



Accountants &
business advisers

Hastings Borough Council

Annual Audit Letter 2009/10

Report to Members

December 2010

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<http://www.pkf.co.uk>

Code of Audit Practice and Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission contains an explanation of the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body. Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors are addressed to members or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body and no responsibility is taken by auditors to any Member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party.

<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/auditmethodology/Pages/codelocalgov.aspx>

<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/auditmethodology/Pages/statementresponsibilities.aspx>

1 Executive summary

- 1.1 This Annual Audit Letter summarises the key issues arising from the work we have completed over the past 12 months. We have already reported the detailed findings from our audit work to those charged with governance in the reports documented in Appendix 1 to this report. The key issues arising from our work are summarised below.

Accounts

- 1.2 We gave an unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts in line with the Government's deadline of 30 September. The Council's arrangements for preparing and publishing the annual accounts remain effective.

Financial performance

- 1.3 The Council's 2009/10 expenditure plans were met and the level of the general reserve increased. The Chief Financial Officer considers the level of the general reserve to be sufficient and the Council recognises it will need to keep the level of all reserves and other available balances under review in the light of the risks and uncertainties it must respond to in 2010/11 and over the medium term.
- 1.4 In anticipation of a significant reduction in resources, the Council updated its medium term financial plan in the year. Officers expected the level of revenue support grant to reduce by 28 per cent over a four year period commencing in 2011/12 and that other resources made available by the Government would also reduce. The medium term financial plan identifies a budget gap amounting to a total of £4.9 million in the period to 2014/15. The Council's prudent planning should ensure its future financial plans are soundly based.

Value for money

- 1.5 Our value for money conclusion was unqualified and the Council maintains a comprehensive value for money framework which continues to secure positive outcomes from the resources available to invest in the area. The Council reported additional employment opportunities have been taken up by local people through the Future Jobs Fund. It also reported jobs have been created and others safeguarded, through measures resourced by Area Based Grant. The Council provided training and further education opportunities to over 1,200 people in the year, including some from hard to reach groups, such as those previously not in employment, education or training.
- 1.6 In partnership, almost all of the targets set for reducing crime were achieved in 2009/10. Only one indicator (reducing serious violent crime) did not meet the target set though performance was in line with the previous year and was only just behind the expected level. The cleanliness of streets improved slightly in the year and the Council therefore made positive progress towards its objective for a 'safe and clean town'.
- 1.7 Recognising the likely reduction in funding available to undertake the programme of special measures currently in place, the Council has completed a major consultation with local people and strategic partners. The 'big conversation' asked stakeholders to state which Council priorities should be retained and which should be changed. The response to the consultation was positive with over 2,400 people contacting the Council. The Council is due to publish detailed feedback and the impact of the consultation on its future priorities in December 2010. The consultation is expected to inform the development of the 2011/12 budget and the updated medium term financial plan. With effective financial and service planning processes, underpinned by the corporate programme of Performance, Income and Efficiency Reviews (PIER), the Council can be confident it has the necessary arrangements in place to address the financial challenges it has identified over the medium term.

- 1.8 The Council recognises more needs to be done to address performance in those areas where targets are not being met and to deliver the challenging agenda it has set. In summary:
- some measures put in place to minimise the impact of the recession have been successful, such as reducing the number of homeless households and increasing the number of affordable homes. However, following a significant increase in caseload, performance in administering benefits was behind the Council's targets in the year and deteriorated further in the period to 30 September 2010. Action has been taken to address the situation and in the months of October and November (2010), performance has improved. The Council needs to ensure the performance now being reported is sustained
 - progress towards targets for waste reduction and increased recycling while improving, remain behind the Council's targets
 - the 'PIER' efficiency programme is delivering substantial savings and ensures the Council's financial plans are resourced over the medium term. The planned reduction in budgets and the reduction in resources available to invest in special measures will continue to require careful management.
- 1.9 The abolition of the Government's 'Place Survey'; Local Area Agreement targets and national performance indicators provides an opportunity for the Council to further review the scope and extent of performance targets necessary to underpin achievement of the Corporate Plan.
- 1.10 While we have no additional recommendations at this time, the Council is dealing with a challenging financial outlook; is developing new priorities in the light of major consultation and is keeping its financial resilience under review. We will continue to report on the Council's progress with this agenda.

Acknowledgement

- 1.11 We would like to thank staff for their co-operation and assistance during the audit and throughout the period.

2 Introduction

About the Council

- 2.1 Hastings Borough Council covers a small geographical area of 20 square miles and is one of five district and borough councils in the county of East Sussex. Most of its population of about 86,500 people live in the seaside towns of Hastings and St Leonards. The Council spends over £100 million each year on services such as refuse collection and street cleaning; planning and economic development; environmental health and benefit payments. The Council provides services to some of the most deprived wards in the country. The most recent index of multiple deprivation rating highlights Hastings as the 29th most deprived district in England.
- 2.2 The Council works through the Hastings and Bexhill Regeneration Task force to manage investment provided by the Government and other contributions from strategic partners to regenerate the area. About £80 million has been invested to improve the Borough's infrastructure and to ensure local people benefit from such investment through better opportunities for education; training and jobs. A new 'Enviro 21' business park is also under construction, which aims to attract businesses involved in environmental technologies, conservation and energy efficiency as part of a network of such parks in the Hastings and Bexhill area. The Council is also making progress with a major cultural project to construct the 'Jerwood Gallery' on the Hastings seafront. The project is ambitious and aims to improve the area's profile as a cultural and tourist destination.
- 2.3 The Council recognises it must work within a reduced resource base following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review and expects the direct funding of the measures and major projects it has delivered over the last six years to reduce substantially in 2011/12 and beyond. To inform the Council's future priorities and investment of resources, a major consultation (known as the 'big conversation') was completed in October 2010. Over 2,400 people responded and the Council is reviewing its priorities accordingly. Further information on the activities of the Council is publicly available on its website at www.hastings.gov.uk.

The purpose of this Letter

- 2.4 The purpose of this Letter is to summarise the key issues arising from the work that we have carried out during the year. Although this Letter is addressed to Members, it is also intended to communicate the significant issues we have identified, in an accessible format, to key external stakeholders, including members of the public. The Letter will be published on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk and also on the Council's website at www.hastings.gov.uk.

Responsibilities of the auditors and the Council

- 2.5 We have been appointed as the Council's independent external auditors by the Audit Commission, the body responsible for appointing auditors to local public bodies in England.
- 2.6 As the Council's external auditors, we have a broad remit covering financial and governance matters. We target our work on areas which involve significant amounts of public money and on the basis of our assessment of the key risks to the Council achieving its objectives. It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the conduct of its business and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. We have considered how the Council is fulfilling these responsibilities.

The scope of our work

- 2.7 Our main responsibility as the appointed auditor is to plan and carry out an audit that meets the requirements of the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice (the Code). Under the Code, we are required to review and report on:
- the Council's financial statements
 - whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

3 Key findings

Financial statements

- 3.1 We issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements on 30 September 2010. Our opinion confirms the financial statements gave a true and fair view of Council's financial affairs as at 31 March 2010 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended.
- 3.2 We were satisfied the Annual Governance Statement was not inconsistent or misleading with other information we were aware of from our audit of the financial statements. The Council's accounting and internal control systems remain effective based on the work of internal audit and our review.

Key issues arising from the audit

- 3.3 The Council's arrangements for preparing and publishing the annual accounts remain effective. A small number of amendments were made to the accounts in the light of our audit work. One significant amendment was made to include a finance lease on the balance sheet which the Council had previously classified as an operating lease. The Council's total assets less liabilities; and the amount of long term liabilities increased by £255,000 accordingly.

Use of resources

- 3.4 The Code requires us to be satisfied that proper arrangements have been made to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources. This is known as the 'value for money conclusion' and draws on the results of specific risk based audit work.

Focus of our value for money work

- 3.5 We ensured the focus of our value for money work in 2010 considered the effectiveness of the action taken; the outcomes achieved and the work the Council should undertake to increase further the value for money secured from the use of resources. Our work therefore reviewed the Council's progress towards:
- ensuring planned efficiency savings were achieved and expenditure on demand-led services managed within agreed budgets
 - managing the effect of the economic downturn on income streams and reviewing strategies for those projects where Government funding is due to come to an end
 - improving the approach to workforce matters by embedding new organisational structures; delivering the new workforce development plan and improving performance towards the Government's enhanced equalities standard.
- 3.6 The Council secured efficiency savings of £1.1 million in the year which was in line with the target level. Since 2008/09, the Council has reported savings of over £2.8 million in total, enabling the overall financial position to be balanced and the level of the general reserve to be maintained at a level considered reasonable by the Chief Financial Officer. The Council continues to respond to the impact of the economic downturn, through the measures and other projects in place to increase the number of local people in employment; training and education. Performance in processing housing and council tax benefit claims while behind target in the year and in the first six months of 2010/11, improved in October and November 2010. The Council is keeping the performance of the service under close review.
- 3.7 The Priorities, Income and Efficiency Review ('PIER') review process expects all service managers to review and maximise opportunities for securing income from fees and charges and has mitigated some, but not all of the risks, of falling income levels.

- 3.8 The Council published its revised 'People Strategy' in July 2010 and this should underpin achievement of the corporate workforce plan. It is working towards the 'achieving' level of the Government's equalities standard.

Value for money conclusion

- 3.9 We are required to be satisfied that proper arrangements have been made to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources (value for money).
- 3.10 In June 2010 the Government announced the abolition of Comprehensive Area Assessment. As a result the Audit Commission announced changes to its use of resources approach, effective immediately, which included removal of the scored judgements for use of resources assessments in local government bodies. It was still necessary, however, for auditors to complete sufficient use of resources assessment work to support their statutory duty to give a value for money conclusion. In practice, much of the use of resources assessment had already been completed at the time of the announcement, in order to meet the prior deadline of submitting indicative scores to the Audit Commission by 21 April 2010.
- 3.11 From 2010/11, we will give our statutory value for money conclusion based on two criteria specified by the Audit Commission that the organisation has proper arrangements in place for:
- securing financial resilience
 - challenging how it secures economy; efficiency and effectiveness
- 3.12 Taking into account our work on use of resources, and the outcomes highlighted at paragraphs 3.5 to 3.8 and the following paragraphs, we concluded adequate arrangements are in place to secure value for money and have provided an unqualified value for money conclusion for the year ended 31 March 2010.

Key findings

- 3.13 We have previously highlighted the Council has a comprehensive financial planning and delivery framework in place. The annual PIER process remains effective and has assisted in balancing the overall financial position in the year and over the medium term. There are clear linkages between the county-wide sustainable community strategy and the Council's priorities for partnership working; economic stability and efficiency.
- 3.14 The influence of the four Area Management Boards has widened in the year, with Cabinet Members and senior management working on each Board to improve the Council's collective understanding of changing community needs. The Council has successfully lobbied for additional investment in specific areas, such as enhanced services for older people and health services provided by the local Primary Care Trust based on its assessment of needs.
- 3.15 An important theme within the value for money assessment is the delivery of outcomes through partnerships. The Council continued to work successfully with the Hastings Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) throughout the year, achieving positive outcomes to reduce crime and minimise the impact of the recession across the Borough. The Council also involves the Hastings and Bexhill Economic Alliance Board in evaluating projects and measures it plans to invest in, ensuring the common ownership of outcomes. The approach assists stakeholders in understanding the impact of investment to achieve LSP objectives for securing employment and businesses growth; enhancing the voluntary sector and developing skills among the local population.

Natural Resources

- 3.16 We assessed the Council's approach to natural resources for the first time in 2009/10 and considered the extent to which Hastings:
- understands and can quantify its use of natural resources and can identify the main influencing factors

- manages performance to reduce its impact on the environment
 - manages the environmental risks it faces, working effectively with partners
- 3.17 The strategic approach to reducing the Council's carbon footprint is based on a policy framework which was updated in March 2010. The Council is monitoring progress towards the commitment given to achieve the '10:10' target for reducing carbon emissions. The Council achieved its target in the year to reduce its energy consumption by 10 per cent compared to the 2008/09 baseline set. With partners, the Council is overseeing the investment of £500,000 through the European-funded 'Future Cities' project to support climate change adaptation activities in Hastings. The Council continued to develop its 'Answers to the Carbon Economy' approach to support an application for grant funding in the year. While unsuccessful, the Council has used the application process to enhance its understanding of the local carbon economy and a further application is being submitted. If additional resources are secured, the Council expects to further reduce carbon emissions in its business parks.

Audit of grant claims and other Government returns

- 3.18 In February 2010, we reported the Council's arrangements for preparing grant claims and other returns to Government departments were effective. We will report the outcome of our audit of the 2010/11 claims to the Audit Committee in due course.

Emerging issues

Financial performance and outlook

- 3.19 In 2009/10 the net service expenditure budget amounted to £23.4 million. Financial performance was kept under close review throughout the year and the budget was revised downwards to £22.6 million with actual expenditure of £21.7 million incurred. The Council increased the level of the general reserve from £1.3 million to £2.7 million as at 31 March 2010. While Hastings aims to maintain the general reserve above its benchmark of £1 million, officers have highlighted the amount of reserves and other balances will need to be kept significantly above that level to maintain the financial resilience of the Council. The Chief Financial Officer considers the level of the general reserve to be sufficient in the light of the financial risks and uncertainties the Council is addressing.
- 3.20 The Council's capital programme in 2009/10 amounted to £7.6 million and expenditure of £6.4 million was actually incurred. Members received reports about the reasons for the slippage on certain projects and agreed expenditure should be carried forward to 2010/11. The capital programme is financed mainly through direct grant and other contributions provided by the Government. The revenue cost of financing the future programme, where the Council decides to finance investment using external borrowing, is identified in preparing the annual budget. The Council is keeping the affordability of the overall capital programme under close review.
- 3.21 The new Government's Emergency budget in June 2010 resulted in a reduction in the Council's area based and other grants amounting to £508,000. The Council updated the 2010/11 budget to ensure it remained balanced while maintaining revenue and capital reserves at their benchmark levels (a total of £3 million).
- 3.22 In the lead up to the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, published on 20 October 2010, the Council modelled various scenarios for Members to consider. The Council anticipated the 28 per cent reduction in revenue support grant over the four year period to 31 March 2015 announced by the Government. The latest medium term financial plan for the period 2011/12 to 2014/15 requires the Council to address a budget gap amounting to a total of £4.9 million in the period to 2014/15.
- 3.23 The medium term financial plan also highlights the risk to the Council's future income streams arising from the continuing economic downturn. In 2010/11, the Council expects to secure income of about £7 million from fees and charges and a further £3 million from the

rent of its industrial estates. Some income streams are expected to achieve budgeted amounts, such as fees for land charges and building control. However, as at the end of September 2010, income from investments is about £40,000 less than planned; income from development control services is £97,000 less than planned and income from off-street car parking is £45,000 less than planned. The PIER review process expects all service managers to review and maximise opportunities for securing income from fees and charges and has mitigated some, but not all of the risks, of falling income levels.

- 3.24 Action has been taken to review and update the Council's priorities in the light of available resources and priorities identified by local people and strategic partners. The initial outcome of the 'big conversation' consultation undertaken by the Council in October 2010 has been published and a detailed report is due to be considered by Members in December 2010. The consultation has highlighted the choices local people have made to retain and also to change Council priorities. The Council can therefore be sure its priorities are the right ones for the area. The outcome of the consultation is expected to inform the development of the 2011/12 budget and the updated medium term financial plan. With effective financial and service planning processes, underpinned by the corporate programme of 'PIER' reviews, the Council can be confident it has the necessary arrangements in place to address the financial challenges it has identified over the medium term.

Progress towards priorities

- 3.25 The Council continues to report progress towards the targets set in the Corporate Plan. As at 31 March 2010, the Council made progress across most priority areas. For instance, the further regeneration of the area has secured additional jobs and educational opportunities for local people. About 100 long-term unemployed people were placed in employment for six months using resources provided by the Government through the Future Jobs Fund. The investment of Area Based Grant in a range of special measures is enabling the Council to address the needs of hard to reach groups such as those 'Not in Education, Employment or Training'. The Council is measuring the impact of its work through the 'Brighton and East Sussex Together' partnership. In 2009/10, the Council worked with over 1,200 local people to place them in employment; training or education or to safeguard their jobs. The Council is therefore working effectively towards its priority for 'softening the impact of the economic downturn on the Town's economy'.
- 3.26 The Council achieved almost all of the targets set for reducing crime. Only one indicator (reducing serious violent crime) did not meet the target set though performance was in line with the previous year and was only just behind the expected level. The cleanliness of streets improved slightly in the year and the Council therefore made positive progress towards its objectives for a 'safe and clean town'.
- 3.27 Improved 'efficiency and customer service' is a priority the Council continues to work towards and there have been some good outcomes. Efficiency savings of over £1 million were secured in the year and the Council expects to achieve further efficiency savings of about £1.1 million in 2010/11. The amount of council tax and business rates collected in the year was ahead of target and the good performance has continued into 2010/11. The number of complaints about the Council reduced in the year and more customers attended the Council information centre.
- 3.28 However, the Council is aware some important targets were not met in the year and action has been taken to improve performance in processing:
- planning applications, where performance is behind target and has deteriorated compared to previous years
 - new claims and changes in entitlement to housing and council tax benefit.
- 3.29 Appendix 2 provides further details about those areas where the Council's performance was behind the targets set for the year.

Performance as at 30 September 2010

- 3.30 As at the end of September 2010, the Council has improved performance in processing planning applications and all targets were met. However, performance in processing benefit applications deteriorated, but has improved in October and November 2010 following the investment of additional resources to tackle the backlog of claims which had arisen. As at the end of November 2010, the number of days taken to process new claims (year to date) was 26.89 days (target 25 days) and to process changes in circumstances (year to date) was 13.95 days (target 12 days). The Council now needs to sustain the improved performance to achieve the targets set for the year, as shown below.

Indicator	31/3/2010	30/09/2010	31/10/2010	30/11/2010
Average time for processing new claims	Target: 25 days Actual: 27.1 days	Target: 25 days Actual: 30.6 days	Target: 25 days Actual: 17.1 days	Target: 25 days Actual: 15.49 days
Average time for processing notification of changes in circumstances	Target: 10 days Actual: 15.8 days	Target: 12 days Actual: 16.1 days	Target: 12 days Actual: 8.3 days	Target: 12 days Actual: 7.96 days

- 3.31 The number of new homes built and the availability of affordable homes has been adversely affected by the economic downturn. However, the Council has taken action with its partners, including developers, to improve performance. As at the end of September 2010, the number of new homes built has increased compared to the previous year. In addition, the number of affordable homes available (42 homes) is ahead of the target of 20 homes for the period April to September 2010.
- 3.32 Performance towards the Council's target for reducing household waste improved in the year and was only slightly behind target as at 31 March 2010. The level of household waste sent for recycling also improved in the year though remained behind the Council's target. As at the end of September 2010, performance has remained in line with that reported in 2009/10. The Council is keeping achievement of these targets under close review.
- 3.33 The abolition of the Government's 'Place Survey'; Local Area Agreement targets and national performance indicators has provided an opportunity for the Council to review the extent of performance information necessary to support achievement of the Corporate Plan. The Council has therefore reduced the number of targets set and further work is due to be completed as the corporate plan is updated in the light of the major consultation recently completed with local people. The performance management framework remains effective, and enables the Cabinet and scrutiny committees to review and challenge the Council's progress towards targets.

Current economic climate

- 3.34 The Council continues to respond to the effects of the economic downturn and to minimise the impact of the recession on people across the Borough. As highlighted at paragraph 3.25, the Council is continuing to report positive outcomes from the investment of substantial amounts of Area Based Grant in measures designed to assist people with the greatest need. Other outcomes over the last 12 months include the establishment of the Hastings Innovation Centre, and the further development of Town Centre office space and the 'Enviro 21' business park.
- 3.35 The Council's interventions have also assisted in reducing the number of people accepted as homeless from 68 people in 2008/09 to 46 people as at 31 March 2010. The number of households living in temporary accommodation reduced significantly from 80 households in 2008/09 to 37 households as at 31 March 2010. The Council must now sustain this performance in 2010/11 and beyond.

Treasury management

- 3.36 Following the collapse of the Icelandic banks in October 2008 the Audit Commission conducted a study to examine treasury management arrangements in local authorities. The resulting report *Risk and Return* was published in March 2009 and the Communities and Local Government Select Committee also made a series of recommendations in its report *Local Authority Investment* published in June 2009. In light of both of these documents, CIPFA revised the *Treasury Management in Public Services: Code of Practice (Second edition 2009)* which sets out the minimum level of arrangements to establish that would be acceptable.
- 3.37 The Council adopted CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management on 15 February 2010, updating the Treasury Management strategy to fully comply with guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Council reports performance against the associated Prudential Indicators throughout the year, with no breaches arising. The Treasury Management annual report was reviewed by the Cabinet in June 2010, and the strategy of reducing new borrowing. The Audit Committee reviews progress in achieving the Treasury Management strategy throughout the year and has noted the continuing low returns earned on investments and the medium term forecast for interest rates. The Council's Treasury Management arrangements remain effective and underpin the achievement of annual and medium term financial plans.

Members' allowances

- 3.38 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 include a requirement for councils to publish annually amounts paid to each Member for different types of allowances in each year. As in previous years and in accordance with the SORP, the Council has included in a note to the financial statements highlighting the total amount paid to Members during 2009/10, with more detailed disclosures in available on the Council's website. It is not a requirement of the Members' allowances regulations to disclose amounts paid to each member within the financial statements, however in light of the recent publicity surrounding MPs' expenses, the Council may wish to make such disclosures more transparent and consider including them in the financial statements in future.

International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)

- 3.39 The Audit Commission published a discussion paper in October 2010 to update its survey Local Governments preparedness for IFRS. Our overall assessment rated the Council's preparedness as 'green', on track for producing IFRS compliant accounts as at 31 March 2011. Action has been taken to review non-current assets for inclusion in the balance sheet and ensure all leases are reviewed in accordance with IFRIC 4 ('Determining Whether an Arrangement Contains a Lease'). The Council is aiming to produce restated 2009/10 accounts by 31 December 2010 for audit review.

Appendix 1: Reports issued in relation to the 2009/10 audit

Report	Date Issued
Audit plan	January 2010
Annual governance report	September 2010

Appendix 2: Progress towards the Council's 2009/10 priorities

Indicator	Performance 2009/10	Council comment
Environmental Health Services		
NI 191 Residual Household Waste (kg per household)	Target: 520kg Actual: 529kg	While slightly behind target, performance has improved compared to previous years.
NI 192 Percentage of household waste sent for recycling	Target: 30% Actual: 27.1%	While behind target, performance has improved compared to previous years.
NI 196 Improved Street cleanliness on a four point scale – 1 being best	Target: Level 2 Actual: Level 4	Securing level 4 means performance has improved slightly compared to previous year.
Regeneration and Community Services		
NI 015 Serious violent crime per 1,000 population	Target: 0.86 Actual: 0.89	The number of such crimes is relatively small at 77. Performance is in line with previous year.
Planning Service		
NI 157a Percentage of major industrial and commercial planning applications determined within 13 weeks	Target: 60% Actual: 54.5%	Performance is behind target and has deteriorated compared to previous years.
NI 157c Percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	Target: 85% Actual: 81.4%	Performance is behind target and has deteriorated compared to previous years.
NI 154 Number of new homes built	Target: 210 Homes Actual: 155 Homes	Performance is behind target and has deteriorated compared to previous years when the target was met.
Housing Services		
NI 187a Tackling Fuel Poverty – percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with low energy rating (Smaller is better)	Target: 11.5% Actual: 17.4%	Performance is behind target and based on a small survey of 287 people.
NI 187b Tackling Fuel Poverty – percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with high energy rating (Bigger is better)	Target: 18% Actual: 17.8%	Performance is only just behind target and based on a small survey of 287 people.
NI155 Number of affordable homes delivered (LAA)	Target: 91 Homes Actual: 43 Homes	Performance is behind target and has deteriorated compared to previous years.

Indicator	Performance 2009/10	Council comment
Financial Services		
NI 181 Time taken to process Housing benefit or Council Tax benefit new claims and change events	Target: 18 days Actual: 18.8 days	Performance is only just behind target. The data is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions.
L 391 Average time for processing new claims	Target: 25 days Actual: 27.1 days	Performance is behind target and deteriorated compared to previous years when the target was met. Improved performance reported in October and November 2010.
L 392 Average time for processing notification of changes in circumstances	Target: 10 days Actual: 15.8 days	Performance is behind target and deteriorated compared to previous years when the target was met. Improved performance reported in October and November 2010.