

DRAFT HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PLAN

2010/11 – 2012/13

Including changes agreed at 18th January 2010 Cabinet

Hastings Council's Corporate Plan consists of the following 3 documents:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Part I Corporate Strategy | Strategic overview - context and priorities |
| Part II Annual Plan | a) 2010/11 - Targets and Milestones
b) 3 - year performance targets* |
| Part III Report back | Retrospective report on performance in 2008/09* |

* To be agreed/published in June 2010

Part I

1. Introduction

About Hastings Borough Council
Statement of Responsibility
Planning on a 3-yearly cycle
About Hastings Borough Council

2. National and Regional Focus

Economic Recession
General Election and Comprehensive Spending Review
Total Place
National Legislation and Policy
 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
 Equality Bill
 Climate Change

3. County Focus

East Sussex Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy Pride of Place
Local Area Agreement
Homes and Communities Agency 'Single Conversation'
Comprehensive Area Assessment

4. Hastings & St Leonards Focus

Physically-Led Regeneration
Education-led Regeneration
Environmentally-Led Regeneration
Culturally-Led Regeneration
Economic Development and Inclusion
Strategic Framework for Regeneration:
 Working Together: Hastings & St Leonards Sustainable Community Strategy
 Local Development Framework
What Local People told us about Our Town – the 2008 Place Survey

5. Hastings Borough Council Focus

Strategic Priorities and Principles
How we Use our Resources
 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
 Priority Income and Efficiency Reviews (PIER)
 Staffing and Physical Resources
 Natural Resources
Improving the way we work
 Business Process Improvement and Contact Centre
 Equality, Diversity and Cohesion
 Environment and Climate Change
 Information, Communication and using New Media

6. Risk Management

7. Annual Targets - Corporate Part II

SUMMARY

This Corporate Plan is a statement of Hastings Borough Council's strategic direction over the next three years to the end of 2012/13. It sets out our vision and strategic priorities, describes the challenging financial context within which we are working and how we intend to make the best use of our resources to achieve the goals set out in the Hastings and St Leonards Sustainable 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 respond to local priorities.
- Detailed performance targets and milestones for 2010/11.

To maximise improvements within Hastings the council continues to work closely with key partners, including SeaSpace, Sussex Police, East Sussex County Council, Hastings and Rother Primary Care Trust, Sussex Coast College Hastings, and Amicus Horizon Housing, along with representatives from the private, voluntary and community sectors to achieve our long-term shared priorities for the area. The Hastings and St Leonards Sustainable Community Strategy 2003 - 2013, sets out our vision and mission statement:

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

Mission: *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.*

The Council's 5 Strategic Priorities for 2010/11 – 2012/13 are:

- 1: Doing everything we can to soften the impact of the economic downturn on the town's economy and residents' lives**
- 2: Working closely with our partners to make the town safe and clean**
- 3: Making sure we're efficient, customer-focussed and a good organisation to work for**
- 4: Promoting equality and an inclusive, supportive community**
- 5: Tackling climate change and making Hastings more environmentally sustainable.**

The Council is facing an increasingly challenging financial situation with a significant funding shortfall identified for 2011/12 onwards as the impacts of the economic recession bite further. The Council has already experienced significant losses in key income streams, and there has been a increase in the demand for services such as Housing and Council Tax Benefits. The Government's scope for funding local government services is also expected to be severely curtailed over the period of this Corporate Plan. In particular, a significant time-limited funding stream from which we currently benefit comes to an end in March 2011, with no certainty of any successor funding.

This situation requires the Council to think carefully about what it can afford to provide, to focus on those services that are most important to meeting the needs of our local community, and to reduce costs in some areas that are not so high a priority.

We will also look to improve the ways in which we provide services, by making efficiency improvements where we can, without undermining the quality of the most important services we provide. Our councillors and staff will play a key role in helping to reshape the council over the next three years, by identifying opportunities for delivering services in more effective ways, and helping to implement changes to services.

Local people have a vital part to play as well by giving us objective feedback on how well we are performing, both in terms of the services we provide, and in our role as community leader for the area.

We will be working hard over the next three years to achieve the priorities set out in this Corporate Plan, and we intend to keep local people informed of our progress through regular updates on our website and in our council magazine, 'About'.

We are always keen to listen to feedback from local people both on our services and on the information we provide. If you have any comments on this plan or on improvements the council can make, we would value your comments. You can contact us at:

comments@hastings.gov.uk

Part I: Corporate Strategy 2010/11 – 2012/13

1. Introduction

ABOUT HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL

1.1 As a public service organisation we have two key responsibilities. The first is to deliver good quality, customer focused, value for money services to the 86,500 residents and numerous businesses in Hastings. The second is to exercise our community leadership role to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well being of Hastings, and contribute to the delivery of the town's Sustainable Community Strategy.

1.2 In undertaking these responsibilities we will aim to:

- Deliver effective local government, based on good quality customer care, which is open and responsive to residents' wishes.
- Empower and involve local people to contribute to decisions about their town and service delivery.
- Fulfil our community leadership and partnership responsibilities to achieve the best for our town.
- Make informed decisions based on reliable, accurate and relevant data and customer intelligence.
- Ensure that we understand who lives in the town and their particular needs.
- Provide fair access to services and ensure inappropriate discriminatory barriers are identified and removed.
- Value our staff and be a fair employer.
- Protect and enhance our environment.
- Balance the provision of quality services to local people and value for money to the taxpayer.

PLANNING ON A 3-YEAR CYCLE

1.3 We take a long-term view of our strategic direction and plan on a three-yearly cycle. However, we will of course review our achievements annually and check that our direction of travel is meeting our stated priorities. The Plan is a living document that provides an organisational steer, and its delivery is supported by processes that are flexible, in order to enable us to respond to changing circumstances and opportunities as they arise.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

1.4 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.

2. National and Regional Focus

2.1 The Council's key role is to promote the wellbeing of the residents and businesses in Hastings. However there are a range of external factors that influence our direction, priorities and plans. These include the impact of global economics, as well as European and National Government policy, legislation, funding priorities and performance frameworks. The following are all factors that have/will influence and drive decisions, structures and focus in Hastings over the next three years:

ECONOMIC RECESSION

2.2 The turmoil in the major world economies has had far reaching effects, and the recovery period according to most economists will be long. The country is facing a period of continued economic uncertainty. The fragile state of the Hastings economy means we are at a greater disadvantage than many other places. Previous experience has shown that deprived areas like ours are the slowest to recover.

2.3 The economic downturn is having, and will continue to have, serious financial implications for the Council, as evidenced by the major reduction of a number of important income streams: for example, Land Charges, Development and Building Control fees, and investment income. It is also resulting in more pressure on some Council services.

2.4 At the same time, the Government's scope for funding local government services is expected to be severely curtailed, and we are facing a prolonged 'Public Funding Recession'. The Government's borrowing requirement has increased because of the recession, and significant public spending cuts are now being sought by all political parties.

2.5 These spending cuts will not only impact directly on the Council's own budget and the employment opportunities it offers, but also on our partners and on the town as a whole. Hastings has relied upon significant sums of public investment to support the sustainable regeneration of our town.

2.6 The Council will continue to work with our partners to address these challenges, and will remain as flexible as we can to respond to the needs of our local communities and businesses.

GENERAL ELECTION AND COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW

2.7 The new national Government formed after the General Election (held no later than June 2010) will undertake a Comprehensive Spending Review, the publication of which will signal their priorities and the funding arrangements for public services from April 2011. The Council together with its staff and partners will need to prepare for the inevitable reduction in central funding for public services, and this will be our key focus during 2010/11.

TOTAL PLACE

2.8 Total Place is a new initiative that takes a 'whole area' approach to public services. Total Place counts the total public funding in one place and considers how local organisations can use their combined resources to lead to better services at less cost.

Total Place or at least the concepts associated with it, seems to have support across all political parties, and so is likely to continue beyond the General Election.

2.9 There are 13 pilot areas participating in the scheme, each area ensuring a diverse mix of economic, geographical and demographic profiles. The impact of the economic downturn means all of the public sector needs to find radical new solutions to not only deliver better value for money, but also better local services more tailored to local needs. Learning from the pilot areas is generating new ideas about how local partnerships can deliver more efficient and effective services. Total Place is being promoted as ‘the next big step’ to redesign how we do things and by doing so improve the quality of life for all communities.

2.10 Although East Sussex is not a pilot area, we already have a sound track record of partnership working, which gives us a good starting point from which the scope for a Total Place approach here could be explored.

NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND POLICY

2.11 The Local Democracy, Economic Development, and Construction Act received Royal Assent in November 2009. It includes provisions for economic assessments, promotion of democracy and integrated regional strategies.

Local Authority Economic Assessments

2.12 The Act creates a duty for all upper tier and unitary authorities in England to prepare an assessment of the economic conditions in its area. In two-tier local government areas like East Sussex, the County Council has this duty. It will be expected to consult with district councils, and will be required to include intelligence gathered by districts. Preparation of the assessment is just starting in East Sussex, arising from which the County Council plans to bring forward a new East Sussex Economic Strategy during 2010/11.

Promotion of Democracy and Petitions

2.13 The Act recognises the important role local authorities play in establishing strong local democracy in their areas, and requires those authorities that do not currently promote understanding about their functions and democratic arrangements to do so. The Borough Council already meets the Act’s requirements. We make detailed information available through our website, and have adopted a robust and transparent process for dealing with petitions to the Council.

Integrated Regional Strategy

2.14 Arising from the Act, a local authority Leaders’ Board is formed in all English regions except London, which works jointly with the regional development agency to integrate regional land-use and economic development strategies into a single strategy. In our Region, the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and South East Leaders Councils (SEEC, of which the Borough Council is a member) have formed a Partnership Board to develop the integrated strategy, which in due course will replace the South East Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy.

Equality Bill

2.15 The Equality Bill (currently expected to receive Royal Assent in early 2010) seeks to promote equality, particularly in the workplace, and to address discrimination. It aims to simplify the somewhat complex laws on discrimination, and to address gender pay differences and age discrimination. It will include a single equality duty for public bodies, including councils, and will ensure that they give regard to discrimination and equality in their purchasing functions.

2.16 The Borough Council has been committed for many years to providing fair access to services and employment, and to ensuring inappropriate discriminatory barriers are identified and removed. We have made good progress against the various local government equality standards, and are bringing together (in advance of the legislation) our three current Equalities Schemes into a Single Equality Scheme.

Environment and Climate Change

2.17 The policy drivers for guiding our environmental and climate change work expand an international, European, national, regional and local level. A summary of the most recent are set out below

2.18 To be completed

3. County Focus

3.1 We recognise that the best and only way to tackle the difficulties faced by our town is to work in partnership with others. Although we take advantage of the opportunities provided at a national and regional level, our most significant partnerships are currently within Hastings and St Leonards, with Bexhill/Rother and with the rest of East Sussex.

3.2 We will continue to work with our partners to ensure that the needs of Hastings residents, and other deprived communities in the County, are highlighted and appropriately addressed. The following sections sets out how we are continuing to work with others across the County and within Hastings to achieve this goal.

EAST SUSSEX INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

3.3 We worked with the County Council, other district councils and partners to develop an integrated Sustainable Community Strategy, Pride of Place, which was adopted in May 2008. The strategy sets out a vision for the whole of East Sussex in 2026 to 'create places where everyone can prosper, be safe and healthy, and live in a high quality environment.'

3.4 The strategy identifies diversity and inequality within the County, and acknowledges the need to narrow the gap between the least and most deprived individuals and communities, while raising the quality of life for everyone. It will be delivered through the Local Area Agreement (see below), a Countywide Action Plan, and the action plans that support the local Borough and District Community Strategies.

EAST SUSSEX LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA)

3.5 The aims of Local Area Agreements are to improve local services and increase economic prosperity for local people. They are three-year agreements, with priorities agreed

between all the main public sector agencies working in the area and Central Government. The LAA is also intended to provide a way of strengthening partnerships and partnership working, and streamlining performance management systems. The County Council is the accountable body for the LAA in East Sussex.

3.6 The East Sussex LAA was signed in June 2008 and refreshed in January 2009. It is made up of 42 performance indicators, including 10 focusing on education and early years. The indicators are from the National Indicator Set (the 198 national targets set by Central Government for all local authorities), and reflect the shared priorities across the County. There are a number of targets that relate to Hastings alone, in recognition of the issues and problems which affect our town, and which can only be resolved by partnership working with other agencies.

3.7 Each LAA indicator has targets and an associated delivery plan which sets out the roles, responsibilities and actions of each of the partners engaged in delivering on the targets. For more details and quarterly performance updates, please see the website of the East Sussex Strategic Partnership (the body who is overseeing delivery of the LAA) www.essp.org.ukk

HOMES & COMMUNITIES AGENCY: 'SINGLE CONVERSATION'

3.8 The new Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the national housing and regeneration agency. It engages local authorities on an area basis (in our case East Sussex) for the purpose of holding a 'Single Conversation'. This is the process through which the HCA and the local authorities will reach a shared view regarding the housing investment priorities for East Sussex.

3.9 Working together we will develop a Local Investment Plan covering proposals for delivering growth, homes, market renewal and regeneration of communities. The Plan will then be formalised into a Local Investment Agreement setting out the HCA's proposed investment for our area.

COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

3.10 Outcomes from the first year of the Comprehensive Area Assessment regime (now re-branded One Place) were published on the One Place website in December 2009. We were pleased that for both elements the Council and its partners in East Sussex performed well.

3.11 The 'Organisational Assessment' looked specifically at the Borough Council's Use of Resources (including its value for money, financial health; costs and performance; governance and ethical behaviour; risk management and workforce planning) and the way we 'Manage our Performance' (how well we are delivering our priority services and the outcomes and improvements important to local people). It found that we were 'Exceeding minimum requirements, performing well', and scored us 3 out of 4.

3.12 The County level (un-scored) Area Assessment, which looked at how well local public services and partners are working together to deliver better outcomes across the

whole of East Sussex, was also positive. As partners, we were pleased that there were no areas of concern flagged, but a little disappointed that some of the activities we regard as innovative were not accepted as notable practice.

4. Hastings & St Leonards Focus

4.1 Hastings and St Leonards is a town where some local people experience many difficulties and high levels of deprivation. However, this is contrasted by a strong sense of community identity, rich cultural and creative life, and an active voluntary and community sector. Public sector bodies, businesses, and voluntary and community bodies are working together to ensure that the quality of life and life chances of all local people are improved, so that everyone can benefit from the best our town has to offer.

4.2 Hastings, in common with a number of other coastal towns, faces significantly high levels of deprivation. Our ranking in the 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation showed that we are the 29th most deprived district in England, and the most deprived in the SE Region; we are also significantly more deprived than other areas in East Sussex.

4.3 The key issue for our town remains the need for continued and sustainable regeneration, which has to be addressed in both the immediate context of the economic recession and the longer term context of climate change. We are working hard with all our partners to regenerate the town using a range of approaches and projects.

PHYSICAL REGENERATION

4.4 The Hastings and Bexhill Regeneration Task Force (of which the Council is a key partner) has managed Government and other investment of about £80 million in the area over the past six years. Outcomes include: an 'Innovation Centre' (serviced premises for start-up and small technology-focused firms); the creation of University Centre, Hastings (UCH) from redundant space in the town's main telephone exchange; and much-needed new town-centre offices in the Lacuna Place and Priory Square developments. A new 'enviro 21' business park is also under construction, which will attract businesses involved in environmental technologies, conservation and energy efficiency to Hastings thereby further expanding and supporting our 'green economy'.

4.5 As mentioned previously, much of this regeneration has been made possible by Government investment. As this source is likely to be severely curtailed in future, we will need to seek alternative funding partners for further development: for example, from the private sector and European funded partnerships and initiatives.

EDUCATION-LED REGENERATION

4.6 The expansion of further and higher education, through both the University Centre Hastings (UCH) and the investment of £92 million in the new Sussex Coast College Hastings (SCCH), is providing greater choice and opportunities for young people from the Hastings area and beyond.

4.7 The 2nd phase of SCCH build – providing education facilities in the Ore Valley – is due to open in summer 2010, and plans are well developed for expanding UCH. The County Council also has plans for a new public library in Hastings town centre.

4.8 There have been concerns for a number of years about the performance of Hastings secondary schools. The GCSE results had deteriorated, and in 2008/09, Hastings was lowest in the League Tables (out of 354 local authorities) in this regard.

4.9 In response to these concerns, Ninestiles education consultancy has been working with three of these schools to improve performance. The County Council's longer term strategy for educational achievement is to develop two new academies in place of these schools.

4.10 Improved educational performance, if sustained, is one of the strongest positive indicators of real regeneration. It could be expected to have impact on community cohesion and crime reduction (particularly amongst young people), and to provide a basis for future prosperity.

ENVIRONMENTALLY-LED REGENERATION

4.11 We have been particularly successful in securing European Union funding for environmental regeneration projects. The Council is leading on 'Future Cities' - a European Partnership project, with partners from the Hastings and Bexhill Task Force and Hastings Trust that will see delivery of a model 'eco-retrofit' project of a Victorian property in Hastings. This will be of national significance, demonstrating the economic feasibility of best available technology.

4.12 The Council is also leading (together with partners in France and Belgium, plus SeaSpace locally) on an Interreg proposal called Answers in the Carbon Economy (ACE). The proposal is an opportunity to secure EU funding to support the upgrading, modernisation, and improved energy efficiency of the Council's industrial estates; and to build the Council's capacity by being the Lead Accountable Body, and raising Hastings' profile in order to facilitate future applications for EU funding.

4.13 The Council also works in partnership with others in the town on initiatives such as Energise Hastings which aims to address fuel poverty, maximise energy efficiency measures in homes and businesses and encourage skills and training for people to become installers of renewable energy technology.

CULTURALLY-LED REGENERATION

4.14 Within a range of cultural regeneration schemes, the most high-profile and significant is the new £9 million Jerwood Gallery and associated Destination Stade project, work on which is scheduled to begin in spring 2010. This scheme is expected to enhance the town's reputation at a regional and national level as a cultural destination, to act as a catalyst for other improvements to the town's cultural offer, and to bring both direct and indirect economic benefits.

4.15 The Council regards environmentally and culturally-led regeneration as potentially key areas for focussing our own future regeneration efforts, as these issues are becoming increasingly more important both locally and internationally. (Further text to be completed)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSION

4.16 The Council has been able to deliver many aspects of its regeneration activities by deploying the additional resources we have received in recognition of the complex issues faced by the town. The most recent of these are the Area Based Grants (ABGs) we received over the three years from 2008/09 – 2010/11.

4.17 We have been using these funds to work closely with local providers to make a positive contribution to the local economy, despite the difficulties brought on by the recession. The Council is investing over £2.7 million of Area Based Grant in programmes providing local people with support and skills into employment. As a result, over a thousand local people in 2009 and more than two thousand in 2010 will receive valuable training and other skills development by Sussex Coast College Hastings and other local training providers.

4.18 The Council is also funding a range of support offered to local people through 1066 Citizens Advice Bureau and other local agencies, which has meant that hundreds of residents have already received financial advice, loans and other help in managing debt.

4.19 More than £2.4 million of Area Based Grant is being invested in the local employment base, helping to retain local businesses and jobs during the economic downturn, and providing comprehensive support to businesses wishing to start up or relocate to Hastings. In the first half of 2009 alone, twenty-seven new businesses started up in Hastings as a direct result of the Council's support and despite the recession.

4.20 The Council is also investing over a £1 million of Area Based Grant into supporting local communities and assisting organisations working in local neighbourhoods to improve the quality of life for residents in greatest need of help. Other Area Based Grant funds are being invested in initiatives to support business growth and increase the number and range of employment opportunities for local people over the longer term.

4.21 Given the state of the public finances, the receipt of successor funding post March 2011 is extremely unlikely. Even if a successor regime were to be announced, and the eligibility criteria were appropriate for Hastings circumstances, the level of funding would certainly not replace current levels.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR REGENERATION

Hastings & St Leonards Sustainable Community Strategy

4.22 Our Sustainable 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 2005/06, 2008/09 and targets for 2012/13.

4.23 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"

4.24 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."

4.25 Our Community Strategy was refreshed in 2005/06 to ensure its priorities and targets remained relevant, and again in 2009/10 following our [Town Conference](#), in order both to

comply with the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act 2007 and to reflect our changed economic circumstances.

4.26 The priorities set out in our town's Sustainable Community Strategy are also reflected in the East Sussex Integrated Community Strategy, and the East Sussex Local Area Agreement. Local people are invited to monitor progress against the commitments in our strategy by reviewing performance against 23 Key Targets.

Hastings Local Development Framework

4.27 The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the physical expression of the Sustainable Community Strategy vision and sets out the Strategy for future spatial planning and place shaping of the town. The LDF plays a central role in the delivery of land for housing, economic growth and regeneration as well as ensuring the infrastructure for sustainable communities is in place.

4.28 Development of the LDF reaches a key milestone in 2010/11 with the submission of the Core Strategy to the Planning Inspectorate and an Examination in Public in March 2011.

WHAT LOCAL PEOPLE TELL US ABOUT OUR TOWN – 2008 PLACE SURVEY

4.29 All local authorities are required to carry out the prescribed national Place Survey every two years, to measure how local people feel about the quality of life in their area, and how satisfied they are with local public services. The Borough Council employed Ipsos Mori to conduct the survey in the autumn of 2008, although the final results were delayed until early summer 2009.

4.30 The Survey identified the things local people felt made an area good to live in, the top four of which were: the level of crime, clean streets, health services and affordable decent housing. The survey also identified the top four things local people felt most needing improving, which were: the level of crime, activities for teenagers, job prospects and clean streets.

4.31 The Local Strategic Partnership used the results to inform the refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy (see 4.18 above). We recognised that our communication efforts may have been too targeted at improving the perception of our town by those who live outside it, and we committed to ensuring local people are made better aware of local successes and improvements. Service providers and partners also agreed to address the poor perceptions of some local services reported in the survey, including where these are at odds with other performance information.

4.32 A repeat survey is due to be undertaken in autumn 2010.

5. Hastings Borough Council Focus

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND PRINCIPLES

5.1 The first stage in the annual business planning cycle is for the Council to decide its Strategic Priorities. These are reviewed each year to ensure that they remain appropriate to current circumstances and opportunities and are informed by local people's views, national legislation and evidence from needs analysis, research and performance management.

5.2 With the on-going economic circumstances the Council needs to ensure its limited resources are properly targeted towards meeting needs of our community. In November 2009, the Cabinet reviewed its current Strategic Priorities - these had previously been the subject of consultation with the Citizens' Panel, staff and partners and had been well supported.

5.3 The Place Survey had been undertaken in autumn 2008 and the results made available in mid 2009 (see para 4.25). The Cabinet agreed that, as three of the top four areas identified in the survey by local people as most needing improvement (crime, jobs and street cleanliness) were already reflected in our Strategic Priorities, that the Priorities should be retained and used to underpin the Corporate Plan and Budget for 2010/11 onwards.

5.4 It was also agreed that the fourth area identified by local people as most needing improvement i.e. activities for young people be included as an operational priority, reflecting the fact that lead strategic responsibility for young people rests with the County Council.

5.5 Our Strategic Priorities for 2010/11 to 2012/13 are set out below in **bold**, together with supporting operational priorities. The linkages between these Strategic Priorities and the annual service and cross cutting targets are made in Part II.

Priority 1: Doing everything we can to soften the impact of the economic downturn on the town's economy and residents' lives

The Council will do this by...

- a) Supporting projects that protect employment and help sectors with longer term growth potential for when the economy improves
- b) Supporting projects that get people into training and jobs and that stop young people falling into unemployment straight after leaving school
- c) Constantly looking for new investment in the town's infrastructure to help safeguard employment during the economic recession
- d) Maintaining our investment programme so we keep improving housing in the town
- e) Working closely with our partners to offer residents and visitors good leisure and cultural opportunities

Priority 2: Working closely with our partners to make the town safe and clean

The Council will do this by...

- a) Working with partners on anti-social behaviour and other key safety issues, particularly in the town centres
- b) Protecting the health and safety of local people and the environment by effective enforcement
- c) Continuing to improve our rubbish and recycling service and street cleanliness

- d) Maintaining and enhancing our high quality open spaces for all to enjoy

Priority 3: Making sure we're efficient, customer-focussed and a good organisation to work for

The Council will do this by...

- a) Involving our staff in achieving further efficiencies and improved value for money, both internally and with our partners
- b) Continuing to provide essential services and to do the things we must do by law, at or above minimum requirements
- c) Improving the quality and effectiveness of all our contacts and communications with local people
- d) Improving our administrative efficiency and maximising benefits from new technology
- e) Supporting our staff through periods of rapid change and uncertainty, and striving for a workforce that better reflects our local community

Priority 4: Promoting equality and an inclusive, supportive community

The Council will do this by...

- a) Encouraging mutual respect between diverse groups and facing up to prejudice
- b) Improving our understanding of different groups living in the local community and making sure our service delivery is sensitive to these differences
- c) Supporting development of sustainable and cohesive communities and helping local people to influence decisions about their local area
- d) Working with partners to provide activities for teenagers

Priority 5: Tackling climate change and making Hastings more environmentally sustainable.

The Council will do this by...

- a) Reducing the environmental impact of our buildings and all our activities and meeting our 10:10 commitment
- b) Looking to maximise the employment and regeneration potential from implementing sustainable initiatives across the town
- c) Providing a lead to local partners and the residents of the town to realise the town wide CO₂ reduction target included in the Sustainable Community Strategy;
- d) Encouraging the use of public transport, walking and cycling as alternatives to car use including supporting a network of suitable cycle routes through the town
- e) Conducting a sustainability check on all new policy initiatives prior to implementing

5.6 The principles that underpin the development of the Council's Corporate Plan and the associated Budget are that we will:

- Continue our primary focus on the regeneration of Hastings and St Leonards
- Provide good quality, customer focussed cost effective services
- Focus on affordability and value for money, recognising 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 other local authorities and partners 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

HOW WE USE OUR RESOURCES

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS*)

5.7 All Councils are expected to plan their finances over more than a one year period. The longer term planning of finance supports the achievement of priorities in the Corporate Plan and allows more effective planning of services. It encourages Councils to predict events in the future, and to develop strategies to deal with them. The budget development process examines the financial implications of the draft Corporate Plan priorities, and matches these to available resources to define the Council-wide budget.

5.8 The current economic climate makes our financial and service planning much more uncertain than would normally be the case. It is within this context that the Cabinet agreed the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2010/11 – 2012/12 in November 2009.

- 5.9 The key objectives of the MTFS are to:
- Ensure the continued reconciliation of the Council's available resources to its priorities
 - Maintain a sustainable Revenue Budget
 - Continue to identify and make efficiency savings
 - Review relevant fees and charges comprehensively as a means of generating additional funding for re-investment in priority services.
 - Ensure sufficient reserves are maintained
 - Ensure that the Council is in a position to set future Council tax rises that are reasonable, affordable, and meet the expectations of the public in relation to the level of service provided
 - Ensure value for money is achieved in the delivery of all services

5.10 Due to the on-going economic uncertainty and the anticipated reduction in Central Government support, the Council is facing a number of strategic financial risks over the next three years. These include:

- Reduced Government funding in terms of the Annual Grant Settlement from 2011/12
- Loss, or significant reduction of Area Based Grant funding in 2011/12
- Continued loss of income
- Increased demand for our services
- Delay in achieving capital receipts from the sale of land and assets
- Failure to deliver planned efficiencies and PIER savings (see below)
- Pension Fund Performance

* For full details of our financial context and planning please see the [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2010/11 - 2012/13](#) and Budget 2010/11 – 2012/13 documents

Priority Income and Efficiency Reviews (PIER)

5.11 The Council is tackling the challenge of reducing resources head on. We widened the scope of our annual Priority Income and Efficiency Review (PIER) process to focus on not only finding efficiencies and savings for the 2010/11 Budget, but also to plan ahead for 2011/12 onwards.

5.12 The PIER process will carry on into the 2010/11 financial year and will identify a range of options, which take account of best and worst case scenarios for the level of public funding that may be available to the Council over future years.

5.13 The PIER process involves Lead Members and senior officers thoroughly examining the Council's 'Base Budgets' to identify efficiency savings, and to ensure that existing spend is still a Council priority and offers value for money. The process seeks opportunities for:

- Identifying further efficiency savings within services and across the organisation;
- 'Invest to Save' schemes to help modernise and improve services and generate efficiencies in the medium term;
- Providing greater value for money services by improving business processes and/or making better use of technology;
- Vigorously exploring options for delivering services with partners to improve the cost effectiveness, quality and/or resilience of our activities and services

5.14 The PIER process will identify a range of options for service delivery reductions and these will be thoroughly tested during the summer before forming part of the draft Budget proposals for 2011/12. For example, a sample of local people will be asked to give their views about the options emerging from the PIER process by using a consultation technique called SIMALTO, which enables them to trade off choices about service delivery levels and make their relative priorities clear.

5.15 We recognise that although we have a good track record of achieving efficiencies, having consistently exceeded our centrally set efficiency targets since 2004/05, the challenge facing us over the next three years is significant and will dominate much of the available management capacity and focus.

Staffing and Physical Resources

5.16 In order to deliver its priorities, the Council not only requires financial resources but also good quality staff and physical resources. There are detailed supporting strategies for both of these areas that underpin the Corporate Plan.

5.17 To be completed

Natural Resources

5.18 During 2010 our use of natural resources we will be judged as part of our Use of Resources Assessment – the Audit Commission will require evidence of how well we understand and quantify our use of natural resources*; how we are managing our performance to reduce our impact on the environment, and how well we manage environmental risks. (*Energy, water, air, land and soil, materials and waste minimisation)

5.19 The Assessment will also review our progress against relevant national indicators:

- NI 185 - CO2 reduction from local authority operations.
- NI 188 - Adapting to climate change.
- NI 194 - Level of air quality – reduction in NOX and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations.
- NI 197 - Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites.

IMPROVING THE WAY WE WORK

Business Process Improvement and Contact Centre

5.20 We have made very significant progress in rationalising our office accommodation over the past year and have moved the majority of our staff into three key buildings. We are now able to provide accessible and appropriate reception facilities for local people at each of these sites.

5.21 Our next focus is to make even better use of the space we continue to occupy. We will maximise the opportunities for flexible, mobile and home-working, in order to reduce further our office space requirements and accommodation costs.

5.22 We believe we have a real opportunity to improve services for local people whilst allowing council services to work smarter and more efficiently. By implementing a Contact Centre we will be able to mask the complexities of the council and present ourselves in a unified way. By creating an integrated approach to handling customer queries we will seek to provide consistent opening hours across services, resolve more calls at first point of contact and be more responsive and consistent.

Equality, Diversity and Cohesion

5.23 The Council has an enduring commitment, as well as a legal requirement to address equalities issues. We aim to be able to “recognise people’s different needs, situations and goals and work towards removing the barriers which limit what people can do and can be”. We work towards this by ensuring that our service planning and delivery considers the equalities strands of:

- Age
- Gender
- Religion/ Belief
- Ethnicity
- Sexuality
- Disability
- Economic and Social Deprivation

5.24 Our approach to equalities is at the heart of all our plans and strategies, so we can inspire and motivate the wider community. We are required by law to monitor who works for us, delivers services for us and accesses our services. By analysing our monitoring, we can continue to provide good quality services for those who already access them on a regular basis as well as better understand who don't use them at all and why.

5.25 We are working hard to ensure our services are equally accessible and are reviewing and removing any adverse impacts in our policies and procedures through our Equality Impact Assessments; we are looking to broaden the diversity of our workforce and are ensuring any barriers to employment are removed.

5.26 Our Equalities and Diversity work also supports our efforts to improve social cohesion in our town. We want to help create communities where there is a shared future vision and a sense of belonging for all; a focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside recognition of diversity; and strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Environment and Climate Change

5.27 We undertake a wide range of actions and initiatives across services and with partners, in pursuit of Priority 5. This work relates to both the internal activities we undertake to reduce our own environmental impact, and those that encourage others to make our town more environmentally sustainable (see section above)

5.28 Our focus for our internal activities over the next period will be on achieving our organisational 10:10 commitment – to reduce our carbon emissions by 10% during 2010, and also to reduce our energy use thereby reducing costs and emissions.

Information, Communication and using New Media

5.29 The 2008/09 Place Survey results demonstrated that we are not communicating as effectively with local people as we need to. For example, despite significant improvements in performance levels for street cleaning, the survey reported that many people had a poor perception of the cleanliness of the town. A significant number of local people also did not feel they could influence decision-making. The lower level of satisfaction with the Council (down from 49% in 2006/07 to 36% in 08/09) is in stark contrast to the satisfaction with the area itself, suggesting the Council is not getting the credit for many of the improvements to local quality of life.

5.30 Making sure local people understand what we do and how they can inform the choices we make will be increasingly important, as resources are tightened and the Council has to make difficult choices over what services to prioritise.

5.31 To be completed

6. Risk Management

Risk Management Strategy

Risks to achieving our Strategic Priorities

6.1 To follow

7. The Link to Annual Priorities - Corporate Part II

7.1 Part II of the Corporate Plan sets out targets and details some of the activities that will be undertaken in 2010/11 to meet our priorities. These are monitored by Overview and Scrutiny quarterly and are the means by which the Council is publicly held to account.

7.2 We ensure that our staff are focussed on achieving our longer term and annual priorities, by cascading the Sustainable Community Strategy targets, Council Priorities and annual targets and milestones into detailed Service Delivery Plans and individual staff targets. These are monitored through quarterly performance reviews and the staff appraisal process.