

**Agenda Item:**

**Report to:** Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007

**Report from:** The Best Value Review Team

**Title of report:** **BEST VALUE REVIEW OF COUNCIL ASSET & PUBLIC REALM MAINTENANCE**

**Purpose of report:** To provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the findings and recommendations of the Best Value Review of Council Asset & Public Realm Maintenance

**Recommendations:**

- 1. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee are invited to discuss the report**
- 2. The report is recommended to Cabinet and Full Council**
- 3. That the attached Action Plan is adopted and implemented**

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## 1. Review Team Membership

1.1. Councillor Keith Bing was appointed to chair the Council Asset & Public Realm Maintenance Best Value Review at the inaugural meeting of 21 March 2007.

1.2. The *Best Value Review team* membership is as follows:-

- Keith Bing                      Councillor (chair)
- Paul Silverson                Councillor
- Paul Smith                     Councillor
- Adrian Rogerson            Head of Projects
- Virginia Gilbert             Head of Resort Services & Amenities
- Mel Wentworth              PA to Corporate Director (Admin Support)
- Katrina Strong                Scrutiny and Development Officer

1.3. Supported by the *Public Realm working group* whose membership is as follows:-

- Adrian Rogerson            Head of Projects (chair)
- Virginia Gilbert             Head of Resort Services & Amenities
- Mark Bourne                 Head of Information Technology
- Rasoul Shahilow            Head of Parking & Highways
- Dave Froude                 Chief Accountant
- Derek Ireland                Highways Manager
- Pranesh Datta                Central St Leonards Neighbourhood Manager
- Nick Sangster                Resort Services Manager
- Peter Mead                    Amenities Manager
- Jane Stephen                Conservation officer
- Michael Hambridge        Public Art Officer
- Mel Weir                      Waste Projects Officer
- Paul Green                    Building Surveyor
- Adelma Daniel                Projects Division (Admin Support)

## 2. Best Value Review Objectives

2.1. To establish the most effective management arrangements within the Council for the proactive maintenance of the public realm, and the Council's assets and property portfolio.

2.2. To examine how these arrangements might:-

- Yield actual & efficiency savings by reducing duplication
- Offer more effective management and working practices giving enhanced performance and measurable efficiency gains

2.3. It was agreed that the review will seek to establish:-

- The current arrangements for the maintenance of the Council's public realm, buildings and assets and the current budget provision/s
- How these arrangements link with ESCC responsibilities for the maintenance of the public realm
- The systems and procedures required to efficiently maintain the Council's public realm, buildings and assets
- How these services and budgets are best managed and co-ordinated in the future

- How the “back room” support services might be most efficiently delivered
- Whether the direct employment of maintenance staff is an effective and sustainable method of addressing small scale works

2.4. The Best Value Review team will produce an action plan to enable the above objectives to be delivered in a reasonable time period and identify the resources needed to deliver the required changes and the associated task priorities.

### 3. Definitions

3.1. This best value review is potentially far reaching in scope and it is therefore necessary to define explicitly what it includes and be equally clear about what it does not.

3.2. This review **includes** the Council Asset & Public Realm Management; the definitions are as follows:-

- **Public Realm Management** is ‘The day-to-day management of those assets contained within the spaces between the cartilage of buildings owned and/or managed by various parties that the general public have physical access to’
- **Asset Management** is ‘The day-to-day management of Council’s commercial property portfolio, including factory units, that do not generally have public access’

3.3. This review **does not include** Facilities Management; the definition being:-

- **Facilities Management** is ‘The day-to-day management of the Council’s buildings to maintain their operation primarily for the benefit of Council employees and limited public access in defined areas’

### 4. Scope of the Review

4.1. The scope of this review encompasses a number of service areas within the authority and includes how they are resourced, organised, funded and what IT support or systems are required to deliver the services in question. The review will also include any contracts already in place providing some or all of these services as follows:

Parking	Carpark maintenance, amenity lighting, CCTV
Highways	Signing and lining, enhanced maintenance and surfacing in town centre areas
Waste Management	Public conveniences, litter and dog bins, signage and street cleansing
Projects	Implementation of various capital schemes and their future maintenance
Amenities	Benches, planters, railings / bollards, sports pavilions and other leisure buildings, street furniture, buildings, amenity & decorative lighting plus grass verge maintenance, grounds maintenance, amenity and decorative lighting.
Resorts	Benches, planters, railings / bollards, minor works supervision, street furniture and buildings.
Estates	Factory maintenance and leasing, repairs and renewals

	programme, minor works contract, land ownership and disposals programme.
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4.2. Although the definition of Asset Maintenance includes the Council's factory units they have NOT been included in the scope of this review having been the subject of a previous Building Maintenance Best Value Review in August 2000.

## 5. Background and Progress to date

5.1. When this Best Value Review was started in March 2007, the areas of responsibility contained in the Scope of the Review were scattered across 6 services; following the management restructure this is now 4 services as follows:

Parking & Highways	Carpark maintenance, signing and lining, amenity lighting, enhanced maintenance and surfacing in town centre areas
Waste Management	Public conveniences, litter and dog bins, signage and street cleansing
Projects	Implementation of various capital schemes and their future maintenance
Amenities & Resort Services	Benches, planters, railings / bollards, sports pavilions and other leisure buildings, minor works supervision, Repairs and Renewals programme, seafront promenade, railings, street furniture, shelters, buildings, amenity and decorative lighting plus grass verge maintenance and grounds maintenance.

5.2. The restructure also moved 3 of those services together under the Environmental Services directorate ensuring much closer coordination and management of resources, budgets and responsibilities in July 2007.

5.3. There are a number of other threads of work whose results materially affect this review such as:

- Best Value Review of Parks and Open Spaces – August 2000
- Citizen Panel surveys – Parks and Open Spaces August 2000 and March 2005
- Institute of Public Finance study – Sept 2007 covering street cleansing, open spaces, overall revenue spend, overall external funding vs council tax costs
- Work to date from the HBC Public Realm Officers working group since January 2006
- Asset Management Plan December 2006 – good rating
- Value for Money audit December 2006 – good rating

## 6. Methodology

- 6.1. As part of producing a Best Value Review local authorities are required to consider 4 criteria, these are known as the 4 Cs; compare, consult, challenge and compete. The areas of challenge, compare and consult will lead to decisions about what services will be provided and *how* they will be provided, whereas compete opens up the question of who will provide the service in future.
- 6.2. The review team used the HBC Best Value Manual (April 2001) for the definition of the 4 criteria that have been included in the 4 key findings sections of this report.
- 6.3. Overall the Best Value Review team needs to consider 7 options for future service delivery dependant on the analysis of the available evidence as follows:-
  - Cessation of the service
  - Creation of a public-private partnership
  - Transfer to another provider, or externalisation with no in-house bid
  - Market testing of all, or part of the service
  - Restructuring or repositioning in-house provision
  - Renegotiating existing contracts
  - Joint commissioning or delivery

## **7. Key findings – Compare**

- 7.1. The Best Value Review Manual states - Compare ourselves with other Councils and organisations to see how we compare with them both in terms of cost and quality; see how others provide the service and to what standard. Learn from the best and try to match their performance.
- 7.2. Hastings landscape is both urban and coastal in nature. It benefits from a large amount of public open spaces of varying quality; all of which imply a fairly high maintenance spend per capita in order just to maintain what we already have. To put this into context, the Best Value Review of Open Spaces in 2000 identified that Hastings had 9.3 acres of open space against the National Playing Fields Association's "six acre standard": 6 acres per 1000 population. Table 2 in appendix C compares the cost per capita as being high when compared to other District Authorities, whilst the cost per hectare is quite low.
- 7.3. A comparison with other authorities in the area of public realm maintenance is very challenging as every authority is unique in its particular mix of buildings, open spaces, streetscape and topography linked to the nature of the area being a rural, urban and/or coastal landscape. An effective way of gauging and indeed comparing performance between authorities is by using satisfaction surveys.

### **Satisfaction Surveys**

- 7.4. The Audit Commission carries out a BVPI General Survey every 3 years of all local authorities in England. Some questions in the survey relate directly to and provide measurement for BVPIs whilst others measure general satisfaction.
  - Parks and Open Spaces - BV119e: 88% satisfied with parks and open spaces. This is the highest within our Audit Commission family and above the all district

average of 73.1%. Satisfaction with parks and open spaces at 88% is higher than that of 2003 at 83% and 2000 at 71%; amongst *users* of parks and open spaces, 90% are satisfied. 42% of respondents providing a response feel that parks and open spaces have stayed the same over the last three years, 55% feel they have improved whilst only 3% feel they have deteriorated.

- Quality of Life - Overall, around two-thirds of respondents express agreement (a great deal/to some extent) that the council is working to make the area cleaner and greener at 74% and is making the local area a better place to live also at 74%.

- 7.5. The Institute of Public Finance study commissioned to inform the 2007-2008 PIER process found that Hastings' total service expenditure weighted by the resident population is estimated to be the highest of all 238 non-metropolitan district councils in England for 2007-2008 at £328.93 per head. However, this is affected by significant external funding to leave a local council tax of £216.06 per Band 'D' property that compares to our Audit neighbours and all district averages of £173.42 and £152.57 respectively. It represents the 15<sup>th</sup> highest council tax of all district councils.
- 7.6. Expenditure is above average for open spaces at £18.86 per head as compared to group averages of £13.76 within our Audit Commission family and £9.98 among all district councils. The report also showed that total actual capital expenditure for Hastings was £7.5m or £89 per head of population. This is lower than both our Audit Commission family average of £132 per head and the all district average of £94 per head. Hastings' capital expenditure for 2005-06 is the 101<sup>st</sup> highest of all 238 district councils but is skewed by the fact we no longer have council housing.
- 7.7. Expenditure on Street Cleansing at £15.20 per head is higher than the neighbour average at £12.15 and the all district average of £9.39. This figure may be affected by the fully urban nature of Hastings and the fact that we clean all roads within the Borough as we have no trunk roads (which would be cleaned by the Highways Authority).

## **8. Key findings – Consult**

- 8.1. The Best Value Review Manual states - Consult with local people and stakeholders to get their views. Consultation will cover users and non-users of the service, Councillors, staff and their representatives, other partners and organisations.
- 8.2. HBC regularly carry out Citizens Panel surveys across the town; surveys about our Parks & Open Spaces performance were undertaken in both August 2000 and March 2005.
- 8.3. Satisfaction levels, tested through the Council's Citizens' Panels have consistently demonstrated Parks and Open Spaces as one of the highest rated services that we provide.
- 8.4. We have also consulted with a number of other authorities similar to ourselves regarding the public realm by sending out a Public Realm Asset Maintenance Survey in July 2007 to Rother District Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Shepway District Council and Thanet District Council. Replies were

received from Rother, Eastbourne and Great Yarmouth. The responses are summarised in Appendix D.

- 8.5. The responses illustrate that Authorities vary in terms of how their public realm is managed, with no fixed pattern. Great Yarmouth take a Facilities management approach, where all their assets are maintained centrally. Eastbourne assigns responsibility for aspects of the public realm to individual departments. Rother mixes both methods depending of type of asset. Of all the responses no authorities have been able to adopt a preventative maintenance approach and all say they have to prioritise maintenance such that some assets are maintained in a less favourable condition.
- 8.6. Great Yarmouth delivers its public realm through a Public Partnership arrangement with Norfolk County Services; Eastbourne works entirely through external contractors. Rother District Council has procured the majority of their services through external contractors, although Car Parks, Town Centre furniture and their seafront and promenade are maintained in house. Some District Authorities do have Highway management agreements, all appear to fund enhancements to Highway functions in order to improve their public realm.

## **9. Key findings – Challenge**

- 9.1. The Best Value Review Manual states - Challenge the service; firstly ask why we provide the service and after comparing and consulting, identify if there are better ways to deliver the service.
- 9.2. HBC is responsible for the maintenance of a considerable number of Public Realm assets including open spaces in various parks and gardens, play areas, town centre pedestrianised areas, seafront structures and public buildings to name but a few.

### **HBC Public Realm Working Group**

- 9.3. The HBC Public Realm working group has supported the Best Value Review team in delivering this review. The working group originally arose out of the officer cross-cutting initiatives in spring 2006 and officers first met in July 2006. However officer meetings specifically concerned with improving capital project delivery, clarifying internal asset ownership, maintenance planning and delivery had been successfully running since at least January 2006.
- 9.4. A Project Initiation Document (PID) was agreed for the officer working group in August 2006 and was then later used as the basis for the PID adopted by the Best Value Review team in March 2007. The results of this work are clearly presented in the Improvement Plan contained in Appendix B of this report and the PID is contained in Appendix E.

## **10. Key findings – Compete**

- 10.1. The Best Value Review Manual states - Compete to see if the service can be provided better or more cheaply by changing the way we do it or by getting someone else to do it, maybe by a contractor or another body or in partnership with others. Opportunities for partnerships with other public bodies, businesses or voluntary organisations are also to be investigated.

### **Review of Contractual Arrangements**

- 10.2. A considerable amount of our existing activity is already the subject of 4 major maintenance contracts that have already been competitively tendered to ensure value for money considerations have been met.
- 10.3. With the two largest contracts, Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing, we have moved away from traditional contract terms where we would have specified precise routines of work – cutting grass a specific number of times or cleaning a street on specific days. Instead, we specify a level of performance we expect a contractor to meet – grass not exceeding a certain height or streets meeting a certain standard of cleanliness. We then leave it to the contractor to use their expertise to best organise the work. This form of contract offers better value for money than insisting on rigid schedules or actions, whether they are necessary or not.
- 10.4. Summary details of these contracts and their overall budgeted value for 2007-2008 are as follows:-
- 10.5. Grounds Maintenance Contract to provide grounds maintenance works to our public open spaces. This contract is administered via our Resort Services & Amenities team and was awarded to Quadron in November 2005 on a 7-year contract; it has an annual value of approximately £1.295 million. There is also a contract for grass cutting on highway verges, administered by the Council on behalf of the County, with an annual value of approximately £70,000. This contract will be re-tendered in early 2008.
- 10.6. Small Works Contract to provide various works associated with the maintenance of the Councils factories and our administrative buildings on a system of scheduled rates for pre-agreed works where the contract value of such work is less than £12,000. The overall contract is administered via our Resort Services & Amenities team and was awarded to Booker & Best in April 2006 on a 5-year contract; it has an annual value of approximately £450,000.
- 10.7. Street Cleansing Contract to provide street cleansing services within the Borough. The overall contract is administered via our Waste Services team and was awarded to Veolia in July 2006 on a 7-year contract with an option to extend by a further 7 years; it has an annual value of approximately £1.292million.
- 10.8. Public Building and Public Convenience Contract (includes Bus Stops and Car Park Ticket Machines and Signage) to provide a facilities cleaning service which also includes attending facilities for municipal buildings and other structures within the Borough. The overall contract is administered via our Waste Services team. A two year extension has recently been awarded to Specialist Hygiene Services from January-08 to December-10. It has an annual value of approximately £250,000.



- 10.9. It is the view of the Best Value Review team that the scope for additional rationalisation and/or improvement of these services through competition is therefore limited and should not be pursued further at this time as these works are currently under contract.
- 10.10. Rother and Eastbourne District Council have now undertaken to align their grounds maintenance and street cleansing contract to ours so that we may all consider co-procurement when our current contracts end.

### **ESCC Public Realm Working Group and Enhanced Maintenance**

- 10.11. ESCC issued their 'Improving the Public Realm in East Sussex' in May-05 that was accepted by HBC Cabinet and endorsed by O&S in Oct-05. Cabinet resolved that:-
- *the ESCC initiative be broadly supported and HBC supports the work of the ESCC working party in furthering their initiative*
  - *HBC undertakes to work in partnership with ESCC to investigate additional sources of funding for improving the quality of the street environment of Hastings & St Leonards*
  - *HBC will seek to further involve ESCC and other partners on forthcoming street improvement schemes in the area*
- 10.12. ESCC have been hosting quarterly Public Realm working group meetings in order to further this initiative and HBC has been actively represented by a member of our Conservation team since July 2004.
- 10.13. HBC has been working closely with ESCC on all Public Realm related capital programme schemes that affect the highway to ensure that by partnering we deliver the best value scheme, use ESCC expertise where possible and resolve the longer term ownership and maintenance issues as part of the scheme delivery; examples are:-
- Central St Leonards – Silchester Road and Marina area public realm improvements where ESCC and highways are part of the project design team
  - Central St Leonards – London Road and Kings Road corridor projects where ESCC and highways are part of the project team and ESCC are doing the design and consultation work
  - Seafront Strategy – Pelham Place and Stade Highway design studies where ESCC are carrying out a 3 phase feasibility study on public realm, highway and pedestrian safety improvements at our behest
  - Seafront Strategy – Pelham pavement widening scheme, following the above study ESCC are developing and delivering our public realm improvements.
- 10.14. Enhanced maintenance is the term normally used to describe a higher standard of maintenance than that proscribed by East Sussex County Council Highways as standard. ESCC have now confirmed that they will make some limited funds available targeted on 'pilot areas' that are contained in the ESCC lead member report of 15 October 2007 entitled 'Maintaining and Improving the Public Realm in East Sussex'.
- 10.15. The Central St Leonards Urban Renaissance Programme will be delivering 3 large public realm projects over the next 3 years in Silchester Road, Marina Area and the

London Road / Kings Road corridor and will be providing extra materials such as Yorkstone in lieu of a commuted sum for maintenance to ESCC in order to qualify for enhanced maintenance. The matter of enhanced maintenance was agreed in the ESCC lead member report of 29 January 2007 entitled 'Silchester Road and Marina Regeneration Scheme, Central St Leonards'.

- 10.16. HBC have approached ESCC to seek approval to use potential income from sponsorship of highway features as a means of offsetting HBC expenditure on enhanced maintenance of verges and roundabouts within the Borough. ESCC have decided to retain any such additional income.
- 10.17. ESCC currently provide funding for 6 cuts per year on highway verges but from April 2008 reduced ESCC funding will mean that this will drop to 5 cuts per year. HBC currently provides for 2 additional cuts per year at a cost of £4,000 per cut and following the ESCC decision, HBC has undertaken to continue to support the previous 8 cut frequency by providing the 3 additional cuts per year.

## **11. Other Activities and Areas of Investigation**

- 11.1. The following sections summarise the findings to date in a number of areas of activity undertaken as part of this review process.

### **Decorative and Amenity Lighting**

- 11.2. Over recent years there has been a significant investment in decorative lighting, notably along the seafront and directed at significant buildings, and amenity lighting in parks and other public spaces where it addresses public concerns about safety. The maintenance costs associated with lighting, particularly the decorative schemes, are an area of growing concern.
- 11.3. The seafront schemes are deteriorating far more quickly than originally envisaged probably due to the aggressive salt environment and driving winds; of particular note:-
- The Pelham car park 'Winds of Change' scheme has not functioned properly for some time and is probably nearing the end of its useful life. This was only ever a limited life scheme.
  - The 'Sticks of Rock', erected along the length of the seafront from the Stade to West Marina in 2003 at a cost of over £100,000 will need either gradual replacement over the next 2 to 3 years as the light fittings continue to fail or perhaps consideration of a new, more robust scheme. In either case, the cost implications are at least at the level of the original scheme and probably significantly higher.
- 11.4. The recently launched LED amenity lighting scheme in George Street ought to be used as a model for any future and replacement lighting schemes as:-
- It uses a fraction of the power (15-20% typically for the same light output)
  - It can be sealed for life to reduce corrosion
  - It is very low maintenance as LED life is 20+ years
  - Standard white light output is more visually appealing
  - New schemes could be designed so that the colours are able to be changed for special occasions, or put on a fixed or timed cycle through a range of colours although this would add to the unit cost.

## **Maintenance of Capital Schemes**

- 11.5. Capital assets typically start their life as a capital acquisition, transfer or as a development project in the Council's Capital Programme; once delivered and available for use they are transferred to the most appropriate internal department to be maintained for the assets life along with the appropriate revenue budget to maintain it.
- 11.6. The Council's Capital Programme of works is now overseen by the officer led *Project Review Board* that reviews programme performance on a quarterly basis. Additionally as part of the annual budget review process prospective new capital schemes are assessed on their whole-life costs so that both revenue and capital implications of any scheme are considered to ensure decisions are made to achieve the best value-for-money over the assets lifecycle.
- 11.7. The Council's Capital Programme includes an item *Project Evaluation Provision*, this is a capital sum made available to fund limited feasibility work on prospective capital projects so that new schemes coming onto the capital programme are better understood resulting in more informed decision making.
- 11.8. It is crucial that on completion of any new capital project it is handed over to the 'beneficial owner' who will maintain the new asset and its amenity value going forward.

## **Condition Surveys**

- 11.9. A condition survey is used to assess a physical assets existence and condition. The data collected is usually logged into a database so that data on any asset can be manipulated, retrieved and used as a basis for maintenance planning and investment.
- 11.10. Condition surveys typically produce a variety of asset information such as:-
- Ownership including that of third parties
  - Physical condition, location and photographs
  - Specification, cost and installation date of original asset
  - Date last and/or next maintained and maintenance cost per item
  - Type of asset and department responsible for maintenance activities
- 11.11. ESCC are seeking to share information about the Public Realm and its management, but for this to be realised the information needs to be first captured and then recorded in a central database. Once this has been achieved meaningful discussions can then take place with ESCC about data sharing.
- 11.12. HBC has no central database of Public Realm assets and what data held is incomplete, often out-of-date and fragmented across various internal departments. A full condition survey of the Public Realm assets in Hastings Town Centre was completed in November 2005.

## **Maintenance Budgets**

11.13. The working group quantified maintenance spend against the definitions contained in the Project Definition document in order to understand the overall scope of maintenance work undertaken on an annual basis. For this exercise, we took figures for the last full financial year 2006-07 as follows:

• Public Realm Management	1,906,300
• Asset Management	<u>467,965</u>
	<u><b>2,374,265</b></u>

11.14. Both budgets cover expenditure for cleaning, fixtures and fittings, grounds maintenance, improvements and alterations, and repairs to premises. The Assets budget maintains factory units and Council offices; the Public Realm budget maintains all other public facilities in our ownership – car parks, public conveniences, parks playgrounds, sports grounds, other open spaces, allotments, seafront facilities and lighting.

11.15. By far the largest elements of the budget are not discretionary as they are either fixed contract costs, such as £1.2 million for grounds maintenance and £160,000 for cleaning or operational repairs costs £880,000 in 2006-07. In reality, the amount of money we have to target specific areas of greater neglect or to enhance decorative spending is probably no more than £100,000 in any year. With every new piece of land where we acquire maintenance responsibility, either after developments or by default when ownership is unclear or unknown that discretionary element of spending is reduced.

11.16. Details of the top 10 areas of maintenance spend by value are contained in Appendix A of this report.

### **Maintenance Management System Development**

11.17. HBC uses a number of formal and informal Information Communications Technology (ICT) systems for Public Realm maintenance and associated activities as follows:-

- Confirm – A contract management ICT system used by Amenities for managing the Grounds Maintenance and by the Waste team for the Waste Management contract. HBC has modules for customer services, asset management and contractors to aid contract compliance work by officers
- EstateMan – ICT system used by Estates to hold property records, asbestos and legionella registers
- Asset Register – held by Finance in an Excel spreadsheet containing a list of Council assets (including property) with either a value in excess of £10,000 or maintenance or other liabilities in excess of this figure.
- Insurance Register – held by Finance and containing the current and rebuild costs of all assets issued by HBC
- GIS – could be used in association with *Confirm* to capture map related information about an assets location
- Minor Works – a bespoke intranet based ICT system for processing client works requests with the term contractor

11.18. A single system would allow the possibility of amalgamating some of the above requirements outlined into a single ICT system to enable much more information to be

shared and increase the overall value and robustness for all users. Any such system would then need to satisfy CIPFA capital accounting standards to enable HBC to meet its increasingly demanding external audit requirements.

- 11.19. The *Confirm* system has been recently updated to increase functionality to support decision making and extra modules for field workers. Our waste contractors now also have *Confirm* licences to ensure much closer integration with our systems, enabling data and map information sharing in real time; *Confirm* system access needs to be extended to all our maintenance contractors in due course.
- 11.20. The whole Public Realm maintenance process needs to be defined as a workflow with systems and resources built around the organisations needs not necessarily what it has at the moment. This will help develop decision making around such issues as:-
- Fault logging – faults are reported by a wide variety of people and performance needs to be tracked on remedying any fault
  - Performance Targets – need to be set so that we understand what our term contractor has agreed to deliver and measure their performance against it
  - Cyclical vs. Reactive Maintenance – system needs to be populated with meaningful information to allow smart schedule and budgetary decisions to be made
  - Joint Working opportunities – clever use of ICT and knowledge it holds will enable joint working or at the very least information sharing to take place with ESCC
- 11.21. The Council's land and property assets are all referenced using a Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) to track items on both the Asset Register and EstateMan systems. A single system approach would also have the benefit of allowing the UPRN to be used consistently across all asset details wherever they are held.

### **Minor Works Contract**

- 11.22. The contract is now administered by the Resort Services & Amenities department who successfully manage work orders placed on the term contractor by Clients using an Intranet based system that is not linked to other pertinent ICT systems
- 11.23. The following key issues have been identified for investigation and resolution:-
- The works orders are managed using an Intranet based minor works system that is not linked to other pertinent ICT systems such as *Confirm*. This results in works orders not being visible to instructing client departments so officers cannot easily track either job progress, budget costs, accept completed works or monitor contractor performance in real-time.
  - There is also a disjoint between individual works orders and the line items listed in the financial system which tend to group several works orders by budget code so that the detail is not obvious to budget managers without a time-consuming investigation.

### **Staffing and Resources**

- 11.24. Since the Best Value Review was started in March 2007, significant changes have taken place to bring together 5 of the 7 services involved in delivering Public Realm maintenance together into 3 services in the Environmental Services Directorate.

11.25. This has delivered significant benefits to the organisation in terms of rationalisation of budgets, resources and responsibilities and streamlined reporting of Public Realm related works.

11.26. The Service areas are shown below:

BEFORE	Reports to BEFORE	AFTER	Reports to AFTER
Parking	Environment & Safety	Parking and Highways	Environmental Services
Highways	Environment & Safety		
Amenities	Leisure and Cultural	Amenities and Resorts	
Resort	Leisure and Cultural		
Waste	Environment & Safety	Waste	
Projects	Regeneration and Planning	Projects	Regeneration and Planning
Estates	DC	Estates	Corporate Services

11.27. The working group has not yet analysed the current structures of teams delivering Public Realm maintenance, the number of staff affected by this review or the recent senior management restructure concluded in July 2007. This will need to be addressed as part of the improvement plan activities including any extra resources required to complete the identified works.

## 12. Key Findings and Conclusions

12.1. The Best Value Review team's key findings and conclusions are as follows:-

12.2. Policies, Procedures and Management Plans – HBC has specific management plans for specific services: parks, nature reserves, waste services and others. The County Council also produces management standards for areas of the public realm, such as street lighting, where they have responsibility for maintenance. We do not, however, have an overall policy relating to the Public Realm in general nor do we have procedures or management plans for certain key areas such as our seafront or town centres. Additionally no Borough officer or department has specific responsibility allocated for the Public Realm. These documents need to be produced to focus activity and resources on required outputs and to set the context in which future investment decisions can be taken.

- **Action Plan action/s = 5.1 / 5.2 /5.3**

12.3. Management Structures and Responsibilities – the recent management restructure completed in Jul-07 has successfully consolidated a number of key activities, staff

resources, management systems and responsibilities associated with the Public Realm into 3 distinct service areas in the Environmental Service directorate. This rationalisation is welcomed and will simplify delivery of required improvements in the draft improvement plan.

- **Action Plan action/s = 1.1 /1.2 /1.3**

12.4. Condition Surveys - no comprehensive database exists identifying the condition of all the Public Realm assets as only the Hastings Town Centre assets have been identified so far in autumn 2005. The condition survey work needed to be undertaken to allow the creation of a full asset register upon which maintenance investment decisions can then be made.

- **Action Plan action/s = 2.1 /2.2**

12.5. Works Order Management - There is a lack of consistency in recording asset details and managing works orders between departments involving different systems, needs and expectations leading to delayed processing time and poor visibility of works order status. Similarly, we do not have a central register of the equipment various Council departments, such as Amenities and Parking, own. The works order systems need to be rationalised to simplify and streamline works order management to save both officer and subcontractor time as well as unnecessary rental of equipment.

- **Action Plan action/s = 2.3**

12.6. Maintenance Management System - The *Confirm* software maintenance system has recently been expanded to meet the additional needs of the new Waste Management contract following a circa £50k investment. *Confirm* is also used by the Amenities department to manage their Public Realm and the parks and open spaces assets through the Grounds Maintenance contract. The recent investment is welcomed and will allow the identified condition survey work to be undertaken.

- **Action Plan action/s = 2.3**

12.7. HBC Asset Register - an asset register is maintained by Finance of all substantial assets over £10k in value primarily for insurance and accounting purposes; this is not linked to any other ICT system holding similar information. Systems need to be put in place to linkup data and/or provide a method of ensuring all Public Realm assets are accounted for, particularly as any maintenance work undertaken supports these asset valuations.

- **Action Plan action/s = 2.4**

12.8. ESCC Enhanced Maintenance – ESCC have now agreed a number of roads now eligible for Enhanced Maintenance as part of their pilot project for Public Realm improvement; this is in addition to the 3 existing schemes in Central St Leonards that are already covered by an Enhanced Maintenance agreement where HBC has provided the materials in lieu of a financial contribution. The County have undertaken to maintain the new street schemes to their completed standard, but the maintenance of new schemes is not being considered as part of enhanced maintenance by ESCC under their Public Realm initiative. They will require specific local agreements. The use of Bulverhythe depot as a secure place to store materials need to be investigated. We must support the pilot scheme and aim to expand into other areas of the town.

- **Action Plan action/s = 3.2 /3.3**

- 12.9. Decorative and Amenity Lighting – Existing decorative lighting scheme life is shorter than expected so ought to be removed to avoid increased maintenance costs or replaced with LED type lighting to reduce future maintenance and running costs. There is currently no identified budget for this work.
- **Action Plan action/s = 3.1**
- 12.10. Public Realm Maintenance Contracts – The 3 main Public Realm maintenance contracts have been recently market tested to ensure value-for-money; continuous inspection of the contractor's performance is essential to ensure that they continue to deliver the contracted benefits to HBC.
- No further action is required.**
- 12.11. Public Realm Asset Maintenance Surveys - In Jul-07 we surveyed 5 other local authorities to gauge how they managed their Public Realm. We found that authorities organised their services in a number of ways but generally relied heavily on contractors rather than internal staff for maintenance and repairs. There was a common theme amongst the responses of funding constraints that made it necessary to prioritise areas of work and levels of attention paid to routine and enhanced maintenance. Generally, all recognised the need for planned maintenance and all admitted that they had room for improvement in this area.
- No further action is required.**
- 12.12. Summary of Best Value Review of Parks and Open Spaces (2000): The review found that a number of facilities were being provided that were under-used and that our spend per capita for Open Spaces was the highest for our Audit Family. It also demonstrated that Hastings had a significantly greater area of open space than its comparators. In fact, roughly 10% of land in this Borough is public open space compared to 1-2% in other Boroughs surveyed. This means that the impact of maintenance performance on the overall appearance of this Borough is very high. Satisfaction levels measured through the Citizen's Panel were considered very high at 84% of people were satisfied/very satisfied with Parks and Open Spaces. Concerns were centred around cleanliness, dog fouling in particular, and around safety and security. Removal of the under-used facilities led to a saving of £120,000 which were used to support the kerbside paper recycling scheme and the provision of an additional Park Ranger.
- No further action is required.**
- 12.13. Public Realm Satisfaction Surveys – (August 2000 – March 2005): Levels of satisfaction in Parks and Open Spaces have been at a high level, when compared to most Council Services and have continued to rise between 2000–2006. The public were asked to prioritise Council Services in 2006 and considered that Parks and Open Spaces were their top priority (83.8%) with keeping the streets clean at 76.9% and maintaining public conveniences at 75%. It is clear from this that the public consider the public realm as an important service. (See Appendix E for details).
- **Action Plan action/s = 4.1**
- 12.14. Public Realm Maintenance and Investment – HBC had a budget of £2.794m for maintenance activities in 2006-07 and 81.9% of which (£2.29m) was allocated to Public Realm works. However, a very large proportion of these funds are already committed via maintenance contracts so that the discretionary spending of circa



£100,000 is limited. This reinforces the need to maximise resource in areas of high public use, to plan for cycles of maintenance and to agree standards.

**Action Plan action/s = 3.1**

12.15. Capital Programme Maintenance Implications – Management processes are now in place to provide a robust method of testing, developing and delivering new capital schemes that result in an addition to the Public Realm requiring future maintenance.

- **No further action is required.**

**13. Best Value Review Public Realm Improvement Plan**

13.1. One of the main objectives of this review team and a required output from all Best Value Reviews is the production of a Service Improvement Plan; as the responsibilities for aspects of the public realm span a number of service areas (as stated in the scope of this report) it was felt that a wider Best Value Review Public Realm Improvement Plan would be more appropriate rather than one for a particular service area and this is attached in Appendix B of this report.

**14. Recommendations**

14.1. The review teams recommendations based on the key findings above are as follows:-

- That the 'Best Value Review Public Realm Improvement Plan 2007-2008' contained in Appendix B of this report is adopted and implemented
- Provision of progress reports to Overview and Scrutiny on progress every 6 months towards the agreed 'Best Value Review Public Realm Improvement Plan 2007-2008'

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**Appendices & Background Documents:**

Appendix A – Financial Analysis Public Realm Maintenance Spend 2006-07

Appendix B – Best Value Review Public Realm Improvement Plan 2007-08

Appendix C – Summary results of Best Value Review Parks & Open Spaces Aug-2000

Appendix D – Summary of Responses to Public Realm Survey of Similar Local Authorities

Appendix E – Project Initiation Document Issue 9

**Policy implications**

Please tick if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities & Community Cohesiveness

Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)  
Risk Management  
Environmental issues  
Economic / Financial implications  
Human Rights Act  
Organisational Consequences


**Officer/s to Contact**

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## **Appendix A - Financial Analysis Public Realm Maintenance Spend 2006-07**

### **Top 10 – Repairs (Total spend = £936,000)**

	<b>Maintenance Works</b>
Leisure Centre	£ 41,320
Cemetery & Crem.	41,000
St Mary in the C	40,808
Ice Rink	31,740
Promenade	31,700
Museum	31,570
White Rock Gdns	26,416
Century House	25,228
Town Hall	25,120
Alexandra Park	21,390

### **Top 10 - Ground Maintenance (budget = £1,232,000)**

	<b>Maintenance Works</b>
Cemetery	£185,000
Alexandra Park	175,000
White Rock Gdns	116,000
Bexhill Rd Rec.	95,000
West Marina Gdns	41,000
Watercourses	41,000
Town Centre	35,000
East Hill	34,000
Sandhurst Play	33,000
West Hill	28,000

### **Top 10 – Public Realm overall (TOTAL = £2,288,722)**

	<b>Maintenance Works</b>	<b>Capital Works</b>	<b>Income</b>
Cemetery	£226,000	<b>£100,000</b>	<b>£650,000</b>
Alexandra Park	198,000	<b>£3,500,000</b>	
White Rock Gdns	145,000		
Bexhill Rd Rec.	100,000		
Watercourses	53,600		
West Marina Gdns	48,200		
Museum	48,000	<b>£1,500,000</b>	<b>£5,000</b>
Town Centre	43,000	<b>£800,000</b>	
Sandhurst Play	41,000		
Promenade	34,000	<b>?</b>	<b>£145,000</b>

### **Top 3 Suppliers – Repairs**

	<b>Maintenance Works</b>
Booker & Best	£441,000
Cunningham Blake	54,000
CBS Engineers	40,000

**Appendix B – BEST VALUE REVIEW Public Realm Improvement Plan 2007-08**

<b>Area for Improvement:</b>					
<b>1. Consolidate the management and resourcing of council asset and public realm maintenance</b>					
<b>Improvements identified and actions required</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Timescale for completion</b>	<b>Person(s)/ Agencies responsible</b>	<b>Outcome required &amp; monitoring arrangements</b>	<b>Priority H, M, L</b>
<b>1.1 Complete the consolidation of staff resources &amp; maintenance budgets under linked service areas</b>	Within existing resources	By Mar-08	Head of Resorts & Amenities + Head of Waste & Recycling + Head of Parking & Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff &amp; budget transfers completed</li> <li>• Eliminate task &amp; process duplication</li> <li>• Create flexible direct labour group</li> </ul>	H
<b>1.2 Review &amp; consolidate all direct labour into co-ordinated working group</b>	Within existing resources	By Apr-08			M
<b>1.3 Complete the consolidation of responsibility for public realm and open space assets under one service area</b>	Within existing resources	By Apr-08	Head of Resorts & Amenities + Estates Manager + Head of Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All non-commercial assets and land to be managed by public realm group</li> </ul>	H

<b>Area for Improvement:</b>					
<b>2. Consolidate and enhance management systems and data sources for maintenance</b>					
<b>Improvements identified and actions required</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Timescale for completion</b>	<b>Person(s)/ Agencies responsible</b>	<b>Outcome required &amp; monitoring arrangements</b>	<b>Priority H, M, L</b>
<b>2.1 Inspection, registration &amp; consolidation of public realm assets into the Confirm system asset register</b>	Significant (2 FTE for 6 months)	By Jul-08	Amenities Manager + Seafront Services Manager + Head of Waste Services	Complete Asset Register to log all assets and basic condition survey details:-  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste assets</li> <li>• Open Space assets</li> <li>• Seafront assets</li> <li>• Hastings town centre street scene assets</li> <li>• St. Leonard's town centre street scene assets</li> <li>• Old Town street scene assets</li> </ul>	H M M H  M  M
2.2 Consolidate and update records for: building maintenance, asbestos and legionella prevention & other miscellaneous works to Confirm	Existing Resources	By Jul-08	Head of Resorts and Amenities	To ensure full compliance with all statutory duties and ensure tasks in place to maintain this. Completion of fire risk assessments.	H
<b>2.3 Expand and standardise on the use of the Confirm system for maintenance</b>	Staff time plus trainer	By Dec-08  By Apr-09	Amenities Manager + Seafront Services Manager	All services involved in asset maintenance are linked into and using the Confirm system.  Move minor works system into Confirm.	M
<b>2.4 Investigate whether financial accounting using Asset Register can be more closely integrated with Confirm</b>	Existing resources	By Dec 08	Head of Finance	Investigation concluded.	H

<b>Area for Improvement:</b>					
<b>3. Create an affordable comprehensive planned maintenance regime</b>					
<b>Improvements identified and actions required</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Timescale for completion</b>	<b>Person(s)/ Agencies responsible</b>	<b>Outcome required &amp; monitoring arrangements</b>	<b>Priority H, M, L</b>
<b>3.1 Produce an affordable costed comprehensive planned maintenance proposal</b>	1 FTE x 1 month	By Oct-08	Head of Resorts & Amenities + Head of Parking and Highways + Head of Finance + Head of Waste and Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to identify maintenance costs for all HBC assets on a planned and/or cyclical maintenance basis.</li> <li>• Will be updated regularly &amp; investment decisions made as part of budget making processes</li> </ul>	M
<b>3.2 Negotiate enhanced maintenance areas &amp; management protocols with ESCC</b>	Officer meetings	By Apr-08 By Apr-09 By Apr-09	Head of Resorts & Amenities	Establish Service Level Agreement (SLA) between HBC & ESCC for:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Leonards Town Centre</li> <li>• Hastings Town Centre</li> <li>Hastings Old Town</li> </ul>	H M M
<b>3.3 Setup secure depot facilities for material storage to support enhanced maintenance</b>	Existing resources	By Apr-08	Head of Projects + Head of Waste and Recycling	Materials are available to ESCC Highways to draw materials under Service Level.	H

<b>Area for Improvement:</b>					
<b>4. Assessment of Public Satisfaction</b>					
<b>Improvements identified and actions required</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Timescale for completion</b>	<b>Person(s)/ Agencies responsible</b>	<b>Outcome required &amp; monitoring arrangements</b>	<b>Priority H, M, L</b>
<b>4.1 Repeat Public Satisfaction survey to assess the impact of Public Realm improvements</b>	None - Submit questions to next Citizens panel	By Sept-08	Head of Resorts & Amenities + Head of Policy & Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular review of performance to feedback to service</li> </ul>	L

<b>Area for Improvement:</b>					
<b>5. Policy &amp; Management Plan Development</b>					
<b>Improvements identified and actions required</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Timescale for completion</b>	<b>Person(s)/ Agencies responsible</b>	<b>Outcome required &amp; monitoring arrangements</b>	<b>Priority H, M, L</b>
<b>5.1 Produce Public Realm Policy</b>	Existing resources	By Apr-08	Head of Resorts & Amenities + Head of Policy & Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set context for capital &amp; maintenance programme investment decisions</li> <li>• Set realistic expectations</li> <li>• Define priorities to inform investment decisions over time</li> </ul>	H
<b>5.2 Produce Seafront Management Plan</b>	Funded from Seafront Strategy capital programme	By Oct-08	Seafront Services Manager + Head of Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate management requirements for leisure activities, visitors, beach awards, events, H&amp;S &amp; sea defences</li> <li>• Agree management regime &amp; responsibilities of HBC and partners including the Stade &amp; working beach</li> <li>• Identify &amp; consolidate patterns of ownership, leases and activity for the seafront to maximise income for HBC as applicable</li> </ul>	H
<b>5.3 Produce Town Centre Management Plan for Hastings, Town Centre</b>	Existing resources	By Dec-08	Head of Regeneration + Head of Resorts & Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate management requirements for events &amp; H&amp;S</li> <li>• Agree management regime &amp; responsibilities of HBC and partners including Town Centre Management</li> <li>• Produce Town Centre maintenance plans</li> </ul>	M

## **Appendix C – Summary results of BEST VALUE REVIEW Parks & Open Spaces Aug-2000**

**Table 1 - Comparison Parks & Open Spaces maintenance costs**

<b>Subject or indicator</b>		<b>Thanet DC</b>	<b>Shepway DC</b>	<b>Eastbourne BC</b>	<b>Hastings BC</b>
Population		126,745	101,443	91,600	81,365
Approximate land area	Hectares	10,322	35,700	4,596	2,970
Total area Parks & O Space	Hectares	171	205	N/A	305
Grounds Maintenance contract	£	£ 875,699	£ 678,499	N/A	£1,325,480
£cost/ hectare	£	£ 5,109.10	£ 3,309.75	N/A	£ 4,345.84
£cost/ head population	£	£ 6.91	£ 6.69	N/A	£ 16.29

**Table 2 - Best Value Review of Parks and Open Spaces - 2000**

<b>1998-99</b>	<b>Hastings</b>	<b>Thanet</b>	<b>Eastbourne</b>	<b>Shepway</b>	<b>Gt. Yarmouth</b>	<b>Penwith</b>	<b>South Wales Best</b>	<b>South Wales Worst</b>	<b>Sevenoaks</b>
Net expenditure per hectare on parks and open spaces.	£ 1,822.88	£ 5,992.04	£ 4,677.23	£ 4,618.00	£ 4,270.00	£10,820.00			£ 3,463.00
Number of sports pitches	37	36	23		26	1			
Total spend per head on sport and recreation.	£ 27.64	£ 13.78	£ 12.30		£ 26.28	£14.64	£ 25.06	£ 13.73	£ 6.22

**Table 3 – Best Value Review 2000 – Amount of Open Space Provided per 1000 Population**

<b>1998-99</b>	<b>Hastings</b>	<b>Thanet</b>	<b>Eastbourne</b>	<b>Shepway</b>
National playing fields - acres per 1000 population	9.26 acres	3.34 acres	N/A	4.99 acres

NB: NPF benchmark is 6 acres per 1,000 head of population



## Appendix D – Summary of Responses to Public Realm Survey of Similar Local Authorities

	<u>Great Yarmouth</u>	<u>Eastbourne</u>	<u>Rother</u>
1. Procurement of Public Realm	Public/Public partnership between Gt. Yarmouth BC and Norfolk County Services	All but car parks maintained through external contractor	All but car parks maintained through external contractor. Town Centre furniture and Seafront/promenade repaired by a.n. other as required.
2. Management Agreement for highways inc verge maintenance	Yes – for Highway verge grass and tree maintenance	Yes	No
3. Own housing stock	Yes – Maintained under the arrangements in 1 above, but managed by internal housing dept.	Yes – managed by Eastbourne homes (ALMO)	No – HA
4. Do you 'enhance' highway areas?	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Do you benefit from sponsorship in Public Realm?	Yes – not specified	Yes – Sponsored roundabouts	No
6. Do you have a minor highways contract?	Yes – as described in 1 above	Yes – for general maintenance work along the seafront, contract from 2007-10	Yes
7. Elements included and value	Decorative/amenity lighting; litter/dog bins; seats/benches; paving/tarmac paths; plumbing; electrical; carpentry; steel works/railings; glazing; internal/external decs.	Decorative/amenity lighting (£6000); litter/dog bins (separate contract); seats/benches (yes); paving/tarmac paths (yes); plumbing (yes); electrical (yes); carpentry (yes); steel works/railings (external as req.); glazing (external as req.); Internal/external decs. (yes); Seafront budget - £39,550.	Decorative/amenity lighting; paving/tarmac paths; plumbing; electrical; carpentry; steel works/railings; glazing; internal/external decs.

	<b><u>Great Yarmouth</u></b>	<b><u>Eastbourne</u></b>	<b><u>Rother</u></b>
8. Do you employ direct labour?	No – all staff employed through NCC partnership	Not responded to	Yes – 2FTE's to give flexibility and opportunity for non-routine type works
9. Do you use an Asset Maintenance System (IT)?	Yes – Mayrise (footway lighting only) others to follow	No – but are acquiring one	No
10. What asset management model do you use?	Facilities Management – where all assets are managed together in a central portfolio	Departmental – where individual dept. is responsible for its own portfolio of assets	Hybrid – where elements are included in routine term contracts and remainder are mopped up under other asset maintenance arrangements
11. Do you co-procure services with others?	Yes as outlines in 1 above	Yes – no detail	Yes – no clarification
12. Are assets maintained under planned maintenance programme?	No	No	NO
13. Have you constructed a budget on zero-based budgeting basis?	Not responded to	No	No
14. Adequacy of current budget	Maintenance is prioritised such that some sites are in less favourable condition	Budgets are always inadequate in keeping assets in good condition	Maintenance is prioritised such that some sites are in less favourable condition

## Appendix E

### BEST VALUE REVIEW Council Asset and Public Realm Maintenance HBC Project Initiation Document

#### Document Ownership & Responsibility:

Client: BEST VALUE REVIEW Council Asset & Public Realm  
Maintenance  
Author: Adrian Rogerson  
Owner/Sponsor: Richard Homewood  
Project Manager: Adrian Rogerson

#### Document Location

Sharepoint Public Realm site: N/A

#### Revision History

Revision	Date	Comment
9	10-Sept-07	Updated BEST VALUE REVIEW schedule to target Dec-07 O&S & document formats following BEST VALUE REVIEW group meeting 13-Aug-07
8	11-Jun-07	Updated following BEST VALUE REVIEW group meeting 31-May-07
7	15-May-07	Updated following BEST VALUE REVIEW group meeting 21-Mar-07
6	15-Aug-06	Updated following public realm officer group meeting 15-Aug-06
5	3-Aug-06	Updated following public realm officer group meeting 3-Aug-06
4	14-Jul-06	Updated following public realm officer group meeting 14-Jul-06
3	19-Jun-06	Updated O&S schedule
1 & 2	2-Mar-06	Initial issue/s

#### Document Approvals

Name	Signature	Title	Date
R Homewood		Corporate Director – Environmental Services	

## **Purpose of Document**

To define the BEST VALUE REVIEW Council Asset & Public Realm Maintenance groups objective for a review of the management arrangements to provide the economic, efficient, effective delivery & long-term management of the public realm in the Borough of Hastings

## **Background**

The last reorganisation of the Council created distinct areas of operation, but led to the division of some relevant activities across Directorates

- Grounds Maintenance remained within Leisure and Culture in recognition of its links with the provision of leisure facilities and public open space.
- Waste management moved to the Environment and Safety Directorate to reflect its links with 'public health' and growing environmental protection activity.
- Estates activity remained with the Deputy Chief Executive in recognition of the need to maximise the financial value of our property assets.
- A number of other smaller 'maintenance' activities remained distributed across departments with small devolved budgets

This has led to some confusion over responsibilities and roles in respect of the maintenance of the public realm and a lack of clarity over which budgets are intended to support which types of street furniture etc.

East Sussex County Council issued their 'Improving the Public Realm in East Sussex' in May 2005 that was accepted by Cabinet in October 2005. Since then ESCC have held quarterly Public Realm meetings attended primarily by the planning & conservation officers of the participating local authorities. Any review undertaken must ensure that the role and responsibilities of ESCC are clearly understood and accepted by all parties.

ESCC are indicating that they will make some limited funds available targeted on 'priority areas' that meet one or more of the following criterion

1. Major regeneration areas
2. Environmentally sensitive areas
3. Compact zones to reduce street clutter

As an authority we ought to be pursuing opportunities to access ESCC funding and for joint working for the Public Realm management.

In terms of our property maintenance and improvement there would again to appear to be a lack of clarity with some elements being led by the Estates team whilst others, because they are funded from the Capital Programme being led by the Projects Team.

The Leisure and Culture Directorate has for several years employed a 'handy man' to perform small-scale works arguably to good effect but there are also some concerns around this approach, which need to be reviewed in the light of the new small works contract commencing

in June 2006. Parking Services employ two trained electrical / mechanical technicians to maintain pay and display machines and other specialised car parks equipment.

### **Project Definition**

This project is far reaching in scope and it is therefore necessary to define what this project includes and be equally clear about what it does not. This project focuses on the Council Asset & Public Realm Management and the related issue of Facilities Management is to be dealt with separately. The proposed definitions are as follows:-

- § **Public Realm Management** is 'The day-to-day management of those assets contained within the spaces between the cartilage of buildings owned and/or managed by various parties that the general public have physical access to'
- § **Facilities Management** is 'The day-to-day management of the Council's buildings to maintain their operation primarily for the benefit of Council employees & limited Public access in defined areas'
- § **Asset Management** is 'The day-to-day management of Council's commercial property portfolio, including factory units, that do not generally have Public access'

### **Project Objectives**

To establish the most effective management arrangements within the Council for the pro-active maintenance of;

- § The public realm, and;
- § The Council's assets and property portfolio (excluding factory units).

An examination of how these arrangements might

- § Yield actual savings by reducing duplication.
- § More probably offer more effective management and working practices giving enhanced performance and measurable efficiency gains.

It was agreed that the project will seek to establish:

- § The current arrangements for the maintenance of the Council's public realm, buildings and assets and the current budget provision/s
- § How these arrangements link with ESCC responsibilities for the maintenance of the public realm
- § The systems and procedures required to efficiently maintain the Council's public realm, buildings and assets
- § How these services and budgets are best managed and co-ordinated in the future
  - How the "back room" support services might be most efficiently delivered
  - Whether maintenance of pay and display machines etc could be more cost effective if contracted out
  - Whether the direct employment of maintenance staff is an effective and sustainable method of addressing small scale works

## **Project Scope**

The scope of this review encompasses a number of service areas within the authority & would include how they are resourced, organised, funded and what IT support or systems are required to deliver the services in question as follows:-

Parking & Highways	Carpark maintenance, signing and lining amenity lighting, enhanced maintenance & surfacing in town centre areas
Waste Management	Public conveniences, litter and dog bins, signage
Projects	Implementation of various capital schemes
Amenities & Resort Services	Benches, planters, railings / bollards, sports pavilions and other leisure buildings, minor works supervision, R&R programme, seafront promenade, railings, street furniture, shelters, buildings, amenity & decorative lighting

## **Method of Approach**

- § To examine if and how all asset & public realm maintenance services and budgets might be drawn together into one point.
- § To review current budget provision for asset & public realm maintenance and evaluate its adequacy.
- § To carry out a Streetscape audit to establish a baseline for the review of asset & public realm maintenance.
- § To consider the need for a Streetscape manual.
- § To consider how and where asset & public realm maintenance would be best managed.
- § To review the current arrangements for the maintenance of the Council's property portfolio, including programmed works through the R&R reserve and minor works contracts as applicable to the Public Realm in the first instance.
- § To review current budget provision both centrally and in departments for building maintenance and how best this funding can be managed in future.
- § To review the current directly employed maintenance staffing arrangements and other 'maintenance' roles within the authority and evaluate their cost effectiveness.

## **Project Deliverables and/or Desired Outcomes**

- § To gain a clear overview of current Council Asset, public realm and property maintenance responsibilities, liabilities, funding and costs
- § More efficient and effective co-ordination of proactive asset & public realm maintenance
- § Greater clarity of corporate priorities for asset & public realm maintenance and targeted activity to maximise value
- § The establishment of a dedicated public realm maintenance budget and team
- § Agreed common objectives with ESCC for public realm maintenance
- § Agree with ESCC priority areas of audit work within the Borough
- § Audit priority areas and populate agreed database and/or system
- § Seek to access ESCC & other 3rd party funding for Public Realm activities
- § Proactive supervision and management of minor works and property maintenance programmes as applicable

- § Improved arrangements for the delivery of 'handy man' services.

### **Exclusions**

- § HBC operational buildings run by HBC except for public toilets and shelters which are to be included

### **Constraints**

- § The existing and anticipated budgets of the teams identified above.
- § Political views about the co-ordination of activity.
- § Existing contractor arrangements (small works, refuse/street cleansing, grounds maintenance, leisure).

### **Interfaces**

- § Relationship between Project Group and Project Sponsor / CMG
- § Relationship with ESCC and its Public Realm Group
- § Eastbourne BC - Review of Good Practice
- § Lead & BEST VALUE REVIEW group members as applicable

### **Assumptions**

- § That the Council needs to rationalise its approach to the management & maintenance of Council Assets & the public realm.
- § That there is a need for more proactive supervision and management of the minor works and property maintenance programmes.
- § Revised systems and structures need to reflect these objectives.
- § There are both efficiency and effectiveness gains to be made through such an approach.

### **Project Organisation Structure**

**Lead Officers:** R Homewood

**Project Manager:** A Rogerson

**Project Group:** M Bourne, D Froude, R Shahilow, J Stephens, P Mead, N Sangster, P Datta, Virginia Gilbert, M Weir, M Hambridge, R Homewood & A Daniel (Admin Support)

### **Project Controls**

- § Initial PID & Project Plan agreed by CMG at issue 6
- § BEST VALUE REVIEW group revised PID issue 7+

### **Exception Process**

Not applicable with the exception that increases in costs from the existing budgets that might be proposed will require the support of all responsible Corporate Directors.

### **Risk Log**

Differences in approach and perspective could impede progress.

Lack of identified funding to allow Council Asset & Public Realm audit work to progress

### **Project Plan**

The review will be conducted over a number of discrete stages of activity as laid out below. Discussions with other local authorities to identify good practice and the ESCC Public Realm Group will also be including as part of the remit of the project group.

<b><u>Stage</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Activities</u></b>	<b><u>Action</u></b>
1	Establish baseline <i>July to Aug-06</i>	Define Public Realm Maintenance & agree PID Agree Project Group membership Identification & analysis of existing budget provision Understand who provides Public Realm related services Public Realm satisfaction & consultation by survey Identify existing Public Realm asset data held Establish IT requirements & current IT provision & capability Maintain active membership of ESCC Public Realm group	Project group Project group APR & finance Budget Mgrs P Mead Project Group M Bourne J Stephens
2	Interim reporting <i>10-Aug-06</i>	Agree background, schedule & rational via PID @ issue 5 Identify resources & funding to complete work	RH
3	Explore opportunities <i>Oct-06 to Feb-07</i>	Identify economic, effectiveness & efficiency opportunities including rationalisation of HBC resources Explore implications & risks	Project group
4	Interim reporting <i>16-Mar-07</i>	Agree background, schedule & rational via PID @ issue 6 Provide update on working group progress to date	APR
5	Setup BEST VALUE REVIEW group <i>21-Mar-07</i>	Agree background, schedule & rational via PID @ issue 7 Review working group interim report & agree way forward	BEST VALUE REVIEW group
6	BEST VALUE REVIEW Officer project group <i>Mar-07 to Nov-07</i>	Support BEST VALUE REVIEW group & take forward agreed latest issue PID Provide supporting information to BEST VALUE REVIEW group as required	Project group
7	BEST VALUE REVIEW group <i>28-Nov-07</i>	Agree final BEST VALUE REVIEW report for O&S meet <i>12-Dec-07</i>	BEST VALUE REVIEW group
8	O&S report <i>12-Dec-07</i>	Present BEST VALUE REVIEW report to O&S	Cllr Bing & RH
9	Cabinet <i>07-Jan-08</i>	Present O&S BEST VALUE REVIEW report and officers covering report to Cabinet	Cllr Bing & RH
10	Council <i>21-Feb-08</i>	Present O&S BEST VALUE REVIEW report and officers covering report to Council	Cllr Bing & RH

### **Contingency Plans**

Full Best Value Review of public realm and council asset maintenance.

### **Project Filing Structure**

All project documents to be filed on project site setup for this project