportunities for physical activity	• Increase footfall at leisure@
Our residents enjoy a strong sense of community and are involved in identifying and resolving local issues	We will work with communities of interest across the borough to help them identify and address their needs	• Increase the number of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
	We will empower local people to be more influential in shaping service delivery in their neighbourhoods	• Increase the number of people who believe they belong to their neighbourhood • Increase overall/general satisfaction with the local area
	We will promote better coordination of engagement and consultation activities	• Increase the number of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality • Increase participation in regular volunteering

Outcome - Communities feel safe and are safe

Objective and outcome	
Strengthening communities - Communities feel safe and are safe	
1. What do we do directly to deliver this outcome	
The council employs a food and occupational health team that keeps the public safe by ensuring standards of health and safety, food safety and hygiene are maintained, in approximately all food premises throughout the borough.	
The community safety and licensing team that keeps the public safe by tackling anti-social behaviour, reducing alcohol-related disorder in the town centre, and ensuring effective licensing of taxis and premises.	
The environmental protection team keeps the public safe by ensuring standards air quality throughout the Borough and keeps check on the levels of pollution into the air and land from industrial and domestic premises.	
We ensure that all our services comply with the need to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.	
2. What else do we do that can help deliver this outcome	
We create safe environments through removing litter, graffiti and abandoned cars	
We have invested in creating safe car parks with improved lighting	
We manage the town's network of CCTV cameras	
We have made our sports pavilions available for young people through working with the youth service and community groups	
3. What do we do in partnership with others to deliver this outcome	
The council coordinates the Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership that brings together key partners including Local Authorities, police and key partners to work with local people to assess problems and implement solutions to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.	
We will work in partnership to keep our children and young people safe and reduce anti-social behaviour.	
The council supports neighbourhood policing by attending their community meetings and working to resolve local priorities where they are related to our service delivery.	
4. What are the longer-term risks to the delivery of this outcome?	
If the economic situation worsens then there is likely to be a rise in particular types of crimes e.g. theft, community tensions and violent crime making the 2% reduction target difficult to sustain.	
If the providers of youth activities and facilities in Cheltenham do not have sufficient funding, then we may see an increase in anti-social behaviour due to a decline in activities and facilities for young people.	

If the amount of funding available to the Police reduces, then this may impact on their ability to deliver partnership anti-social behaviour projects.

5. how should the council commission this work in future to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome, deliver improved value for money and to address risks

To be identified

6. What are our planned improvement actions to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome and to address risks?

Improvement Action	Planned Benefits	Key Resources	Dates	Lead	Partners
To be identified					

7. How will we know what difference we have made over the five years?

What will we do directly	Measured by this indicator	Baseline	Target by 2015	Lead
Keep the public safe by ensuring standards of food safety, hygiene, health and safety and licensing are maintained	• NI 184 Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law	70% in 2008-09	% increase per annum	

What will we do in partnership	Measured by this indicator	Baseline	Target by 2015	Lead
Help communities feel safer	• the percentage of people saying they feel safe during the day • the percentage of people saying they feel safe at night	• 92% • 52%	2% increase per annum	
Make sure that communities are safe	• The total volume of recorded crime per annum	11,404 in 2008-09	2% reduction per annum	
Reduce anti-social behaviour	• The number of anti-social behaviour incidents • NI 17 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour • Number of crime victims aged under 19	7,242 in 2008-09 There were 716 crime victims who were aged under 19 in 2007-08 (19% of the county's total)	2% reduction per annum	

Outcome - People have access to decent and affordable housing

Objective and outcome
Strengthening communities - People have access to decent and affordable housing
1. What do we do directly to deliver this outcome
Through our housing enabling function, we negotiate for new affordable homes through the planning system, working with other local authorities in Gloucestershire and partner landlords, to secure more affordable homes to rent and for shared ownership, to which the Council has nomination rights
Through our housing options team we support people who are in housing need and/or threatened with homelessness through providing advice and help them secure appropriate accommodation.
We provide lifeline alarms and disabled facility grants and adaptations to enable vulnerable people to live independently at home.
We provide grant-assistance and loans for vulnerable people to make their living accommodation fit for purpose
2. What else do we do that can help deliver this outcome
Our strategic planning function will put in place an agreed long-term framework for the provision of more affordable housing through the planning system.
3. What do we do in partnership with others to deliver this outcome
Cheltenham Borough Homes is our arms length management organisation that manages the council's housing stock. We are working with CBH to provide more affordable rented homes.
We commission housing advice and debt services.
We work in partnership to increase the number of older and vulnerable people supported to live independently at home through supporting commissioning housing related support and the home improvement agency service.
We work with Severn Wye Energy Agency to promote energy efficient homes and tackle fuel poverty.
We work with the 5 other districts in Gloucestershire on a joint approach to allocating social housing through Gloucestershire Homeseeker.
4. What are the longer-term risks to the delivery of this outcome?
We currently receive Homelessness Implementation funding from government as ring fenced grant which finances all homeless prevention initiatives such as rent deposits etc. The funding is due to cease under current arrangements by March 2011. There is no clear indication as to whether funding will continue via Area Based Grant or at all. Withdrawal of this funding will result in only a nominal amount of budget being available for securing Bed and Breakfast, storage costs and other relevant activity to run the Housing Options Service and undoubtedly this will be under increased pressure in turn in light of withdrawal of Homelessness prevention initiatives.

The Supporting People programme which funds housing related support programme to sustain independent living opportunities for households and an effective homelessness preventative tool has a reducing budget.

5. how should the council commission this work in future to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome, deliver improved value for money and to address risks

To be identified

6. What are our planned improvement actions to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome and to address risks?

Improvement Action	Planned Benefits	Key Resources	Dates	Lead	Partners
House building programme with CBH					

7. How will we know what difference we have made over the five years?

What will we do directly	Measured by this indicator	Baseline	Target by 2015	Lead
Enable the provision of more affordable housing	• Increase the number additional homes provided (NI 154) • Increase the number of affordable homes delivered (NI 155)			
Provide support for people who are homeless	• Decrease the number of households living in Temporary Accommodation (NI 156)			
What will we do in partnership	**Measured by this indicator**	**Baseline**	**Target by 2015**	**Lead**
Increase the number of older and vulnerable people supported to live independently at home	• Increase the extent to which older people feel that they receive the support they need to live independently at home (NI 139) • Increase the percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living (NI 141)			

Outcome - People are able to lead healthy lifestyles

Objective and outcome
Strengthening communities - People are able to lead healthy lifestyles
1. What do we do directly to deliver this outcome
Our leisure centre "leisure@cheltenham" provides three swimming pools, a sports hall, a cricket hall, squash courts, fitness suite, three studio spaces and a health spa.
We promote a range of initiatives to encourage use of leisure@ including free swims, active lifestyle programmes, exercise referral programmes.
We employ a Sport, Play & Healthy Lifestyles Team that deliver a range of activities that promote greater engagement in sporting activities and increase opportunities for physical activity.
2. What else do we do that can help deliver this outcome
We provide parks and gardens.
We provide sporting pitches and tennis courts available for hire.
We provide holiday playschemes for school-age children.
We promote "decent homes" that are healthy to live in through our work with Cheltenham Borough Homes.
3. What do we do in partnership with others to deliver this outcome
The NHS part-funds our healthy lifestyles development officer – who promotes healthy lifestyles which contributes to reducing health inequalities
The council supports the Cheltenham Community Sport and Physical Activity Network (CSPAN) which is a multi agency steering group that delivers projects to improve the health and well-being of residents in Cheltenham.
The council coordinates the Health and Wellbeing Partnership that contributes to the health and wellbeing agenda through the reduction in health inequalities of Cheltenham residents.
The council supports a neighbourhood learning in deprived communities project that is providing pre-vocational learning support for individuals with mental health needs
4. What are the longer-term risks to the delivery of this outcome?
• Continued financial viability of leisure@
• If economic conditions persists then there could be an impact on people's ability to lead healthy lifestyles, in terms of diet, access to physical activity, housing conditions making the reduction target difficult to sustain.

5. how should the council commission this work in future to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome, deliver improved value for money and to address risks

To be identified

6. What are our planned improvement actions to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome and to address risks?

Improvement Action	Planned Benefits	Key Resources	Dates	Lead	Partners
To be identified					

7. How will we know what difference we have made over the five years?

What will we do directly	Measured by this indicator	Baseline	Target by 2015	Lead
Promoting greater engagement in sporting activities	Increase adult participation in sport (NI 8)			
Increase opportunities for physical activity at leisure@	Footfall at leisure@			

What will we do in partnership	Measured by this indicator	Baseline	Target by 2015	Lead
Reducing health inequalities	Decrease the gap in life expectancy at birth between quintile 1 and quintile 5 in cheltenham			
Promoting Healthy Active Lifestyles	Number of people engaged in CSPAN projects			

Outcome - Our residents enjoy a strong sense of community and are involved in identifying and resolving local issues

Objective and outcome

Strengthening communities - Our residents enjoy a strong sense of community and are involved in identifying and resolving local issues

1. What do we do directly to deliver this outcome

We work with communities of interest across the borough to help them identify and address their needs. Our current focus is on working with the borough's black and minority ethnic communities.

We work with local people in geographic communities to be more influential in shaping service delivery in their neighbourhoods. We are currently working to find a workable solution for how the council can improve its approach to neighbourhood working which will strengthen its relationships with parish councils, regeneration partnerships and other resident and community groups.

We promote strong and resilient communities through community development, events and activities

2. What else do we do that can help deliver this outcome

Our work to tackle anti-social behaviour in communities helps create stronger and more confident communities.

3. What do we do in partnership with others to deliver this outcome

We recognise that the VCS is instrumental in creating strong communities; both through larger voluntary sector organisations who are providing services to communities or the wide range of local community organisations that are representing their communities interests.

4. What are the longer-term risks to the delivery of this outcome?

- If the council cannot provide adequate resourcing to support improved neighbourhood working we might not be able to meet the expectations of local residents.
- If the council cannot negotiate a workable solution for neighbourhood working with key stakeholders then we will not be able to deliver our neighbourhood management aspiration.
- If the council cannot provide adequate resourcing to support community engagement and development activities then we might not be able to meet the expectations of local residents.

5. how should the council commission this work in future to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome, deliver improved value for money and to address risks

To be identified

6. What are our planned improvement actions to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome and to address risks?

Improvement Action	Planned Benefits	Key Resources	Dates	Lead	Partners
Agreeing a workable solution for how the council can improve its approach to neighbourhood working					

7. How will we know what difference we have made over the five years?

What will we do directly	Measured by this indicator	Baseline	Target by 2015	Lead
Working with local people to be more influential in shaping service delivery in their neighbourhoods	• Increase the number of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (NI 4) • Increase overall/general satisfaction with the local area (NI 5)	30% of people felt they could influence decisions 84.5% of people were very or fairly satisfied with their local area (place survey 2008)		
Working with communities of interest across the borough to help them identify and address their needs	• Increase the number of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (NI 1)	81.9% of people believed that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (place survey 2008)		
Promoting strong and resilient communities through community development, events and activities	• Increase the number of people who believe they belong to their neighbourhood (NI 2) • Increase participation in regular volunteering (NI 6)	58% of people believed that they belong to their neighbourhood 24.8% participated in regular volunteering (place survey 2008)		

What will we do in partnership	Measured by this indicator	Baseline	Target by 2015	Lead
Support the voluntary and community sector	Environment for a thriving third sector (NI 7 - measured at a county level)	For Gloucestershire, the score was 13.9% of VCAS organisations that were surveyed. The national score was 16.2%		

Cross-cutting objective - Enhancing the provision of arts and culture

1. What's the situation?

Cheltenham is extremely fortunate to have a wide range of cultural facilities backed up by a vigorous and successful programme of internationally recognised arts and sports festivals running throughout the year. The borough is home to the Everyman Theatre and the Playhouse Theatre, both of which put on a rich and varied programme of professional and amateur performing arts. Other venues, such as the Town Hall, Pittville Pump Room and the Centaur, host live music as well as festival and community events.

Cheltenham has a wide-range of festivals that take place throughout the year which include the world-renowned Jazz, Music, Science and Literature Festivals. The borough is also home to Cheltenham Racecourse which hosts a number of nationally important national hunt race meetings as well as the Gold Cup festival which brings in significant number of overseas visitors to Cheltenham. The borough also boasts a thriving community of independent artists as well as a considerable amount of voluntary sector activity, under the umbrella of Cheltenham Arts Council.

The provision of arts and culture is essential to supporting Cheltenham's quality of life. They generate community vitality and a sense of belonging while also bringing an annual contribution of some £34 million (Source Comedia 2003) to the economic well-being of the borough and its residents. This represents 0.8% of the total business turnover in the borough. Around one day in five is a festival day in Cheltenham; over 300 jobs are sustained by the festival programme and a wide range of businesses benefit from the trade the festivals generate.

However, maintaining the borough's cultural heritage and developing new services that respond to the emerging needs of artists and more sophisticated demands of audiences represents a substantial challenge. Following the Cultural Review undertaken by an independent consultant for the Borough Council and Cheltenham Festivals in 2006, the Council is considering improvement proposals for the Town Hall and has already committed to improvements to the Art Gallery and Museum. At the same time, the festivals team are now part of an arms length organisation that is being asked to be more commercially minded about income generation to reduce their dependency on the public purse.

2. What does our community want?

The place survey told us that satisfaction with our museums and galleries (62%) and theatres (76%) are significantly higher in Cheltenham than anywhere else in Gloucestershire with both being rated in the top 10 in the country.

3. Therefore what are our outcomes and what difference will we have made over the five years?

Outcomes	What are we trying to do	What difference will we make
Arts and culture are used as a means to strengthen communities, strengthen the economy and enhance and protect our environment	Create a financially sustainable structure for delivering arts and culture activities.	A vibrant and diverse range of cultural providers.

Outcome - Arts and culture are used as a means to strengthen communities, strengthen the economy and enhance and protect our environment

Objective and outcome	

Cross-cutting objective: Enhancing the provision of arts and culture

Outcome = Arts and culture are used as a means to strengthen communities, strengthen the economy and enhance and protect our environment

1. What do we do directly to deliver this outcome

The council provides a wide range of cultural facilities. Our venues, such as the Town Hall and the Pittville Pump Room host live music as well as festival and community events.

The council provides Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum which displays paintings, drawings, sculpture, archaeology, local and social history, and objects from all over the world. The arts and crafts display has been nationally recognised for its importance.

The council also provides a vigorous programme of community arts development to engage people with the arts, developing its audiences and empowering individuals and communities.

2. What else do we do that can help deliver this outcome

To be identified

3. What do we do in partnership with others to deliver this outcome

Cheltenham Festivals is now an arms length organisation that is being asked to be more commercially minded about income generation to reduce their dependency on the public purse. The Festivals team is responsible for hosting acclaimed festivals that take place throughout the year which include the world-renowned Jazz, Music, Science and Literature Festivals.

The council supports the Everyman Theatre which is the earliest surviving example of the work of Frank Matcham, who was the country's leading theatre architect at the turn of the 20th century.

The council also supports the Playhouse Theatre which celebrates non-professional drama.

4. What are the longer-term risks to the delivery of this outcome?

To be identified

5. how should the council commission this work in future to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome, deliver improved value for money and to address risks

To be identified

6. What are our planned improvement actions to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome and to address risks?

Improvement Action	Planned Benefits	Key Resources	Dates	Lead	Partners
Deliver the Art Gallery and Museum extension project.					

7. How will we know what difference we have made over the five years?

What will we do directly	Measured by this indicator	Baseline	Target by 2015	Lead
Create a financially sustainable structure for arts and culture	*To be identified*			

What will we do In partnership	Measured by this indicator	Baseline	Target by 2015	Lead
Arts and culture are used as a means to strengthen communities, strengthen the economy and enhance and protect our environment	*To be identified*			

Cross-cutting objective - Ensuring we provide value for money services that meet the needs of our customers

1. What's the situation?

The single greatest challenge the council faces over the next five years is the drive to secure significant efficiencies across every aspect of the council's business.

Although the council was able to agree the 2009-10 budget through identifying additional income and savings worth over £1m, we predict having to make a further £1m worth of savings for the 2010-11 budget. The predicted gap for the next five years is going to be at least £3.5m which may rise to nearer £5m once pension shortfalls and the predicted decrease in rate support grant (the money we get from central government) take effect. This gap is set out in the council's medium term financial strategy (MTFS).

Promoting value for money has been a key focus for the council for a number of years. Cumulative efficiencies achieved since 2004-05 are worth £3.26m, nearly £1m ahead of target. But we know that this effort has to be increased if we are to meet our current MTFS targets.

This will include looking at what services we provide and how we provide these services.

In terms of what services, an independent review by our peers in Spring 2009 concluded that the council was trying to do too much. They wrote:
"Given a rising budget deficit and difficulties experienced through the impact of the recession, there is concern that the council is in danger of spreading itself too thinly, with a result that it is pursuing too many priorities at a time of major resource challenge. When the business plan is next revised, it will be important for the council to satisfy itself that it has adequate staffing and financial resources to achieve its 33 aims".

There is general consensus for a move to fewer high-level objectives. This will support our work to be clearer about our priority services and that the objectives we choose must reflect the reality of community needs and provide a framework for community outcomes.

In terms of how we provide services, the council will increasingly look to "commission" services, this means that we will work to deliver outcomes for local people regardless of whether these services are provided in-house, externally or through various forms of partnership. This will challenge our way of thinking through reviewing who is best-placed to meet the needs of our customers within the widest sense of sustainability. It will support the development of partnerships with businesses, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations, and with other organisations in the public sector to deliver services that provide quality and value for money.

2. What does our community want?

From the place survey

The place survey told us that just over a third of people across Cheltenham Borough feel that the council provides value for money. Although we do score better than the average for Gloucestershire, we do fare slightly worse when compared to the averages for district councils. This is despite positive assurances from our auditors that the council does provide value for money services.

3. Therefore what are our outcomes and what difference will we have made over the five years?

Outcomes	What are we trying to do	What difference will we make
The council delivers cashable savings, as well as improved customer satisfaction overall and better performance through the effective commissioning of services	- Implement our sourcing strategy - Implement the Bridging the Gap Programme - Provide a better match of services to needs - Ensure value for money service delivery - Promote innovation and creativity	Achieve our cash-saving targets Improve the percentage of people who are very or fairly satisfied with how council runs things

Outcome - The council delivers cashable savings, improved customer satisfaction and better performance through the effective commissioning of services

Objective and outcome

Cross-cutting - Ensuring we provide value for money services that effectively meet the needs of our customers

Outcome = The council delivers cashable savings, as well as improved customer satisfaction overall and better performance through the effective commissioning of services

1. What do we do directly to deliver this outcome

The council provides a range of services that support this outcome:

- Our democratic services team ensures the smooth and efficient management of the council's committee system including the cabinet, three overview and scrutiny committees and statutory committees such as planning and licensing.
- Our procurement team helps the council save money through the driving down prices and reducing the cost of our purchasing processes
- Our audit and corporate governance work help ensures that we are carrying out our business in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, and honest and accountable manner.
- Our communications team help support improved customer satisfaction through promoting all the positive things the council does and then making sure that staff, elected members and the media are aware of the reasons why we have to sometimes make difficult decisions.
- Our property services team make sure that our assets are effectively managed to help reduce the costs of running them and maintaining them.
- Our financial services team ensure the effective management of the financial resources we have and helps the council set its annual budget and medium term financial strategy
- Our customer services and customer relations teams ensure that we provide an excellent service to our customers however they choose to access the council's services and that there is a right to further consideration through the complaints process.
- Our human resources team provides support and advice to the council on all matters connected with the employment of people such as recruitment and retention; employee relations; payroll and pensions and learning and development.
- Our legal services team, which is now shared with Tewkesbury Borough Council, provides legal advice and assistance to elected members and officers to support our decision-making processes
- Our ICT service help the council maximise the use of new technology to support the effective delivery of services to our customers.
- Our revenues team manage a range of sources of income for the council including the collection of council tax and business rates and processing of invoices
- Our benefits team manage the allocation of benefits to help people pay their rent and council tax.

2. What else do we do that can help deliver this outcome

To help secure ongoing efficiencies, the council is preparing a "sourcing strategy" which will make recommendations on how best the council can deliver the following services; Revenues and Benefits, Finance, Human Resources, Information Communication Technology (ICT), Procurement and Customer Services.

The council has an existing commitment to our bridging the gap programme which plans to create a sustainable budget that will continue improving over time, eventually releasing the council from the annual budget gap.

3. What do we do in partnership with others to deliver this outcome

The council is working with other district councils to help realise the cost savings from sharing services. We have already launched shared services for Audit (with Cotswold District Council), Legal Services and Building Control (both with Tewkesbury Borough Council).

4. What are the longer-term risks to the delivery of this outcome?

Declining rate support grant from the government will make it harder for the council to produce a balanced budget each year.

5. how should the council commission this work in future to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome, deliver improved value for money and to address risks

6. What are our planned improvement actions to secure longer-term delivery of this outcome and to address risks?

Improvement Action	Planned Benefits	Key Resources	Dates	Lead	Partners
Implement our sourcing strategy					
Implement the Bridging the Gap Programme					

7. How will we know what difference we have made over the five years?

What will we do directly	Measured by this indicator	Baseline	Target by 2015	Lead
Deliver cashable savings	Achieve MTFS cash-saving targets			
Improve customer satisfaction	Improve the percentage of people who are very or fairly satisfied with how council runs things	48% of people were very or fairly satisfied with the way the council runs things. (place survey 2008)		
Deliver improved performance	Proportion of annual milestones that are delivered on target at year end.	In 2008-09, 75% of milestones were completed at year end and 33% of indicators were on target.		