

# Hastings Borough Council

# Draft Corporate Plan 2007/8 – 2009/10

Part I	Corporate Strategy	(3-year direction and focus)
Part II	Annual Plan	(Plans and Targets for 2007 -08)
Part III	Annual Report	(Retrospective on performance in 2006-07 and 3-year performance targets, published by 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2007)

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# **Part I Corporate Strategy 2007/08 – 2009/10**

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 About this Plan**

This Corporate Plan is a statement of Hastings Borough Council's strategic direction over the next three years to the end of 2009/10. It sets out how we will ensure that we successfully address our priorities, meet the needs of our communities, and ensure we have a strong dedicated and motivated workforce to deliver the long-term goals of the Community Strategy.

The Corporate Plan includes:

- The national, regional and local issues that impact on our strategic planning and resource allocation
- The financial context within which we are operating and our strategy to ensure we have sufficient financial resources to maintain good standards of service delivery and to respond to local priorities.
- Links to other key strategies and plans that inform and guide our work
- Corporate and Service goals covering a 3-year time horizon, as well as more detailed performance targets and milestones for 2007/08.

### **1.2 Statement of Responsibility**

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the Corporate Plan and for the information and assessments set out within it and the assumptions and estimates on which they are based. The Council is also responsible for installing appropriate performance management and internal control systems from which the information and assessments in the Corporate Plan have been derived. The Council is satisfied that the information and assessments included in the plan are in all material aspects accurate and complete and that the plan is realistic and achievable.

### **1.3 The Move Towards 3-Year Planning**

Our move towards a three-year strategic planning cycle has been supported by changes to the financial and performance framework within which Local Government now operates, i.e.

- Government financial settlement – this is now done on a 3 yearly cycle
- Community Strategy milestones – are measured on a three yearly cycle
- Best Value Performance Indicators – we are required to set 3 year targets
- Local Area Agreements (LAA) targets – take a 3-year timescale

The move from annual to 3-year planning provides stability to plan into future, and identifies milestone actions that need to be taken to address issues in the medium term. This is an evolving process and will be embedded and improved during 2007/08. The Corporate Plan is a living document that provides an organisational steer – it will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes and new priorities.

## **2. National and Regional Context**

2.1 The Government believes the desire to increase prosperity and quality of life for the nation depends on the ability to improve the economic performance of the nation's Cities, City Regions and other significant urban areas.

2.2 The importance of the urban area centred on Hastings as a contributor to the improvement of the Nation's and Region's prosperity has been recognised. Hastings/Bexhill is 1 of the 56 Primary Urban Areas in England identified recently by Central Government. It is also identified as a Regional Hub in the recently published South East Regional Economic Strategy, and in the draft spatial strategy for the South East Region (the SE Plan).

### **Local Government White Paper**

2.3 The Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities was published in October 2006. This set out the Government's vision and future direction for Local Government as:

*“revitalised local authorities, working with their partners, to reshape public services around the citizens and communities that use them.”*

2.4 Through work to deliver the Hastings and St Leonard's Community Strategy, the Neighbourhood Renewal Agenda and the Local Area Agreement, Hastings Council and its partners have already made considerable progress in re-shaping public services and responding to priorities of local communities. There is still further work to be undertaken and further embedding of Area Co-ordination is the next stage of this process.

2.5 We will respond to many of the specific proposals in the White Paper during the life of this Plan, as legislation is enacted, new duties and powers are clarified, and further guidance issued.

### **Efficiency and the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007**

2.6 The Local Government White paper welcomed the significant progress made by Councils in improving local services but acknowledged that rising public expectations and the challenging financial climate require that councils continue to drive forward the transformation of local services.

2.7 The Comprehensive Spending Review to be published in 2007, is expected to identify an increase in the annual efficiency target councils are required to achieve, and put a greater emphasis on cashable efficiencies and Value for Money. The Council has successfully achieved delivery of its efficiency targets to date, however identifying further cashable efficiency gains into the

future will be a challenge that we will address at the same time as meeting our Financial Strategy (see section 4.)

2.8 The year on year increases in central government investment in public services is also expected to slow down significantly. Therefore, growth to support additional activities at a local level will have to be achieved in large measure from Gershon-type efficiency savings.

2.8 In order to meet these targets, Councils will be encouraged to undertake greater collaboration with others to deliver services. Hastings Council has a good track record of joint working with other authorities and is already looking at delivering shared services in a number of areas in order to provide greater efficiency and resilience.

### **3 Local Context**

#### **Community Strategy**

3.1 The difficulties faced by our town have been recognised, and since 2001 we have been the focus of significant external investment. We have been addressing those areas requiring improvement and will continue to work with our partners on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to tackle the social, physical and economic issues that inhibit the long-term prosperity of our town.

3.2 The LSP's vision to 2013 for regeneration, agreed with local people and our partners is:

*"The renaissance of Hastings through social, economic, cultural and environmental regeneration"*

3.3 The Community Strategy is the overarching 10 year strategy agreed in 2003, for improving the quality of life of all people living in the town and focuses on 21 key targets. The Strategy is monitored by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), who set key milestones to review progress in 2005, 2008 and 2013.

3.4 The mission of the LSP through implementing the Hastings and St Leonards Community Strategy is:

*"To build on the town's strong community spirit, culture, diverse population and extraordinary natural environment to create a safer, healthier more sustainable and more prosperous place with lasting opportunities for everybody."*

3.5 To maintain a focus on what we are aiming to achieve, the Community Strategy and Council Priorities are reflected in what staff do in their day-to-day jobs. We translate these priorities into annual service delivery plans and targets. Progress and performance is then monitored through quarterly review meetings and the staff appraisal process.



#### **Local Area Agreement**

3.6 The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement between East Sussex County Council on behalf of service providers and central government. It covers the period from 1 April 2006 until 31 March 2009. The LAA identifies

priorities for improvement in East Sussex and how these priorities will be tackled in partnership with other organisations in the county.

3.7 The LAA priorities have been developed from shared priorities identified in the Hastings Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, and those in the community strategies of the other East Sussex Councils and business plans of other partner agencies.

The LAA is structured around four key services areas.

- Children and young people – aims to improve young people’s chances in life. It includes targets for reducing bullying, teenage pregnancy and days lost through exclusion from school.
- Safer and stronger communities – aims to increase residents’ engagement in their local communities. It includes targets for reducing offending, increasing home safety, reducing homelessness and promoting volunteering.
- Healthier communities and older people – aims to reduce health inequalities and improve services for older people. It includes targets for reducing early mortality rates, increasing the response and quality of community care and improving support for carers.
- Economic development and enterprise – aims to increase the prosperity of residents and communities. It includes targets for increasing employee skills and improving economic performance in deprived parts of East Sussex

3.8 In addition Hastings has it’s own ‘Mini-LAA’, this is designed to achieve a faster rate of improvement in the most deprived areas than the Borough average.

3.9 The LAA is reviewed annually to ensure that these priorities are still current and to assess our progress against our targets.

### **Impacts on the Corporate Plan**

3.9 A key driver for the Council’s activities remains to contribute to achieving the aspirations in the Community Strategy for benefit of local people. However, the financial climate within which we are operating has altered significantly. In setting out the principles that underpin the Corporate Plan it is important to note the context and parameters for the options and decisions open to the Council in setting its work plans and budget up to 2010:

- For every £1 of Council Tax paid – only 15p goes to the Borough Council
- Every additional 1% of Council Tax levied by the Borough Council yields around £60,000
- Government will continue to expect local government to make at least 2.5% efficiency gains per annum

- The Council has been using its reserves (savings) in recent years to support new activities, these reserves are now reduced and are no longer available to use in this way (see 4. Finance Context for details)
- Uncertainty exists around continuation of several external-funding streams (see 3.6)
- We face a number of significant financial pressures and face future funding shortfalls (see 4. Finance Context for details)

### **Principles and priorities underpinning the Corporate Plan**

3.10 The following principles and priorities were the subject of consultation with the Citizens' Panel and Members in December 2006 and achieved high levels of support. These were subsequently applied to the development of the Corporate Plan and its associated budget.

- Continue our primary focus on the regeneration of Hastings and St Leonards
- Prioritise activities that contribute to improving the town's 5 E's
  - § Economy
  - § Education
  - § Employment
  - § Environment (including Housing)
  - § Enjoyment
- Provide good quality, customer focussed cost effective services
- Focus on affordability and recognise that our financial position means we have to make every penny count.
- Ensure our expenditure is in line with income and we focus on our 'core' activities and work with others to bring in external funds for anything extra.
- Recognise that we may not be able to deliver as wide a range of services in future
- Increase joint-working with local authority partners and others to share resources, improve the quality, resilience and cost efficiency of our services
- Deliver services in the most efficient, effective and equitable way either in-house or by others in the private or voluntary sector.
- Make savings by not funding activities which can be funded from elsewhere
- Keep Hastings Borough Council's Council Tax increase as low as possible whilst providing the services the town needs.
- Recognise that the Council cannot be a funder of last resort when funding from other sources is reduced or ends



### **Partnership working**

3.11 Although we are a borough council, we face many issues of the same complexity as metropolitan councils who have far greater resources. Partnerships are a powerful way of meeting these challenges and accessing the resources we need to revitalise our town. We have embraced this way of working and play an active role in a number of significant local partnerships. We are committed to working with our partners in the Local Strategic Partnership (see 3.1 above) and the Hastings & Bexhill Task Force. The Task Force is charged with the realisation of the Five Point Plan for physical regeneration of the area.

#### **4. Financial Context**

4.1 Details of the Council's Financial Strategy for 2007/08 to 2009/10 are set out in detail in the budget papers, and Appendix 1.

4.2 The Council's Financial Strategy identifies the pressures facing the organisation and requires us to take further steps to reduce net expenditure. These pressures include:

- Revenue Budget Forward Plan - As expected, the forward plan shows future year revenue shortfalls of £550,000 in 2008-09 increasing to £1.5m in 2009-10.
- Use of Reserves to support activities - Through the use of reserves we have been able to support a programme of activity that is now not sustainable and we need to reduce net expenditure to balance the budget. The level of reserves has now reduced and the need to maintain a reasonable level to meet unexpected events is imperative.
- Capital Programme - The Capital Programme is partly funded by capital receipts. The ability to generate new receipts is diminishing swiftly and this adversely affects the Council's ability to support future capital investment. In addition the cost of the Capital Programme now has significantly greater consequences on the revenue budget i.e. for every £1m of the Capital Programme spent there is a revenue cost of £90k. The Council will therefore need to reduce the amount of local funds used to support the Programme, and be more imaginative about how we provide and maintain the infrastructure and assets the town needs.
- Time limited external funding - The Council has been the recipient of large amounts of external funding to support our activities. Many of these funding streams are time limited, and a considerable number of these draw to a close over the life of this Plan. Although our position in the national deprivation statistics has improved, there is still further work required to narrow the gap between the quality of life in Hastings and the rest of the SE of England. It is presently unclear what, if any, successor funding will be available to support these activities. The Forward Plan assumes that a cessation of grant will result in a cessation or reduction of service. The challenge for the Council will be to identify the priority of the services currently financed by specific grant and if thought desirable to continue with the service, how best to finance it.

4.3 To achieve the reduction in expenditure required we will build upon our successful Priorities, Income and Expenditure reviews (PIER) and undertake a more fundamental review in 2007/08. The review will identify the core services and activities the Council is to provide, and seek alternative sources of funding for those that fall outside of this category.

## **5. Links to other related Strategies**

- Asset Management Plan – to follow
- Risk – see Appendix 2

## **6. Services Context**

6.1 As identified in section 4, in order to address the Council's medium term financial position and to achieve our priority of delivering good quality core services, we need to prioritise our activities and services. To inform this activity we need to define 'core' activities and services. We have begun this process by asking the Citizens' Panel to give us their views on which services they consider to be core, which are most in need of improving, and which we should no longer be providing. This information will be used to support the next PIER reviews that will take place in early 2007/08.

6.2 In developing our service delivery plans we will pay particular and increasing attention to priorities, with matching resources suitably focused, and strive to be increasingly effective in focusing on what the Council must do well, and in not pursuing every initiative.

## **7. 3-year Goals**

### **Corporate Goals**

- Contribute to achieving the Community Strategy 21 Key Targets - milestones will be measured in 2008/09
- Contribute to achieving Local Area Agreement targets:
  - In Outcome 23 – targets to narrow the gap between Hastings and the rest of East Sussex
  - Contribute to targets across the 4 blocks (see 3.2)
- Meet Best Value Performance Indicator targets – listed in Part III - Annual Report
- Use of Resources Score – Consolidate on our score from the annual assessment of how well we manage our resources and offer Value for Money
- Annual Efficiency Statements – identify cash and efficiency savings as per Government Targets, currently 2.5% per annum
- Achieve good satisfaction ratings for our services
- Secure external funding for non-core services where possible.

### **Services and Resources Goals**

#### **A. Front-line Service Delivery**

1. Deliver good quality, cost effective customer focused front-line services with high levels of customer satisfaction.
2. Ensure all customers receive the same high quality, non-discriminatory service wherever, whenever and however they access the Council.
3. Maintain and improve where necessary, effective day-to-day delivery of core services.

#### **B. Economic Regeneration and Inclusion**

1. Influence the development of the South East Plan so that the special circumstances of Hastings are recognised at regional level
2. Develop Hastings/Bexhill as an Economic Hub at sub regional level, recognising its importance as an economic driver for the wider area
3. Market Hastings as an attractive place for people to live, work and visit and as a leisure and tourist destination
4. With partners, develop and deliver economic inclusion and development activity which will increase employment opportunities and the employability of local people
5. Maximise the Council's income through letting of industrial and commercial property and achievement of the land disposal programme
6. Develop with partners vocational training which meets the needs of both employers and the potential of local residents

**C. Physical Regeneration**

1. Ensure that the planned large-scale regeneration projects are realised at the earliest opportunity for the benefit of the local community through work with partners in the Hastings and Bexhill Task Force
2. Improve the seafront infrastructure
3. Support the renaissance of Central St Leonards through delivery of the Renewal Strategy programme.
4. Improve the physical appearance and image of the town.
5. Provide an efficient and effective planning service that meets or exceeds Government targets on performance
6. Develop a long-term parking strategy that supports regeneration developments
7. Develop the Council's capacity to fulfil its strategic housing role and achieve a better understanding of the Hastings Housing Market
8. Work with partners to ensure the supply of affordable housing meets targets
9. Tackle poor quality private housing conditions and empty homes

**D. Social Regeneration and Quality of Life**

1. Reduce deprivation and narrow the gap between quality of life in Hastings and the rest of SE England
2. Deliver the Safer Hastings Strategy in partnership with the Safer Hastings Partnership focussing on supporting families to help address anti-social behaviour and addressing the rise in public place violent crime.
3. Strengthen community engagement by working with partners to embed Area Coordination, and by administering local, national and European elections.
4. Prevent and reduce homelessness and provide greater choice for people to resolve their housing problems through the 'Housing Options Approach'
5. Protect the health and safety of local people and the environment, and reduce the impact of pollution by effective enforcement of
6. Rationalise and improve effectiveness of the front line enforcement services to meet challenges of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, ensuring a sustainable service for the future.
7. Support development of sustainable and harmonious communities, with effective and inclusive participation.
8. Provide opportunities for people of all ages to become more active and take part in leisure, sport, play and cultural activities
9. Protect the best of our natural environment and provide everyone with access to well-maintained open space including parks, beaches, local nature reserves and play areas
10. Develop a Local Development Framework for Hastings by engaging the local community and stakeholders in its production to ensure the policies and proposals properly reflect Borough wide needs and aspirations.
11. Work with partners to maintain plans to respond to civil emergencies.
12. Work closely with East Sussex County Council on highway and traffic management, promoting public transport and effective parking enforcement.

### **E. Organisational Development**

1. Demonstrate the Council is efficient, effective, offers value for money and responds to local and national priorities.
2. Inform corporate decision-making with intelligence gained from effective consultation, performance management, national and local policies, research and best practice.
3. Further enhance the Council's Scrutiny function.
4. Make substantial improvements to our effectiveness and efficiency by streamlining administrative and financial processes and maximising benefits from new technology.
5. Ensure we are an Equal Opportunities employer who recruits and retains high calibre staff and works for continuous improvement in their skills, knowledge and competencies.
6. Achieve the aims of the Council's Office Accommodation Strategy.
7. Ensure all projects and high-risk activities use best practice project management techniques and methodology to deliver projects to time, budget, and agreed specifications.
8. Further improve Financial Management Information
9. Identify risks in service delivery, budgets, performance and projects, and after thorough assessment, take actions to reduce, mitigate, transfer or accept these risks.

### **F. Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability**

1. Explore and take-up opportunities for collaboration with others to improve the cost effectiveness quality and/or resilience of services
2. Consolidate and improve on our good organisational performance (as externally assessed).
3. Obtain value for money from the goods and services we procure and commission in terms of quality, cost and meeting Council objectives.
4. Maximise income generation and collection and attract external funding to support Council priorities
5. Maintain a robust and sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy
6. Improve pro-active maintenance of Council owned property.
7. Further reduce the Council's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and footprint.
8. Improve recycling performance and identify sustainable arrangements for dealing with recyclates.
9. Ensure the Council operates legally taking due regard of timely legal advice

In order to achieve these 3-year goals we have set out targets and milestones for the next and subsequent years within Service Delivery Plans. The Council's Annual Plan sets out targets for 2007/08 and details some of the some of the activities that will be undertaken towards meeting our 3-year goals. These are monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee quarterly and are the means by which the Council is publicly held to account.

## **Financial Strategy**

The Council is a relatively high spending authority and its annual spending is only sustainable by the use of reserves built from savings in previous years. Once these reserves have been used, annual spending will need to be reduced in real terms.

We need to respond to this and other anticipated changes in our resource base. Therefore we will continue our wide-ranging review of spending priorities, costs and income (PIER) to ~~work towards~~ **achieve** a balanced budget in future years. We will ensure that the use of external funds are maximised, but recognise that some existing external finance is time limited and that this adds further to our future financial challenges. We will continue to promote income-generating initiatives, including the use of powers to trade as appropriate.

The Council will continue to need to find money to support new initiatives that reflect stakeholder priorities. These can only be financed from external sources, by re-focusing existing budgets and/or by generating additional income.

We will aim to reduce Council expenditure or increase income to a level that is sustainable in the medium term and which is focused on our priorities.

The Council seeks to maximise investment initiatives by gaining external finance from the Government and our other partners to support the Capital Programme. The revenue consequences of investment expenditure are taken into account in our forward revenue expenditure planning and represent a substantial addition to future revenue expenditure.

### **Revenue Budget Forward Plan**

The Council has a Revenue Budget Forward Plan that sets out the main likely variations, including inflation assumptions, in future revenue budgets up to 31 March 2010. An excess of expenditure over assumed income is identified of £550,000 in 2008-09 rising to £1.5m in 2009-10. Clearly this position must be addressed and will be an early corporate priority in 2007.

Further information is included in the 2007/08 Budget Report and the detailed Forward Plan that is an appendix to that report. The most significant factor driving the increase is the revenue financing costs of the Council's Capital Programme.

## Revenue Expenditure

The allocation of resources to services is:

	Last Year Spend £'m	Last Year Income £'m	This Year Spend £'m	This year Income £'m
Communications & Organisational Development	6.1	(2.6)	6.4	(2.7)
Environment & Safety	12.8	(8.2)	12.7	(8.0)
Housing, Communities & Neighbourhoods	7.8	(5.1)	8.1	(5.5)
Leisure & Cultural Development	7.9	(3.7)	7.8	(3.7)
Central Services (incl. Finance)	55.0	(54.1)	56.3	(55.5)
Regeneration & Planning	8.1	(6.3)	7.8	(5.8)
<b>Net Service Expenditure</b>	<b>17.7</b>		<b>17.9</b>	
<b>Net Capital Financing and Interest Charges</b>	<b>(0.6)</b>		<b>(0.3)</b>	
<b>Reserves, Contingency and Other Items</b>	<b>(1.5)</b>		<b>(1.4)</b>	
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>15.6</b>		<b>16.2</b>	

This year's net revenue expenditure is supported by a Council Tax increase of 3.5% to ensure that we continue to develop and invest in our services, and encourage others, to meet the needs of our residents. This year's net expenditure is funded by:

	£'m
Government Grant	9.9
Local Council Tax	6.3
	<b>16.2</b>

The budget has been framed to resource the priorities and initiatives set out elsewhere in this Corporate Plan.

## Investment Expenditure

In formulating the investment programme, reference has been made to the following scheme criteria:

- (a) is of a major social, physical or economic regeneration nature
- (b) meets the objective of sustainable development
- (c) levers in other sources of finance such as partnership/lottery funding, or provide a financial return to the Council;



(d) does not incur ongoing revenue costs (in addition to financing costs) or reduces ongoing revenue costs to assist the revenue budget.

Over the three years to 31st March 2010 the Council plans to invest £32m in Hastings & St Leonards. This relates to:

	£'m
Communications & Organisational Development	0.2
Environment & Safety	1.4
Housing, Communities & Neighbourhoods	8.4
Leisure & Cultural Development	14.8
Central Services (incl. Finance)	0.8
Regeneration & Planning	6.6
	32.2

This investment expenditure is the maximum affordable and is heavily dependent on external funding sources, including over £9m Government grant to support planned Coast Protection Schemes.

### **Risk Assessment and Risk Mapping**

Whenever we make a commitment to a course of action, there may be opportunities and rewards but there is also an inherent risk of failure. We have recognised the importance of identifying potential risks, assessing their potential impact and agreeing ways of dealing with them.

We have adopted a Risk Management Framework to give the Council a formal process for evaluating and managing risk. This Framework and a risk mapping methodology are the means we will use to identify the key risks to the Council, how they have been assessed and how they are being managed and monitored.

We use this Framework to build a risk map for the commitments we make in our Service Delivery Plans. The risk map summarises all the categories of risk, such as, for example, the impact of change on staff or the risk of failure of IT systems, and shows how great an impact failure would have on our plans and how likely it is that failure will occur.

The Risk Map, which is based upon an assessment by service managers, identifies the principal corporate level risks as:

- The risk to the Council's reputation if it fails to deliver in any of its statutory obligations or publicised priorities
- The risk that services may not be able to cope with the pace or scale of change
- Partnership risks
- Project risks

We will address the risk of failure through the planning and performance management framework by carefully prioritising delivery to ensure that the most important commitments are fully resourced. We will address the negative impact of change through our organisational development programme with particular emphasis on guidance for managing and working within a changing environment.

Similarly, areas of medium and low risk are carefully addressed through the risk management process.

We have a Project Management Methodology in place and this includes Risk Assessment.

We will review the risk assessments whenever significant changes are made in our service delivery commitments.

We regularly review our Risk Framework for possible improvement and compliance with Best Practice