

Financial Services – 2009/10 TARGETS / MILESTONES

1. Produce a budget for 2010/11 that takes account of evolving priorities and known financial pressures.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – The budget will be compiled for consideration by Cabinet in early 2010. The Medium Term Financial Strategy will be considered by Cabinet in early November 2009 at the same time as priorities are reviewed. Actions being taken now by the Council e.g. management restructure should help to ensure a balanced budget in 2010/11.

Risk Level: Amber

Risks Description/Action: Achieving a balanced budget in 2010/11 is a significant challenge against a background of reduced income streams, lower investment returns and uncertainties on expenditure surrounding Concessionary fares. Action is already being taken in 2009/10 to help achieve a balanced budget in 2009/10 e.g. Priority, Income and Efficiency Review (PIER) process, and the Efficiency and Resilience Group.

2. Meet the annual accounts and budget timetables.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – The Audit committee approved the 2008/9 accounts on the 29 June 2009. The External auditors are now auditing the accounts. The budget process for 2009/10 (revised) and 2010/11 commences with the PIER process (Performance Improvement and Efficiency Reviews).

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: The Accounts timetable could be disrupted through higher levels of sickness or failure to identify sufficient savings. The PIER process has a clear timetable, and there should be sufficient scope within the budget timetable to cope with a higher than normal absence rate

3. Achieve an unqualified audit opinion for the annual statement of accounts and all auditable grant claims.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – the External auditors are currently auditing the accounts. A report of the findings will be presented to the Audit Committee in September 2009

Risk Level: Amber

Risks Description/Action: There have been more complex changes to accounting rules and regulations, and more comprehensive annual disclosure requirements. The Council expects to achieve an unqualified audit opinion

4. Continue to meet targets for Council tax and business rates collection. (See PI section in Part III for specific targets)

QTR 1 – On target with risks identified

Progress – Council Tax collection is slightly ahead of last year's performance. (35.97% compared to 35.80%). This is encouraging bearing in mind the continuing recession which has resulted in many job losses and reduced hours of working in the town.

Business Rates collection is slightly behind last year's performance. (37.69% compared to 38.13%) We are monitoring the situation closely however with the introduction of the deferral scheme for Business Rates payers on 31 July

2009, we will have a clearer picture of the likely outcome by the end of quarter 2 i.e. end of September.

Risk Level: GREEN

Risks Description/Action: A reduced collection rate for council tax has a direct impact on the collection fund. Actions being undertaken include:
Continue to actively pursue council tax payers in a timely manner
Continue to ensure tax payers are aware of the council tax benefit system
Continue to ensure tax payers are aware of the various discounts available
A reduced collection of business rates has a less direct impact on the Council. We are advising business rate payers on the help that is available eg Small Business Rate Relief. With the introduction of the Business Rates Deferral scheme in July 2009, we will monitor closely the effect this has on the collection rate.

5. Continue to monitor and meet Benefits performance targets in respect of new claims and change of circumstances. (See PI section in Part III for specific targets)

QTR 1 – On Target with Risks Identified

Progress – Due to the increased number of new claims and changes of circumstance as a result of the recession, performance has slipped significantly over the first quarter of the year. 2,449 new claims were processed between April and June compared to 1,915 for the corresponding period in 2008/09, an increase of 28%. The service is still hopeful that a level of performance can be achieved that means the year-end average meets target.

Risk Level: RED

Risks Description/Action: We are undertaking more 1-1 interviews with new claimants to try and speed up the process, have produced a new leaflet with useful telephone numbers regarding the various benefits that are available and are using additional Government resources to help fund resources for processing.

6. Improve the telephone service to Revenues customers by monitoring staff performance, identifying and providing for training needs and conducting customer satisfaction surveys during the year.

QTR 1 – ON TARGET

Progress – In the first quarter, 8,417 council tax calls were answered, with 8,332 (99%) being answered within 10 minutes. This represents an increase from October 2008 when we were answering only 93%.

For the same period 5,789 benefit calls were answered, with 5,586 (96.5%) being answered within 10 minutes. Again this represents an improvement from October 2008 when we were only answering 84%.

Staff have training updates on a monthly basis in order to keep them well informed with any changes.

Risk Level: AMBER

Risks Description/Action: Increased waiting times lead to disgruntled, unhappy customers. We are monitoring number of calls, peak periods & reason for calls.

7. Develop the Council's Asset Management Plan to reflect the changing economic circumstances and the potential opportunities arising from the Bexhill Link Road and additional commercial development.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – The 2009/10 Asset Management Plan is in draft form.

Risk Level: Green

8. Identify asset disposal opportunities in readiness for any upturn in the property market.

QTR 1 – On Target with risk identified

Progress – Wellington Square offices have been sold. Completion due November 2009. The Council's disposal programme is being reviewed as part of the 2009/10 budget process

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Lower land and property values may necessitate holding onto property until there is an upturn in the market.

9. Maximise occupancy of industrial units against the uncertain economic environment, whilst maximising job opportunities.

QTR 1 – On Target with Risks Identified

Progress – A number of meetings have taken place with companies who are experiencing difficulties in the recession. The Council has been able to let some units but has as yet not been successful in letting units at Stirling Road. A revised marketing strategy is being pursued.

Risk Level: Amber

Risks Description/Action: Empty units will result in loss of income and fewer job opportunities. The Council is being proactive and offering assistance where there is a good business case for doing so.

10. Work with the new tenant of St Mary in the Castle to enable the building to be offered as a venue for meetings, events and functions, whilst also pursuing a longer-term sustainable solution for the building.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – The Council has let the property on a short term lease. The venue is being for meeting events and functions. The Myplace bid by Hastings Trust has been successful and is being developed. Report to Cabinet on 7th September 2009.

Risk Level: Amber

Risks Description/Action: Bid not viable.

INTERNAL AUDIT AND INVESTIGATIONS – 2009/10 TARGETS / MILESTONES

- 1. Perform a formal review of the shared Fraud Investigation Service provided to Rother District Council with a view to making the arrangement more permanent**

QTR 1 – On target with Risks Identified

Progress – It is intended that the formal review will take place shortly before the first anniversary of operations, that is, prior to 1st September 2009.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

- 2. Further embed our risk management processes and develop identification and recording throughout the organisation of significant partnership, contract and opportunity risks.**

QTR 1 – On target with Risks Identified

Progress – A further 44 people were trained in risk management and using the Corporate Risk management system (GRACE) during quarter 1. Identification and recording throughout the organisation of significant partnership, contract and opportunity risks continued.

Risk Level: Amber

Risks Description/Action: Progress is being monitored by Audit Committee – further detailed report to September meeting.

- 3. Continue to deliver the annual Audit Plan and report outcomes to the Audit Committee.**

QTR 1 – On target

Progress – The 2009/10 audit plan is progressing fully as anticipated.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

- 4. Continue to review our procurement arrangements to include an assurance on value for money and, working in collaboration with other local authorities and Improvement and Efficiency South East, put in place improved arrangements for supplies and service contracts.**

QTR 1 – On target

Progress – We have continued to participate in a pan Sussex procurement exercise and will be receiving proposals for our consideration by early October.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

- 5. Review the Sustainable Procurement Policy to ensure it remains current and accurately reflects our responsibilities.**

QTR 1 – On target

Progress – We have carried out a review and as a result have enhanced the section on equalities with regard to procurement.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

UPDATE ON SHORTFALLS FROM 2008/09

- 3. Continue to deliver the Audit Plan and report outcomes to the Audit Committee**

Reported in Corporate Plan Part III:

Delivery against the Audit Plan was not achieved due to unanticipated new work which included strengthening controls over contract management in response to the

recommendations made by external audit. The non-completed work will be accomplished by end of the first quarter 2009/10.

QTR 1 – Slippage

Progress – The audits that were in progress at year end are still in the process of being completed. Whilst work is progressing as planned on the current year's audit plan, we have re-deployed resources to enable early close down of last year's slippage.

Risk Level: Amber

Risks Description/Action: The work is well progressed with some of it at draft report stage during the first quarter. Re-deployment of resources will enable closure of the outstanding work for reporting to the next Audit Committee in September.

LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – 2009/10 TARGETS / MILESTONES

- 1. Continue discussions and negotiations with the Foreshore Trustees and the Charity Commission to seek a satisfactory conclusion to Sea Front issues.**

QTR 1 – On target

Progress – The Council is awaiting the Trustees' responses on land matters. The draft Scheme for the return of the Trusteeship is agreed for public consultation. The Charity Commission consultation cannot proceed until the land matters have been resolved satisfactorily. The Protector, whose role is governed by the draft Scheme, has been appointed by the Trustees, pending approval of the Scheme.

Risk Level: AMBER

Risks Description/Action: Tolerated

- 2. Subject to a positive Charity Commission decision, make appropriate arrangements for the smooth functioning of the Hastings and St Leonards Foreshore Charitable Trust, following the return of the trusteeship to the Council.**

QTR 1 – On target with risks identified

Progress – The draft Charity Commission Scheme should be published on settlement of the land issues with the Foreshore Trustees.

Risk Level: RED

Risks Description/Action: We are continuing to work closely with Foreshore Trustees to resolve outstanding land issues, and have been in correspondence with Charity Commission regarding the terms of the proposed scheme.

- 3. Work with other local authorities towards a shared legal service.**

QTR 1 – On target

Progress – Work is continuing on this through the East Sussex Secretaries and Solicitors Group (ESSAS) on the following:- a pan Sussex framework agreement for external legal services; an agreed standard charge out rate between authorities in the Group and in principle agreement to seek to outsource work within the Group before going to external providers; joint procurement via ESSAS consortium on legal intelligence such as online research facilities and joint procurement of a common case management system.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

- 4. Undertake a review of Council Constitution to enable further improvements to the decision-making process, including new requirements from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and regulations made under the Act.**

QTR 1 – On target

Progress – There will be a report on a review of the Constitution to Working Arrangements Group in August. Further reports are likely to be considered later in the year.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

- 5. Work with Standards Committee and Council to adopt, implement and give training to members on the proposed revisions to the member Code of Conduct.**

QTR 1 – On target

Progress – We are awaiting revision of the Code.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

6. Promote and manage the Overview and Scrutiny annual work programme of service reviews and policy projects selected by councillors.

QTR 1 – On-Target

Progress – Members agreed the following priority reviews programme at the 2009/10 Annual Meeting of Overview and Scrutiny;

Capacity of the Sewerage system

Public Consultation Arrangements

Worklessness

Management of Factory Units

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

7. Provide a comprehensive training and development programme for councillors including working with other Sussex authorities to provide joint training opportunities.

QTR 1 – On-target

Progress – The Members Training and Development Group is meeting in August to review the outturn of the 2008/2009 programme and discuss requirements for 2009/10 and beyond.

Risk Level: GREEN

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

8. Support the Council's democratic processes and councillors by the timely organisation and management of meetings, production and distribution of agendas and minutes, secretarial support for the Leader of the Council and advice and administrative support for all councillors.

QTR 1 – On-target

Progress – All agenda's issued in line with legislative and constitutional requirements.

Risk Level: Green/Amber

Risks Description/Action: The corporate restructure has resulted in a range of special meetings being organised in July and August as well as additional Licensing Committees being required to deal with reviews requested by our environmental health department submitted in May. These created additional workload for the small Democratic Services Team during and straight after the European and County Council Election periods. All of the team have significant election duties and have been thanked for their efforts and flexibility in reorganising annual leave and other commitments to ensure that these meetings were properly organised.

9. Prepare for a Parliamentary election to be held no later than May 2010 and manage the 2009 European and County Council elections including visiting all Polling Stations with the Hastings and Rother Disability Forum to review access.

QTR 1 – On-target

Progress – Despite significant staffing changes in the Democratic Services Team in the build up to the 2009 European and County Council elections, the elections were organised extremely well.

An East Sussex project group is preparing single project plan for organising the parliamentary election as all East Sussex authorities have cross boundary

issues including Hastings that takes on areas of Rother. Hastings will be the only East Sussex authority with combined elections should the parliamentary election be held in 2010 as our colleagues work to a 4 year local election timetable with elections in 2011. We are liaising with Hastings and Rother Disability Forum to complete the access survey.

Risk Level: Amber

Risks Description/Action: With a parliamentary election to organise plus local elections in the next 10 months, there will be significant requirements on the small Democratic Services Team. Elections are a complex area of work process wise and legislatively and all of the team will be undergoing specialist training to prepare for them.

10. Work with the Hastings Young Persons Council to visit schools and colleges across the Borough to promote Democracy and encourage young people to register and vote when they reach the legal age.

QTR 1 – On-target

Progress – A meeting was held with the Young Persons' Council (YPC) to discuss a campaign and this is a target in the Community Cohesion Action Plan. The YPC were considering their position and we are to meet them again to progress the campaign as well as liaising with East Sussex County Council and Rother on joint promotional opportunities.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES – 2009/10 TARGETS / MILESTONES

1. Improve our environmental performance by reducing our server power energy consumption.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – The core business case for the virtualisation of our servers has been completed. Work has now commenced on the storage solution that partners this.

Risk Level: GREEN

Risks Description/Action: Low technology risk, and low financial risk.

2. Continue to maintain the Council's IT network, facilitate office moves and provide IT support to enable the smooth running of the Council. We look to resolve 97% of all Helpdesk calls within target time and achieve a network availability of 99.90%.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – 95.35% of Helpdesk calls were closed within target time (against an overall target of 95.5%). Network availability was 99.98%

Risk Level: GREEN

Risks Description/Action: The support team are still running with a temporary member of staff. Performance is being maintained against the backdrop of significant additional development work associated with office accommodation moves.

3. Continue to work collaboratively with Access East Sussex partners to achieve common approaches and solutions to service delivery IT solutions.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – The updated web kiosk design has now been implemented across East Sussex to simplify usage and minimise maintenance overheads. Work is underway to establish if a common approach to the government mandated 'IT Health Check' can be found.

Risk Level: GREEN

Risks Description/Action: The partners are keen to share expertise and knowledge, and develop common approaches where practicable.

4. Make better use of IT to deliver further financial savings for the Council.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – We have implemented advertising on the main corporate website (managed on a day-to-day basis) by the e-marketing team. We have renegotiated the third-party support contract for Revenues and Benefits and have realised a £30,000 per annum contract saving. We are working on a number of e-forms to allow more 'transactional' website interactions. Featurnet phones now stand at 31 extensions, and these should be phased out shortly.

Risk Level: GREEN

Risks Description/Action: We have a work programme identified that aims to firm-up savings opportunities.

POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND SUSTAINABILITY SERVICE – 2009/10 TARGETS / MILESTONES

- 1. Work across Hastings Borough Council and with our partners to prepare for our first annual assessment under the new national performance regime - Comprehensive Area Assessment, incorporating a revised Use of Resources assessment for the Council.**

QTR 1 – On Target with Risks Identified

Progress – The newly branded ‘One Place’ assessments will be published by the Audit Commission on 10th December. This report will publish details of the Area Assessment for each area (in our case this refers to East Sussex) and Organisational Assessment scores for each PCT, Fire and Rescue Service, Police Authority, County and District Council.

Area Assessment – The East Sussex Strategic Partnership received an update from the CAA Lead at its meeting on 17th July. Ms Prail identified a number of areas of focus that remain for her staff to investigate further. She did state that at this time they were not signalling any areas for a ‘Red Flag’ (areas where partnership action is unlikely to address an issue of under-performance) or ‘Green Flag’ (areas of notable good practice). The Area Assessment is not scored.

Organisational Assessment – The Council is subject to an assessment in two parts, both parts are informed by cross-cutting judgements about value for money, equalities and sustainability:

a) **Use of Resources** – this focuses on financial planning and health; understanding costs and performance; financial monitoring and reporting; commissioning and procurement; data quality; good governance and ethical behaviour; risk management and internal control, and workforce planning. The Council’s external auditors have undertaken the field-work to assess us for this aspect. This aspect of the assessment is scored out of 4.

b) **Managing Performance** – this is similar to the previous Direction of Travel statement and assesses i) how well we are delivering our priority services and the outcomes and improvements that are important to local people, and ii) whether we have the leadership, capacity and capability we need to deliver future improvements. The field work for this assessment is being undertaken in August/September. This assessment is also scored out of 4.

Risk Level: AMBER

Risks Description/Action: Supporting field work and evidence maintained to meet criteria to ensure we remain a 3 under a new and harder test.

- 2. Explore with the Local Strategic Partnership the idea of creating a Hastings ‘Local Area Agreement’ in the context of finalising the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy by June 2009.**

QTR 1 – Slippage

Progress – The Local Strategic Partnership agreed the narrative of the Sustainable Community Strategy at its meeting on 29th June. The Strategy was also subsequently agreed at the Full Council meeting on 29th July. The issue of agreeing the 21 Key Targets was deferred until the autumn (i.e. 12th October LSP) to allow partners to: Undertake a further vigorous review of the detail of the 21 Key Targets over the summer/autumn and identify milestones for March 2011 and challenging but realistic targets for March 2013, in the context of ongoing uncertainty about the length and depth of the recession and the impact this will have on our town and communities, as well as the uncertainty about the future level of public sector finances. The issue of a Local Area Agreement will be addressed as part of this exercise.

Risk Level: AMBER

Risks Description/Action: Review of SCS to be completed by autumn 2009 to ensure our SCS is fit for purpose as required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

3. Refresh our Participation Strategy in response to the new Duty to Inform, Consult and Involve and co-ordinate engagement activity across the Local Strategic Partnership.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – This activity will be assisted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review of consultation. The membership of the team has been agreed and a first meeting will be held during August. The draft Project Initiation Document will set out the issues to be reviewed and will explicitly exclude the work undertaken elsewhere re: engagement via the Area Structures.

Risk Level: Amber

Risks Description/Action: Review underway in 2009/10 to ensure our Corporate Policy and practice reflects the Duty to Inform, Consult and Involve.

4. Project manage the Council's contribution to the 3-year, European-funded 'Future Cities' project which sees £500,000 invested in the town to support climate change adaptation activities.

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – During April completed the first financial claim for the project; developed and finalised the contract with Hastings Trust to deliver training opportunities during the Eco-retrofit of a property in Cambridge Gardens. Developed, advertised and successfully recruited to the Climate Change Project Officer post to support with delivery of the project. Took part in the Working Group 1 meeting in Holland developing an international Climate Assessment Tool and began planning for the all partners visit to Hastings in September 09.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

5. Work with partners across East Sussex to share expertise and resources to deliver on the Local Area Agreement targets to reduce per capita CO₂ emissions in our area, and to measure our preparedness in assessing and addressing the risks and opportunities of a changing climate. (See performance indicator section in Part III for specific targets)

QTR 1 – On Target

Progress – Continued to be an active member of the two LAA working groups and help to co-ordinate the LSP Climate Change conference in June including the facilitation of table top discussions. Raised awareness of the NI 188 climate adaptation indicator amongst heads of service and began to research the impacts of severe weather events on our services and communities.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – 2009/10 TARGETS / MILESTONES

Target 1. Following the Scrutiny Review of sickness absence, improve further the Council's approach to sickness absence management and performance against our targets. (See performance indicators in Part III)

QTR 1 – On Target with risks identified

Progress – The action plan that was agreed as an outcome from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel has completed all of the agreed actions, except for the Absence Management Toolkit which is waiting to go on the intranet.

The completed actions are

- Member access for EAP
- Change in wording for relevant policies
- Change absence baseline to 8.5
- HR briefings on absence management
- Improved training for other managerial staff on absence management

Risk Level: Amber

Risks Description/Action: Due to the H1N1 pandemic, there is a high risk of absence figures increasing significantly; business continuity plans have been put in place. We are recording all absences with H1N1 NHS reference numbers separately.

Target 2. Promote the health, safety and welfare of Council staff through a review of policies relating to occupational health, wellbeing and safety.

QTR 1 – On Target

The Smart Working Toolkit has been completed and published on the intranet.

Stress in the Workplace Policy to be reviewed in line with the Health & Wellbeing Steering Group Action Plan

We have asked for feedback from staff on the Action Plan and will now implement. We have begun to deliver our schedule of monthly health advice events

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

Target 3. Support the Council's workforce to deliver our organisational needs, through workforce planning and the provision of a range of development opportunities that enable staff to gain skills, competences and experience necessary to enhance service delivery.

QTR 1 – On target

Learning and Development plan in place following consultation with managers. Scheduled to review in September to ensure continued match to organisational needs. Continue to be active member of Sussex Training Consortium, achieving economies of scale in purchasing training provision. Work on identifying behavioural competencies for staff is well under way (currently consulting). Work on skills and knowledge also begun – workshops to help complete this are being planned in August/September

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

Target 4. Agree and implement our People Strategy and Action Plan. This will steer our continuing work to improve leadership and management skills; enhance organisational development and change management capabilities,

and enable and encourage staff to become more involved in shaping services and decision-making.

QTR 1 – On target

We are currently updating Part Two of the People Strategy, which is the action plan, to reflect outcomes achieved in the first year and new priorities.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate

Target 5. Undertake a follow-up internal staff survey to ensure the measures we have taken to improve communications, reduce stress and manage change are being effective and continue to improve us HBC as a good employer.

QTR 1 – On target

The staff survey is underway. Results analysed and published later in the year.

Risk Level: Green

Risks Description/Action: Tolerate