



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Annual Report

Formerly Best Value Performance Plan

2005

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Foreword



The past year has been very exciting in terms of Ashford town and the Borough as a whole. Investment has been strong, unemployment has been falling and business formation is high. Ashford has unrivalled transport links and from 2009 will be the only town in the UK with direct access to eight major London termini.

You will all have undoubtedly read or been involved in the work around Ashford's Future. It is through this work that the Council is ensuring that the success of the Borough is built on a sustainable basis, in other words we need to ensure that our success is not just short-term but maintained for future generations. The Council will continue with this work and continue to represent the views of the people of the Borough in all our dealings with partners and Central Government.

Over the coming months, all the residents of the Borough will have the opportunity to comment on the proposals for the future growth of Ashford. I would urge everyone to take the opportunity to make their views known to the Council.

The new Annual Report contains the Council's Corporate Plan, which was refreshed by Members during the year. The Corporate Plan reflects the commitment of all Councillors and sets the scene for what the Council is striving to achieve.

The Chief Executive has listed many of the major highlights of the year and all Members of the Council have been committed to ensuring that the people of the Borough have a Council that delivers effective services to its customers.

Councillor Paul Clokie
Leader
Ashford Borough Council

Foreword



Welcome to what has become, in effect, the annual report on the work of Ashford Borough Council. This document provides an overview of the Council's corporate objectives, with more detail on the objectives set for the individual service areas, along with information about the Council's performance against various statutory criteria and a summary of our priorities for further improvement.

The past year has seen significant progress on a number of major corporate objectives.

The plans for Ashford's future growth are being firmed up. During the year, work continued on an integrated water catchment management strategy for the town, several major transport studies, an economic action plan and an overall master plan reflecting extensive public consultation on what the expanded town of Ashford should look like in 20 years' time. Meanwhile there is practical evidence of the measures being taken to facilitate growth and improve the quality of life for the Borough's residents. Work began in January on the complete remodelling of the Stour Leisure Centre. The new Indoor Bowls Hall opened on Victoria Park in 2004. The preparatory work to enable the building of a major extension to the County Square Shopping Centre has been completed. Negotiations on the refurbishment of the Stanhope Estate with Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits from the Government have entered their final phase and the Council has maintained its excellent record of prudent financial management: it continues to charge the lowest level of Council Tax in Kent.

For the Council, a highlight of the year was the award of "Beacon" status for its approach to Asset Management. Ashford was the only district council in the country to achieve this prestigious award in this category: it recognised the effectiveness of the Council's approach to Asset Management and its Innovative work with partner organisations (such as social care and the Ashford Primary Care Trust) to deliver excellent new shared facilities for the community.

The Council has also been recognised as a leader in the use of new technology to enable our customers to contact the Council, obtain information and transact business using a wide range of mediums, including text messaging, digital TV, video conferencing, the internet and our state of the art Call Centre and Visitor Centre. Ashford was runner up (highly commended) in the Local Government section of the National e-Government Awards.

This report shows how well the Council is doing in a wide range of areas, and our plans for further improvement. There are challenges ahead but we are determined to build on the firm foundations already established and to continue to deliver excellent value for money for local Council Tax payers.

D J R Hill
Chief Executive
Ashford Borough Council

Setting the Scene

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has selected Ashford as one of the major growth areas of the South-East, asked to provide 31,000 new homes and 28,000 new jobs by 2031.

Ashford is, therefore, poised for major growth over the coming years. As a Council we are seeking to do much more than provide first-rate services: we are leading Ashford into the future both through the development of the town and by building prosperous communities.

Geographically, Ashford has always been a transport hub. In the 1600s, when it was primarily a market town, Ashford provided roads to the port of Faversham and to Canterbury, Hythe, Romney Marsh and the Weald. With the arrival of the railway in 1842 and the foundation of the Railway Works in 1846, the town's population more than doubled between 1841 and 1861, from 3,000 to 7,000.

Today, the railway still plays an important role in the town. Ashford station provides fast links to both London and Europe and is one of the busiest stations in the country. The links between Europe and London have encouraged significant investment from American, Japanese and French companies that looks set to continue in the future.

Ashford Borough Council has been rising to the challenge of managing this fast-growing area:

- In December 2003 the Government's Comprehensive Performance Assessment stated that 'Ashford Borough Council is a good council that is well-placed to deliver further improvements.' We now aim to become an 'excellent' authority by 2007.
- In May 2005 an Audit Commission report on Ashford's performance in delivering sustainable communities declared that we were a 'good' authority and also that we have 'promising prospects for improvement'
- × In 2005 we achieved beacon status in the area of Asset Management. A scheme by which councils that achieved innovative and excellence in designated areas are recognised by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)

About the Area

The Borough of Ashford covers an area of 224 square miles and, according to the Office of National Statistics' estimate, has a population of 105,900. The two main areas are Ashford, which contains many shops and businesses as well as the international train station, and Tenterden, which contains many historic buildings and is set in the heart of some of the finest countryside in Kent.

Ashford itself has been subject to major development over the past few years. The McArthur Glen designer outlet store has brought many new visitors to Ashford, as have the many new shops and businesses that have opened in the High Street (see www.ashfordtcp.co.uk for more details). Construction is about to begin on a new Debenhams department store that will further enhance the town centre.

As well as attracting new business, Ashford is also finding itself home to an increasing number of people. The Government recognises Ashford's potential and has assigned over £11.4 million of funds to help Ashford grow sustainably. This money will allow Ashford to lay the foundations for major growth, providing 28,000 new jobs and 31,000 new homes.

In addition to this, Ashford's Future delivery board has been continuing its work. This is a major partnership between Ashford Borough Council and its partners from other Local and Central Government bodies. The board has now started on the extensive programme of projects to stimulate and sustain growth. For more information please visit www.ashfordsfuture.org/index.htm

Whilst much is planned for the future of Ashford, we are not complacent about the current challenges we face. Work has started on a Private Finance Initiative to redevelop the Stanhope estate, one of the most deprived wards in the South-East, over the next 10 years. Work has also commenced on a major refurbishment of the Stour Leisure Centre in Ashford in order to meet the increased leisure needs of the town. In addition to this, we have continued to develop the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy. These are the plans that will help direct Ashford Borough Council's work over the next couple of years in all service areas. More details of the Corporate Plan can be found later in the document.



About the Council

The elections on 1st May 2003 saw residents elect 43 councillors to represent them until 2007. Councillors are responsible for directing Ashford Borough Council which employs around 500 staff to deliver the council's various services. Of the 43 councillors, 25 are Conservative, 7 Ashford Independent, 5 Liberal Democrat, 4 Labour and 2 Independent.

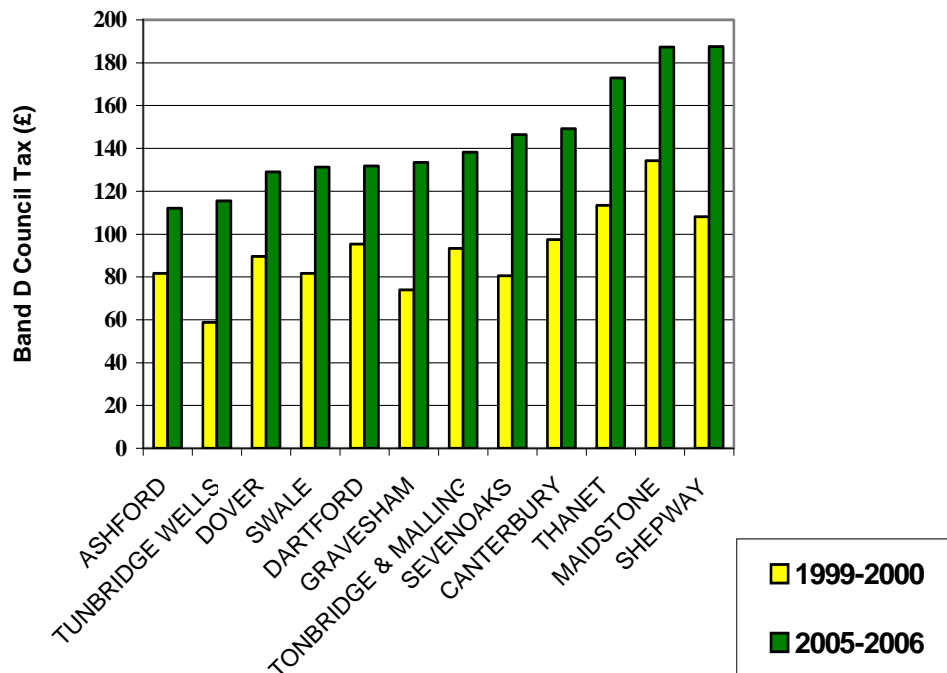
Ashford Borough Council is split into service groups, each responsible for a range of services. The arrangement of services is shown below:



The Council has achieved much in the past few years, including:

- A 'Good' assessment from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) the national rating system for all local authorities.
- Secured £35 million of funding for the development of Ashford Town Centre.
- Launched the Customer Call Centre and Customer Contact Centre.
- Developed a new Corporate Plan and Community Strategy.
- Achieved Beacon Status from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) for our Asset Management service.
- Secured over £4.2 million for cultural services projects between April 2004 and March 2005.
- Maintained the lowest Council Tax rate in Kent.

Council Tax in Ashford



As a Council, we are determined to build on these achievements. In doing so we aim to:

- Achieve an 'Excellent' assessment in our CPA in 2007.
- Maintain our low Council Tax rates.
- Begin to deliver the Masterplan for the development of Ashford town centre.
- Continue work on the regeneration of Stanhope.
- Complete the refurbishment of the Stour Centre.
- Continue work on designing improvements to the Ashford ring road.

We also recognise that some areas do not perform as well as others. We aim to tackle these weaknesses by:

- Delivering all aspects of the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy.
- Improving our community engagement through increased public and partnership consultancy.
- Improving our performance management culture to achieve top quartile performance in every service.
- Increasing value for money through better budgetary control.
- Improving customer service standards through the use of challenging targets and revising the complaints procedure.
- Increasing the accessibility of council services on-line.
- Improving the quality of our internal and external communications.

This Report aims to show how we will achieve these goals and how Ashford Borough Council will fulfil its mission:

To protect and improve the quality of life of every resident of the Borough, both now and in the future.

Corporate Plan Summary

Planning Process and Structure

To produce this new plan, the Borough Council has thoroughly reviewed its previously approved policies and strategies. This review has reflected progress made in preparing for Ashford's Future and the work of the Ashford Partnership, which has now created a framework for the Community Strategy. The council has also taken the opportunity to consider the outcome of the Council's first Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and to consider how it can work more effectively through a series of in depth Service Resource Reviews and by preparing a Medium Term Financial Plan.

The new Corporate Strategy is in loose-leaf format and has three parts

- × **A Mission Statement** – This sets out our purpose and overall objectives
- × **An Action Statement** – This sets out what we aim to achieve between 2003 and 2007, with costs and key outcomes.
- × **A Statement of our Performance and Targets** - which we will revise yearly when we prepare and update our individual Service Plans, showing the immediate targets for the year ahead and the progress made against our overall objectives.

In this way we will show a clear connection between our policies, our priorities, the actions we will take to meet them, the resources we have and performance against targets.

Mission Statement and Approach

Ashford Borough Council's 'Mission' is "To protect and improve the quality of life of every resident of the Borough, now and in the future."

We will do this by

Listening

- . to what our community says
- . to feedback from our staff and customers
- . to what our partners tell us they are trying to achieve.

Learning

- . from our experience
- . by training and developing our staff to serve the community better
- . from the best examples set by others

Leading

- . by example
- × by representing the community's interests when the Borough is affected by the actions of others
- . by working with others for the common good

The Corporate Plan is split into four distinct objectives:

A Better Future

To meet this objective we will:

- × Take all necessary steps to ensure future growth and development in and around the Ashford Urban Area is high quality and sustainable
- × Prepare a new Local Development Framework (a document which sets out the basis for managing planning over the next few years) for the Borough by 2006

A Better Environment

To meet this objective we will:

- × Protect and improve the local environment
- × Transform the quality of Ashford Town Centre
- × Encourage a new approach to public transport
- × With partners contribute to improving community safety and reducing the fear of crime

Better Lives

To meet this objective we will:

- × Lobby with partners through the Local Strategic Partnership, for new and improved schools and colleges
- × Increase the opportunities for local residents to prosper
- × Develop active, creative and sustainable communities
- × Modernise the Stour Leisure Centre by 2006
- × Promote healthy living and social well being
- × Develop strategies to ensure our services meet the needs of all

Better Services

To meet this objective we will:

- × Manage our resources so that Ashford continues to have one of the lowest council taxes in Kent
- × Consult widely and effectively with the community to ensure that our services meet their needs and aspirations
- × Improve the quality of all our services to ensure they deliver what is required to a suitable standard, as economically and efficiently as possible
- × Communicate clearly and effectively



Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) is the Government's judgement of how well the council operates. In 2003 Ashford Borough Council, in its first ever assessment of this type was judged as being 'a Good Council that is well placed to deliver further improvements'. This was a fantastic achievement, reflecting the hard work and dedication of everyone at the council.

However being a 'Good' council isn't good enough for Ashford, we want to be judged as an 'Excellent' council, bringing our residents, partners and stakeholders the 'best' in public service achievement, reliability and value.

In order to achieve a judgement of 'Excellent' we need to remain focused on continually improving the way in which we deliver services. The following improvement plan details the steps we need to take to improve ourselves as a council and deliver the excellent services our residents deserve.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN, MAY 2005 TO DECEMBER 2007

“JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE”

KEY ACTIONS

Tighten up Corporate Planning

Maintain the organisation’s clear focus on delivering Members’ objectives, as reflected in the 2003-2007 Corporate Plan. Review and refresh the Corporate Plan objectives each year (in the light of community feedback and maintaining the link to the Medium Term Financial Plan) and monitor progress on a six monthly basis. Maintain a clear link between Corporate Plan objectives and service area, team and individual objectives so that everyone in the organisation understands how they contribute to the delivery of those corporate goals. Formalise the co-ordination of objectives and service planning to promote greater cross-departmental learning. Make preparations to develop a new Corporate Plan immediately after the 2007 Elections, in time to influence the 2008/2009 budget-setting and service planning cycle.

Strengthen the Ashford Partnership

Further strengthen joint working with local public, private and voluntary sector partners (in the Ashford Partnership) to promote the co-ordinated activity necessary to deliver the objectives of the Borough Community Strategy, the Ashford’s Future project and relevant outcome targets under the Kent Local Area Agreement. Encourage partners to reflect Community Strategy objectives in their organisation’s corporate objectives; utilise the Partnership to deliver real and measurable improvements in the quality of life of Borough residents; and promote further community involvement in monitoring and developing the community strategy.

Improve consultation and community engagement

Review and improve the Council’s approach to consultation, and community engagement. Ensure that intelligence available to the Council and its partners is effectively harnessed, disseminated and utilised to inform future plans and strategies. Promote a co-ordinated community consultation exercise during 2006/2007 to lay the foundations for a refreshed Community Strategy and a new Corporate Plan. Complete work on the development of an evidence-based social inclusion strategy, both for the Council and for the Ashford Partnership.

Maintain efforts to get the best out of Ashford's Future

Exploit the opportunities provided by the Government's commitment to facilitate the growth of Ashford in order to strengthen the Council's community leadership role, preserving local democratic control over the pace, nature and quality of growth and securing real improvements to the quality of life of existing as well as future residents. Draw up a high level project plan and risk assessment for the successful delivery of Ashford's Future. Set ground breaking standards for the quality and sustainability of development in the Borough, fully reflecting the principles of Local Agenda 21 (LA21 is the local version of a initiative agreed internationally, by which we must question the impact that we are having on our quality of life and on the planet in which we live).

Secure Better Communication

Secure significant further improvements in two-way communications, both internal and external. Communicate effectively in a timely and efficient manner with the public, our partners, stakeholders and employees of the council to ensure the role, objectives and aims of the council are delivered and understood.

Promote a stronger performance management culture

Embed a positive performance management culture throughout the organisation. Draw up and apply a new integrated performance management framework for the organisation that will bring all relevant monitoring information together in a regular and timely fashion, to enable any necessary corrective action to be taken. Make effective use of the Council's new performance management software (PB Views) to measure, monitor and report progress. Tackle poor organisational and individual performance. Update the Council's strategic risk assessment each year and promote effective risk management across all Services. Compare our performance with the national average and with that of relevant comparators; aim to achieve top quartile performance in every service area and to learn from others' successes.

Focus on workforce development

Fulfil the objectives of the Organisational Development Plan, securing further changes in culture and working practices throughout the Authority to ensure that the Council's staff are well motivated and well-equipped to deliver the organisation's priorities. Conduct a preliminary analysis of likely future workforce requirements, taking account of Ashford's growth and changes in the volume and nature of services required. Ensure that the performance appraisal system is applied comprehensively and consistently and that identified corporate and individual training and development needs are met.



Drive further efficiencies throughout the Council

Secure excellent value for money for local Council Tax payers by pursuing a financial strategy in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan. Maintain the current high standard of budget monitoring and control. Extend the Council's analysis of the future revenue implications of Ashford's growth and Identify strategies for closing any resource gaps. Utilise the Service Development Strategy to deliver a series of streamlined reviews that will resolve our service challenges and contribute to balanced finances. (The seven themes are Strategic Planning, Procurement, Property Management, Communications and Marketing, Public Open Space and Amenity Management, Leisure, Cultural Services and Tourism and Housing Management.)

Improve project management capacity by developing the Project Office as a project and programme management resource but also as a vehicle for promoting better project management throughout the organisation. Continue to meet ambitious e-Government targets and develop further improvements to our Internet presence, and ability to transact business on-line.

Embed a Customer Focused Culture throughout the Organisation

Further reinforce the importance of customer service as a driver for all that we do. Identify, monitor and achieve challenging service standards as measured through national and appropriate local performance indicators. Enhance the way we utilise customer feedback to highlight local priorities and how these can be best reflected in the services we provide. Use customer feedback, service reviews, bench-marking and performance measures to ensure we are providing value for money.

Communications & Marketing

The Communications and Marketing team at Ashford Borough Council are responsible for the production of press releases, handling publicity opportunities, marketing all events, producing in house information and communication materials, external consultation and research exercises, and internet and intranet content.

The team aims to provide a high quality service that promotes Council activities, ensuring that all Ashford residents and visitors are fully aware of the Council's activities and are able to voice their opinions.



Service Standards

To provide a high quality and respected marketing and communications service internally and externally which promotes and publicises Council activities and offers sound media and publicity handling advice.

Budget

	Budget 2004/05 (£)	Projected Outturn 2004/05 (£)	Budget 2005/06 (£)
Total Expenditure	244,850	257,341	204,010
Recharges	10,120	-35,784	-23,380
Income	-63,000	-57,712	0
Net Expenditure	191,970	168,845	180,630

Past Achievements

Increase frequency of 'Review' Magazine

In March 2005 we launched the newly developed, Ashford Voice Magazine to replace 'Review'. This is a monthly publication distributed to all resident's of Ashford and displayed in public buildings around the borough. It is hoped that this publication will keep resident's and visitor's informed on events within the borough, enabling increased access to information on the council and public services.

Wider Partnership Communication

During 2004 the Communications and Marketing team developed a new newsletter for partners associated with the local strategic partnership and Ashford's Future.

Intranet and Internet Functionality

Having appointed a new Web Design and Content Officer, work has been completed on updating abcexchange, the Council's internal website, to improve the function of the intranet and the way people use it. This work is being further developed by looking at the Council's external websites.

Current Progress

Clearer Council Brand

This year the Communications and Marketing team hope to have developed a clearer corporate brand. By developing appropriate use guidelines, the new brand will ensure that all council activities are recognised within the Borough and beyond, with clearly recognisable imagery used on all official documentation.

Promote Plain English

In order to ensure that all Ashford Borough Council's documents are readily accessible the Communications and Marketing team actively promote the use of Plain English throughout the Council. This should result in the council presenting reports, letters and publications in a way that customers and staff find easier to understand.

Internet Surveys

In order to ensure that we are fully aware of what Ashford's residents want, we have introduced a number of Internet Surveys on various topics, such as a Licensing survey and also the What Matters survey, which sought the opinions of 11-19 year olds in the borough. This survey method is being constantly developed and further surveys will be carried out in this way.

Performance Indicators

C1 - measures the level of staff satisfaction with the information they receive in the monthly staff publication, 'Root and Branch'

Indicator number and name	2004/05 result	2004/05 target	2003/04 result
C1 - percentage of staff satisfied with information received from Root and Branch*	81%	80%	67%

* Root and Branch is the internal staff magazine that is published on a monthly basis

Future Goals

Improved approach to Consultation

At the beginning of 2007, the Council will have looked closely at the way it carries out research and consultation and how it uses that information. A framework will be developed, using information from the Council, partners and other sources, to ensure a clear picture of the attitudes, aspirations and needs of the resident's and businesses of the Borough.

Standardised forms

By the end of 2006, Communication and Marketing plan to standardise the style of many of the Council's forms and leaflets. This will help to reduce the costs and help develop a clearer corporate brand for Ashford Borough Council.

Contact



For further information, please contact

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Corporate Core

The Corporate Core is comprised of five units of specific activity that primarily have an effect on the whole council;

The Corporate Property team is responsible for property and facilities management as well as the emergency planning function for the council.

The Corporate Governance team are responsible for internal audit, performance management and scrutiny;

Policy and Planning team co-ordinate corporate planning across the council and with its partners;

The Personnel and Development Team organise recruitment, personnel policies, payroll and training.

The Project Office manage major projects and programmes that come within the Council's remit and promote effective project management throughout the council.

The fundamental purpose of the Corporate Core is to enable the rest of the organisation to operate more effectively and coherently, and to help anticipate and respond quickly to new challenges.



Service Standards

To support the Chief Executive and Management Team in providing strategic direction to the authority as a whole; and to manage certain of the key corporate processes necessary to facilitate the achievement of the Council's objectives.

By providing strategic support to the council as a whole as well as continuous support to all our services to help them deliver a better standard of service every day. It is clear the most pertinent part of the Corporate Plan relating to the Corporate Core is that of Better Services.

Budget

	Budget 2004/05 (£)	Projected Outturn 2004/05 (£)	Budget 2005/06 (£)
Total Expenditure	2,732,270	2,449,532	4,680,100
Recharges	-1,933,570	-1,619,906	-3,136,830
Income	-6,000	-11,058	-672,720
Net Expenditure	792,700	818,568	870,550

Corporate Property	Budget 2004/05 (£)	Projected Outturn 2004/05 (£)
Total Expenditure	3,576,620	4,087,762
Recharges	-2,204,700	-2,257,987
Income	-1,604,510	-1,789,537
Net Expenditure	-232,590	40,238

NB with the 1st April 05 re-organisation Corporate Property is now part of the Corporate Core

Past Achievements

Beacon Status

The 'Beacon Council' Scheme was set up by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) in order to disseminate best practice in service delivery across local government. Ashford Borough Council won Beacon status for Asset Management in March 2005 and as a result is one of only five councils nationwide with this status, which allows us to help other authorities.

Emergency Planning

The new Civil Contingencies Act has placed additional duties on the Council. These duties include having an up to date emergency plan in place and also providing advice to the public on business continuity, carrying out risk assessments and sharing information with other public bodies to ensure a co-ordinated and joined up approach to preparing for and responding to emergencies.

Current Progress

Asset Management

The Council's Property Strategy sets out the key actions necessary to ensure the continued efficient and effective management of the Council's assets. This includes looking for ways to share property with partner organisations and ensuring that all new community facilities provided as part of Ashford's growth are sustainable and affordable in the long term.

Audit Partnership

Moving forward with the partnership agenda by forming a newly resourced audit section jointly with Maidstone Borough Council. This will lead to increased opportunities for efficiencies and learning.

Performance Management Framework

Introducing a clear Performance Management Framework (PMF) so that all members of staff can identify clearly the role they play in achieving the Council's objectives. An interactive version will be launched on the website by the end of the year, to enable easy access to all policies and performance information.

Performance Indicators

BV1 and 2 measure the successful engagement and involvement of the Council with the local population and the amount of work the Council has done towards improving community and race relations.

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV1 - Does Authority have a community Strategy?	Yes	Yes	No
BV1b - Date of community strategy review	Apr-07	Apr-07	
BV2a - Equality Standard (Level 0-5)	1	2	0
BV2b - Duty to promote race equality	26.32%	20.00%	26.32%

BV11, 16 and 17 monitor the of outcome of the Council's equal opportunities policies and measure and put into context the progress made towards equal opportunities employment in the Council.

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV11a - Top earners that are women	21.50%	25%	20%
BV11b - Top Earners that are ethnic minorities	0%	2.40%	0%
BV16a - % Employees declaring Disability	3.82%	5.00%	4.41%
BV16b - % Economically active disabled people in borough	10.45%	10.45%	10.45
BV17a - % Employees from ethnic minority	1.90%	2.41%	2.68%
BV17b - % Economically active ethnic minority in borough	1.13%	1.13%	1.13%

BV12, 14 and 15 monitor the improvements in the sickness and the retirement rate of the Council workforce.

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV12 - Working days lost due to sickness	8.61	6.49	9.94
BV14 - Retirement Rate (excl. Ill health)	0.76%	0.20%	0.59%
BV15 - Ill Health Retirement Rate	0.19%	0.30%	0.20%

BV156 monitors the Council's buildings for accessibility for disabled people, measuring the Council's compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV156 - Suitability of authorities buildings for the disabled	67.00%	50.00%	50.00%

Future Goals

Undergo CPA

During 2007 we hope to have another Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Having been previously assessed a 'good' authority, we are now hoping to achieve an 'excellent' authority status. This will be achieved by tackling the weaknesses and maintaining areas of strength shown in our previous CPA. This will be accomplished through the completion of the CPA Improvement Plan.

Service Development Reviews

Each year, Ashford Borough Council completes a series of Best Value Reviews. These reviews are aimed at improving performance whilst maintaining or reducing costs so that the services are performing at their optimum level. After much work on service reviews a new programme of seven themed reviews will be started in 2005/06 which will continue the Best Value principles.

Update Corporate Plan

By 2007 our current corporate plan will have been completed. A new corporate plan will therefore be devised in order to continue the work currently being done.

Contact

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Cultural Services

Cultural Services at Ashford Borough Council fulfil a diverse range of services:

- the Regeneration Team are responsible for the Community Grants Fund, Urban Forums and supporting the Local Strategic Partnership;
- the Tourism Team run the Tourist Information Centres and support Museums and other heritage sites;
- The Cultural Planning and Development Team are responsible for project management, play areas and conservation & ecology;
- The Cultural Projects Team cover arts & creative industries, sports and youth development services. In addition, Cultural Services manages the Stour Leisure Centre, the Julie Rose Stadium, the Tenterden Leisure Centre and community centres. Together, the teams aim to enable local people to influence the work, services and culture of the Borough, in order to provide a rich cultural backdrop to living and working in Ashford.



Service Standards

To enable local people, the voluntary, public and private sectors to influence the work, services and culture of the Borough Council in order that we can work together to provide a rich cultural backdrop to living and working in Ashford.

By working in partnership with various organisations across the district, Cultural Services hope to improve the lives of the residents and ensuring the Better Lives section of our Corporate Plan is realised. Through the development of active and creative communities we hope to improve the quality of life of residents, ensuring that communities are supported and developed.

Budget

	Budget 2004/05 (£)	Projected Outturn 2004/05 (£)	Budget 2005/06 (£)
Total Expenditure	3,096,470	3,339,414	3,302,700
Recharges	-82,470	-99,648	-59,350
Income	-23,620	-267,705	-342,860
Net Expenditure	2,990,380	2,972,061	2,800,490

NB the reorganisation has meant a transfer of some units

Past Achievements

Stour Centre Refurbishment

During 2005 the first phase of work started on the Stour Leisure Centre Re-modernisation. This ongoing work will provide an improvement to the services the Stour Centre can offer, creating a modern leisure and healthy lifestyle centre. In addition a Management Trust has been formed. The new trustees and Chief Executive will support the Stour Centre's ongoing development and will promote the Stour Centre function as a more commercial operation.

Voluntary and Community Sector

A Compact was launched in June 2004 as a result of working with the voluntary sector and others. We have now helped to establish Ashford Voluntary Network which is a structure representative of the voluntary sector within the Borough. Through this network there will be a funding review of the sector this year, seeking to develop voluntary services as Ashford grows, which will ensure that these services are represented and help them to be more effective.

Securing Partnership Funding

Over the last year we have managed to secure 4.3 million pounds worth of partnership funding for various projects within the remit of Cultural Services, which will help to improve the quality of life of residents.

Current Progress

Sports Development

There are a number of major ongoing projects which are enabling the sports and leisure development within the borough. A new Indoor Bowls Centre was completed in October 2004 the first national tri-athlon championships is taking place in in July 2005. Also work will be starting this year on a woman's and girl's netball centre at Christ Church School, adjacent to the existing soccer centre.

Urban Community Forums

Four community forums which cover all un-parished areas of urban Ashford, (Willesborough, Kennington, South Ashford and Central Ashford) have been set up in order to ensure that all Ashford residents have access to a community forum. This year we are continuing to develop these forums and looking at issues to help them to deliver their priorities identified from community assessments.

Parks and Open Spaces

We are currently finishing phase one of our major parks improvements. During this initial phase we have built new play and multi-games areas. We are also planning on carrying out some new planting, footpath work, environmental improvements and new wildlife habitats to improve the quality of our parks and open spaces.

Performance Indicators

BV170 measures the number of visits to Council funded or part funded museums and is intended to encourage usage of museum's

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV170a - No of museum visits per 1,000 population	26.17	32	30.96
BV170b - Number of museum visits that were in person, per 1,000 population	26.17	32	30.96
BV170c - Number of museum visits that were in school groups	N/A	92	92

BV177 monitors the amount of money spent on providing community legal advice and aims to measure the growing level of funding that is being directed to accredited services, and thereby increasing the quality.

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV177 - Community Legal advice	97.71%	94%	86.20%

SL1 and 2 measure the number of visits to the Stour Centre and Julie Rose Stadium, by monitoring this, we will hopefully be able to measure an increase in these numbers.

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
SL1a - Number of Stour Centre Visits per 1,000 population	2.4	2.4	N/A
SL1b - Number of Julie Rose visits per 1,000 population	0.58	0.58	N/A
SL2a - Stour Centre visits from concession groups per 1,000 population	0.09	0.09	N/A

Future Goals

Discovery Centre

Work is progressing to support Kent County Council on the development of a new Discovery Centre which will be an opportunity for the council to assist in the development of an innovative new library service in a major new public building. It will also provide additional services, such as information on births, marriages and deaths services and video conferencing links to other community buildings.

Local Arts and Media Centre

During the current year, we will be working with SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) the Arts Council and Kent County Council to produce a planning and feasibility study for the provision of a new arts and media centre.

Reviewing Cultural Strategy

Culture is at the heart of Ashford's growth. Ensuring that both existing and new residents have access to a wide range of leisure facilities and events. As a result the Cultural Strategy will be reviewed in 2006 and on a regular basis thereafter, to ensure that the needs of the community are met.

Youth Services

A new and revised youth plan will be launched to provide yet more new services for young people. The Local Strategic Partnership will oversee the multi-agency delivery of new youth projects in collaboration with young People.

Cultural Services

For further information, please contact:

Mark Carty
Head of Cultural Services
mark.carty@ashford.gov.uk
01233 330477

Environmental Services

Environmental Services are split into several teams, each performing a wide variety of functions for Ashford Borough Council.

The Clean Team are responsible for waste management, street cleansing, abandoned vehicles and pest control.

The Green Team manage grounds maintenance, cemeteries, trees, and allotments.

Environmental Health manage food safety, health and safety enforcement, licensing and taxi and private hire, public entertainments and lotteries.

Environmental Protection look after noise, air quality and contaminated land.

The Community Safety Unit deals with Anti Social Behaviour in conjunction with the police and other agencies. They also manage the Town Centre Markets.

The Monitoring Centre manages the Council's Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) , lifeline alarms, town centre radio and out of hours Duty Officer System.

Parking services manage parking enforcement.

Engineering Services look at parking strategy and other parking issues, along with a range of engineering functions.

Business Services supports all the other teams and assist with the development of the Service Plan and Business Strategies.



Service Standards

To provide efficient, effective and well managed Environmental Services for the Community ensuring that the Council complies with its statutory responsibilities and achieves its corporate aims and objectives.

By ensuring that the environment is kept tidy, clean and free of rubbish the general satisfaction of residents and visitors with the appearance of the borough should improve. By endorsing and encouraging recycling and composting schemes they also aim to decrease the amount of domestic waste that goes to landfill. Environmental Services creates a better physical environment which as well as contributing to the Better Environment concept of the Corporate Plan also works towards Better Lives and Better Futures.

Budget

	Budget 2004/05 (£)	Projected Outturn 2004/05 (£)	Budget 2005/06 (£)
Total Expenditure	7,964,280	8,281,320	6,363,340
Recharges	-1,314,760	-1,474,450	-1,031,580
Income	-1,258,420	-1,386,167	-1,014,140
Net Expenditure	5,391,100	5,410,703	4,317,620

NB the reorganisation has meant a transfer to Environmental Services of some units

Past Achievements

Air Quality Monitoring

DEFRA, the Governments Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has established a clear timetable with the aim of improving air quality. In order to complete this timetable Ashford Borough Council is adopting clear service standards, including reducing Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions in Council buildings and monitoring air quality at nominated sites to help keep a high standard of air quality.

Grounds Maintenance Contract

In 2004 the Council awarded a new grounds maintenance contract to ensure that all green spaces are maintained to the highest standards. All Council owned ground is maintained through this contract and as such the contract is reviewed regularly to ensure a quality product at affordable prices

New Licensing Act

The first appointed date for the new licensing act came in February 2005. Responsibility for liquor licenses came under the responsibility of Local Authorities. We have, through time and people management ensured that this increased workload has not affected or disrupted frontline services.

Current Progress

Domestic Waste Strategy

In order to ensure that all domestic waste is dealt with in the most appropriate manner, Environmental Services are continually developing the Domestic Waste Strategy. This strategy ensures that we meet the challenging new targets for waste collection - including 21% of domestic waste being recycled by 2005/06. As a result of this strategy, in April 2005 a garden waste collection scheme was introduced in the Borough. The 'blue box' scheme was introduced in 2002 and it is hoped that this will be extended in 2007.

Working with Police

Ashford currently has one of the lowest crime rates in the County. By working with the Police and other community partners the new Community Safety team set up in July 2004 aims to reduce the amount of Anti Social Behaviour therefore reducing our crime rate. This will be helped by the new Community Safety Partnership Strategy, which was published in April 2005.

Health and Safety

Through joint working with the Health and Safety Executive, Environmental Services aims to improve Health and Safety at work within the Borough. This is being done by raising levels of staff awareness and improving working conditions.

Performance Indicators

BV166 is intended to measure the procedures that local authorities have in place in order to carry out their environmental health enforcement duties effectively.

Indicator Number and Description	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV166 - Environmental Health Checklist	84.2%	84.15%	84.15%

BV82, 84, 86 and 91 all ensure that waste reduction is a high priority for the local authority, whether by reducing the weight of household waste collected or by increasing the percentage of recyclable waste that is collected.

Indicator Number and Description	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV82a—Percentage Household waste recycled	13.36%	18%	13.67%
BV82b Percentage of waste composted	0.60%	0.59%	0.41%
BV84 - Household waste collected per head	413.93kgs	425 kgs	404.74kgs
BV86 - Cost of waste collected per house	£37.51	£37.60	£38.94
BV91 - Kerbside Collection of recyclables	82.1%	78.35%	78.35%

BV199 which has actually been expanded for the 2005/06 year measures the reduction in unacceptable levels of litter.

Indicator Number and Description	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV199 - Local Street & Environmental Cleanliness - lower percentage = cleaner	16.33%	25%	38.94%

BV126 and 127 both measure levels of crime within the Borough and aims to measure reduction in crime. These indicators are shared with Kent Police.

Indicator Number and Description	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV126 - Domestic burglaries per 1000 population	4.4	8.69	amended
BV127a - Violent offences committed by a stranger, per 1,000 population	2.2	2.38	2.51
BV127b - Violent offences in a public place, per 1,000 population	7.2	6.73	7.08
BV127c - Violent Offences in connection with licensed premises, per 1,000 pop	0.68	0.46	0.48
BV127d - Violent offences committed under the influence, per 1,000 population	2.63	3.19	3.36

Future Goals

Improve Parks

Environmental Services at Ashford Borough Council are constantly working to improve our parks and open spaces. We aim to provide 2.4 hectares of parks and open spaces for every 1,000 residents of Ashford and to maintain these spaces to the highest standard. We aim to complete a major survey which will help to improve the parks of Ashford in the next financial year

A Cleaner Borough

Together with Kent County Council, Environmental Services at Ashford Borough Council are working to ensure that all streets are kept clear of litter and refuse. This will result in a cleaner Borough and a more pleasant environment in which to live, work and visit.

Contact

For further information please contact:

Paul Jackson
Head of Environmental Services
paul.jackson@ashford.gov.uk
01233 330518

Financial Services

Financial Services at Ashford Borough Council is divided into two sections.

Accountancy Services deal with all accounts including payments, budget monitoring, financial returns and claims and treasury management.

Revenues and Benefits handle all Council Tax and Housing Benefit payments and collection of all monies due to the Council.

Together, they aim to provide an efficient, effective and well managed financial service for the Council and to ensure that all our customers receive a fast and reliable service.



Service Standards

The service objective is to provide efficient, effective and well managed financial service to the council, so that the Council can carry out its functions and that its financial matters comply with legislation, in particular the Section 151 Officer's statutory responsibility.

Financial services is in a unique position, through its accountancy function it helps services carry out their functions thereby helping provide a well run council, and better services to residents. It also ensures that the money the council receives from resident's is used carefully and to maximum potential, enabling the council to maintain its commitment to keeping the low level of council tax that Ashford resident's currently enjoy.

Budget

	Budget 2004/05 (£)	Projected Outturn 2004/05 (£)	Budget 2005/06 (£)
Total Expenditure	25,956,560	28,636,451	28,858,980
Recharges	-1,682,760	-2436,269	-1549,260
Income	-21,542,730	-23,716,002	-24,434,230
Net Expenditure	2,731,070	2,484,180	2,875,490

Past Achievements

Implementation of DIP in Revenues and Benefits

Revenue and Benefits now have their new Document Imaging Processing fully implemented. This system allows staff to view all correspondence relating to a case on screen, thereby greatly reducing staff time spent searching for case notes etc. Allowing response times to queries to be improved.

BACS payment system

In February 2005 a new Banks Automated Credit System (BACS), which allows money to be sent electronically between banks was implemented. This allows us to pay major suppliers faster and more securely. There are also plans to widen this to smaller suppliers, such as landlords and eventually to individuals

New Purchase Ordering System

In May 2004, a new electronic Purchase Ordering system was implemented. This ensures better monitoring of purchasing activities and the ability to audit our purchasing systems and allows improved budgetary control in services.

Current Progress

Minimising Benefit Delays

Having implemented the new Document Imaging Processing system, we have already seen some positive effects on the processing time for Housing and Council Tax benefit applications. We are, however, looking to try and meet the performance levels of the top quartile (top 25%) of local authorities in this.

Maintaining Low Council Tax

Currently Ashford residents enjoy the lowest council tax rates in Kent. By maintaining financial awareness within the council, Ashford Borough Council aims to keep its costs low so that residents will continue to enjoy low rates for years to come.

Introduce DIP in Invoice Processing

Following the success of implementing a Document Imaging Process in Revenues and Benefits, we are looking at introducing a similar system in invoice processing. We will be introducing this in March 2006 and it should include all the benefits of the Revenues and Benefits system, including being able to reference notes and faster turnaround times.

Performance Indicators

BV 8, 9 and 10 all monitor the prompt collection or payment of monies to and from the council.

Indicator number and name	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 target	2003/04 Actual
BV 8—Invoices paid on time	88.95%	92.5%	88.54%
BV 9—Percentage of Council Tax collected	97.83%	98.1%	97.43%
BV 10—Percentage on Non-Domestic Rates collected	99.65%	98.8%	98.97%

BV 76a, b c & d all monitor fraud reduction services within Housing Benefit

Indicator number and name	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV 76a— Housing Benefit: visits per 1,000 caseload per year	311	300	519
BV 76b—Housing Benefit security: Investigators per 1,000 caseload	0.4	0.3	0.44
BV 76c—Housing Benefit security: Investigations per 1,000 caseload	37	22	28.48
BV 76d—Housing Benefit Security: prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload	5.4	4.5	3.48

BV 78a, b & 79a monitor the speed and accuracy of administering Housing and Council Tax Benefit

Indicator number and name	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV78a—Speed of processing: New HB/CTB claims	40.25 days	36 days	49 days
BV78b—Speed of Processing: Change in Circumstances for HB/CTB claims	8.25 days	9 days	13 days
BV79a—Accuracy of Processing HB/CTB claims	99.2%	98.6%	96.8%
BV79b—Percentage of recoverable overpayments recovered	60.40%	62.0%	54.69%

RB 1, 2, 3 & 4 all monitor the efficiency of the Revenue and Benefits Team through measuring administration costs, speed of correspondence and success of collecting income.

Indicator number and name	2004/05 result	2004/05 target	2003/04 result
RB 1— Cost of administering a Council Tax account	£14.50	£13.91	N/A
RB 2—Cost of administering a Benefits Claim	£81.00	£66.95	N/A
RB 3—Percentage of Correspondence replied to within 10 working days	76.9%	90%	N/A
RB 4—Percentage of sundry debtor income collected	90.25%	93%	91%

Development of E-Procurement

By 2007 we hope to have set up an e-procurement system to enable us to buy and tender for goods and services online. Saving administration time and ensuring that we are purchasing in an efficient way, we will be able to transmit purchase orders electronically, direct to suppliers.

New Housing Allowance

The Department for Work and Pensions has recently tested a new Local Housing Allowance in nine trial areas and are currently completing further consultation regarding its viability. As with any new scheme, Financial Services will endeavour to keep up with this legislation including any IT and administrative issues this may incur.

For further information please contact:

Pauline Adams
 Head of Financial Services
 pauline.adams@ashford.gov.uk
 01223 330545

Housing

Housing Services are committed to working with our current housing stock and in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to ensure that the Borough is able to increase the volume of total housing stock available to work towards balanced communities, that are sustainable and remain that way. That all housing stock is maintained to an appropriate condition and that all Council Housing stock meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.



Service Standards

To work towards ensuring that the communities within the borough remain sustainable. To increase the number of affordable homes and ensure sufficient supported housing units are provided. To prevent and support people who become homeless. To provide services to Private sector Landlords and administer Disability Facilities Grants (DFG's)

Housing Services work towards improving the quality of life of residents of the Borough, therefore concentrating on the Better Lives aspect of the Corporate Plan. By developing strategies and encouraging inclusive communities, this service also helps to progress the Better Future and Better Lives areas of the Corporate Plan.

Budget

	Budget 2004/05 £	Projected Outturn 2004/05 £	Budget 2005/06 £
Total Expenditure	527,750	849,752	681,710
Recharges	0	0	0
Income	-85,590	-390,665	-190,590
Net Expenditure	442,160	459,087	491,120

Decent Homes Standard

Nearly all Council properties achieved the Decent Homes Standard in the year 2004/05. This is well ahead of the Government target of achieving 100% by 2010.

HomeBridge Facility

The HomeBridge Facility, a recuperative care facility for frail elderly people in a community based setting has been completed. Provided in a groundbreaking partnership scheme, demonstrating creativity and initiative with Kent County Council, the Primary Care Trust and Age Concern, it is hoped that this facility will allow residents to regain a sense of independence while supporting their care needs.

Updated Housing Needs Survey

By April 2005 an updated Housing Needs Survey was completed. This will enable the updating of information, which will directly influence the type of housing needed and direct funds to the appropriate area.

Diversity Packs

Ashford Borough Council has taken the lead in partnership working with other South East Kent Council's and Housing Associations to launch a diversity pack. This pack assists residents in understanding issues of diversity and involving all areas of the community within any resident or community group.

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan/Housing Strategy

The purpose of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Housing Strategy is to show that the Council can deliver the levels of service, home improvements and maintenance required by the Council and its tenants.

Improve Domestic Energy Efficiency

Housing services are currently undertaking work to ensure that domestic energy efficiency is improved throughout the borough. As well as giving users a significant saving it will also help to improve the local environment.

Housing Option Appraisal Process

The GOSE (Government Office for the South East) gave formal approval for Ashford's options appraisal in May 2005. This report looks at the future of our housing stock and how Ashford Borough Council can best deliver decent homes and provide good quality services to its tenants. We were the first Authority in Kent to achieve sign off for this.

Willesborough Windmill Site

On the new Willesborough Windmill Site, we have worked with a Registered Social Landlord to build highly energy efficient housing available for rent, as part of the provision of affordable housing.

Tenants Forum

As a result of the Borough's tenant's forum we are working towards improving neighbourhoods. Combating anti-social behaviour through better communication with the difficult to reach sections of the community and by working with tenants through initiatives such as the Diversity Packs to build and improve the neighbourhood environment.

Performance Indicators

BV183a & b, 202 & 203 These are all government indicators that measure information on the authority's effect on homelessness.

Indicator No & description	2004/2005 result	2004/2005 target	2003/2004 result
BV183a—Length of stay in temporary accommodation (bed & breakfast)	7.8 weeks	1 week	4.43 weeks
BV183b—Length of stay in temporary accommodation (hostel)	N/A	N/A	0 weeks
BV202—Number of Rough Sleepers	3	3	n/a
BV203—Change in number of families in temporary accommodation	26.37	26.37	n/a

BV63, 64, 184a & b and 185 are all government indicators designed to monitor maintenance of Local Authority dwellings and the quality of housing in the borough.

Indicator No & description	2004/2005 result	2004/2005 target	2003/2004 result
BV63—Average SAP rating of Local Authority owned housing	66.1	66	64.02
BV64—Number of unfit private dwellings returned to occupation or demolished as a result of our action	3	4	0
BV184a—The Proportion of non-decent Local Authority Dwellings	2.15%	4.41%	4.06%
BV184b—Percentage change in non-decent local authority dwellings	66.05%	25%	48.28%

BV74 and 75 both measure tenant satisfaction, monitoring this should lead to an increase in these satisfaction levels, ensuring the happiness of as many tenants as possible.

Indicator No & description	2004/2005 result	2004/2005 target	2003/2004 result
BV74 - Satisfaction of tenants - council houses	81%	83.00%	81%
BV75- Satisfaction of tenants re consultation	61%	60%	61%

Future Goals

Stanhope Regeneration

PFI will enable the council to positively enhance this area and enhance the lives of those people living in Stanhope. To make sure that the regeneration of Stanhope continues to make progress, the Council will now undertake a number of the key activities including the appointing architects for the project and organising the next round of resident consultations.

Choice Based Lettings

To ensure equality and fairness in access to housing there will be a review of Choice Based Lettings. This letting system gives people choice in where they live. However as there are now a number of policies that govern this area, we need to review the policy and form a consistent strategy towards accessibility of housing.

Rural Housing Guidance

Ashford Borough Council will be working with Housing Association's and Parish Council's on how to deliver affordable housing in rural areas. It is hoped that the resulting strategy in this area will be used as best practice and shared with other council's throughout the UK.

Sheltered Housing Review

We will be carrying out a sheltered housing review with the following objectives. To ensure we provide the best quality support we can for our older residents and to consider the pros and cons of the current service set-up and assess if alternatives deliver the quality tenants want more affordably.

Contact

For further information, please contact:

Tracey Kerly
Head of Housing Services
tracey.kerly@ashford.gov.uk
01233 330

Customer Services & ICT

Customer Services and Information Communication Technology are responsible for four separate areas:

Customer Services provide both face-to-face and telephone support and advice to all residents of Ashford Borough through the customer contact centre;

Information Communication Technology manage technical support and systems development within Ashford Borough Council;

Print Room provides comprehensive reprographics services;

Executive Support provide a range of document production services (including Electronic Document Management);

Overall, they aim to provide an efficient and effective service to Ashford residents as well as a comprehensive Technology system to officers and members.



Service Standards

The service objective is to provide efficient and effective customer service to members of the public as well as to provide comprehensive information technology services to the Council .

Information and Communications Technology, combined with Customer Services ensure that this Service is at the heart of the council. The Customer Services Assistants aid communication with the residents of the borough, through the Customer Contact Centre and on the phone, ensuring that they have the correct information and support from their council. The ICT section of this service enable the computer systems and software that are used by all services. This department is the support service for the whole council.

Budget

	Budget 2004/05 £	Projected Outturn 2004/05 £	Budget 2005/06 £
Total Expenditure	2,542,710	2,763,960	2,087,570
Recharges	-2,363,290	-2,378,083	-2,119,110
Income	-235,920	-362,746	-60,200
Net Expenditure	-56,500	23,131	-91,740

Past Achievements

Introduction of new CRM system

From Mid 2004 we have implemented a new Customer Relationship Management System which has allowed for easier co-ordination of all transactions with the council.

Relocate Servers

The contract with an external service provider ended in 2005. As a result we have decided to relocate the servers to Ashford Borough Council. This move has ensured that repair times are quicker and any hardware updates that are required can be completed promptly.

Electronic Service Availability

Ashford Borough Council has now enabled 86% of services to be available electronically. This is compared with 64% last year. As a result of this continuous improvement, we are hoping to increase electronic availability to 100% by 2006.

Staff Web Content Management

As the internet service at Ashford Borough Council has grown so has the need for staff to take responsibility for their own areas. A new content management system is now in place and should allow the web content on internet sites to be updated directly by services and therefore ensure that it is relevant and up to date.

Introduction of new SMS and video conferencing system

In order to enable us to reach our target for the delivery of services available electronically we need to look at various popular forms of communication. This includes implementing new technology such as text messaging (sms) and video conferencing within our customer services department. A system allowing these to be integrated into the existing system is planned for July 2005.

Disseminate Best Practice

Having established a Service Improvement Team there is ongoing work to ensure that each service look at ways of improving the quality of their customer service and produce service standards focussed on customer service delivery.

Customer Satisfaction

Ensuring that customer satisfaction improvement is paramount to the council. We continue to improve on the customer satisfaction ratings and also improve on the number of customer enquiries that are dealt with at the first point of contact. (see Performance Indicators, on the next page for further details on the progress of this)

Current Progress

Performance Indicators

BV157 is a statutory government indicator that is designed to make all interactions that are enabled to be available for electronic delivery

Indicator No & description	2004/2005 result	2004/2005 target	2003/2004 result
BV157 Types of interactions delivered electronically	86.19%	85.00%	64.00%

ICT 1 & 3 are local indicators which are intended to help us measure the success of IT in keeping essential computer services working and also how quickly they respond to any problems or queries that arise.

Indicator No & description	2004/2005 result	2004/2005 target	2003/2004 result
ICT1 % of calls logged with IT Help Desk dealt with within 2 working days	77.25%	80.00%	Not recorded
ICT3 % of computer systems available to services	99.35%	99.5%	Not recorded

ICT 2, 4 and 5 are all local indicators which are being measured to ensure that we improve our efficiency in customer services,

Indicator No & description	2004/2005 result	2004/2005 target	2003/2004 result
ICT 4a % of call centre calls answered on time (within 2 minutes)	80.7%	80%	New
ICT 4b Average time taken to answer call centre call by operator	71 secs	None set	New
ICT5 % of call centre calls abandoned	27.8%	20%	New

Future Goals

Central Correspondence Handling Unit

The primary stages of development for the Council's Central Correspondence Handling Unit is underway and it is anticipated this will be implemented by the end of 2006. This will ensure that correspondence is distributed through the council quickly and specifically, enabling a faster response time to correspondence.

New Gateway Centre

We are setting up a new Gateway Centre in conjunction with Kent County Council, Ashford PCT and a range of voluntary sector partners which will provide a one stop shop for Ashford residents. In time this will grow and encompass more public services, enabling even greater access to information for all residents.

Document Management System

Producing a comprehensive business case for the implementation of a corporate document and information management system. The result of this will enable us to decide whether to implement a document management system for the council.

Contact

For more information please contact:

Rob Neil
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rob.neil@ashford.gov.uk
01233 330577

Legal & Democratic Services

Legal and Democratic Services at Ashford Borough Council is split into two units;

Legal Services provide the full range of legal services to the organisation and the Legal and Democratic Services Manager is also the Council's statutory Monitoring Officer;

The Democratic Services unit is split into two distinct areas —Member Services, which provides support to the Council's administrative structure at member level and the Mayoralty, and Electoral Services which deals with all election and electoral registration matters.

Together they aim to provide efficient and cost effective services.



Service Standards

To provide efficient and cost effective services which are responsive to client needs and embrace the Council's core values and objectives.

By enabling and supporting the Council to work within its legal obligations, Legal and Democratic Services help the Council to ensure that it carries out all of its functions in a legal way, fulfilling the better services section of the Corporate Plan . By supporting the Members and Mayor this Service also ensures that the democratic processes are upheld and the views of the community, through elected members, are expressed.

Budget

	Budget 2004/05 £	Projected Outturn 2004/05 £	Budget 2005/06 £
Total Expenditure	2,243,840	2,179,594	2,150,460
Recharges	-926,240	-907,497	-843,780
Income	-79,810	-135,522	-109,370
Net Expenditure	1,237,790	1,135,575	1,197,310

Past Achievements

Implementation of Case Management

The software package, Case Management, provides a consistent approach to file management, document production and performance monitoring. This programme has now been rolled out through legal services.

Enhance S106 support capacity

Legal Services looked to increase their capacity to provide the ongoing level of support required by Planning Services in relation to enforcement and major site development. Through recruiting a solicitor specifically for this purpose, Legal Services have taken steps to ensure that there is a closer working partnership between planning and legal services. This closer working between departments will enable the Council to achieve more for Ashford's future.

Current Progress

Review On-line Publication

Since January 2004 Legal and Democratic Services have introduced an online system for publishing committee agendas, reports and minutes. These can be viewed by both members and the public. In April 2005 a review took place which endorsed this format and encouraged members to use this service. As a result it is hoped that there will be both environmental and cost savings to the council.

Providing on-going legal advice

This year the Legal Service will be required to provide advice on a wide range of council projects, including the Stour Centre, Stanhope PFI and legal arrangements for the improvement of M20 Junction 10. As well as masterplanning work with Ashford's growth and the Local Development Framework.

LDS3 monitors the speed with which member services publish the minutes of meetings, allowing public access to relevant information.

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
LDS3a - Exec minutes published in 3 working days	100%	100%	New
LDS3b - Non-exec minutes published in 5 working days	95.45%	95%	New

Lexcel Accreditation

Developed by the Law Society, Lexcel is a quality mark for public and private sector legal services which demonstrates achievement of high standards of performance management, client care, financial and staff management, service planning and administrative procedures. Receiving this accreditation is something that Legal & Democratic Services will be looking at.

Manage all Elections

During the current and throughout the next three years a number of elections will be held. These are all managed by electoral services. These include:

Election Type	2005	2006	2007
UK Parliament	X		
County Council	X		
Borough Council			X
Parish Council			X

Apart from these programmed elections, Electoral Services manages elections for the filling of casual vacancies within the Parish, District and County Council areas as they arise. Any National Referendum's on issues related to Europe will also be organised and managed by the Electoral Services Team.

Contact



For further information please contact:

Terry Mortimer
Head of Legal & Democratic Services
terry.mortimer@ashford.gov.uk
01233 330210

Planning and Development

Planning & Development's main objective is to help plan successfully for the Borough's future.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has selected Ashford as a major area of growth and Planning & Development, working with partners and the Ashford's Future Delivery Team, will ensure that all development proposals are of the highest value and quality. As well as promoting economic growth and job creation, Planning & Development aim to create places that both visitors and residents can enjoy for many years.



Service Standards

To plan successfully for the Borough's future and deliver an excellent planning service adding value and quality to development proposals to create places people enjoy and sustainable development; promoting economic growth; and giving staff scope to develop and constantly improve their skills and the service we provide.

Planning and Development primarily work towards the Better Environment section of the Corporate Plan. Through careful planning they allow residents and visitors to enjoy the Ashford area and enable residents to have a say in the future development of their community.

Budget

	Budget 2004/05 £	Projected Outturn 2004/05 £	Budget 2005/06 £
Total Expenditure	2,786,690	3,524,496	4,523,600
Recharges	-105,510	-130,144	-504,380
Income	-1,152,820	-1,877,555	-2,804,560
Net Expenditure	1,528,360	1,516,797	1,214,660

Past Achievements

Masterplanning Greater Ashford and the Town Centre

The Masterplan for Greater Ashford area has now been prepared and published its options report in May 2005. This outlines the key choices for the next local plan — now called the Local Development Framework (LDF) Masterplanning on the town centre has also progressed, but is not due to be published until July 2005. Together these reports aim to lay the foundations to ensure that growth and development in and around Ashford achieves the key principles of making a better, more sustainable built environment.

Preferred Ring Road Remodelling Scheme

Transport remodelling of the various options is now being completed to evaluate how a two way traffic system can be introduced. Designs for the early works, which will set the new quality standard for the rest of the project, are well advanced. Works will begin in 2006.

Agree new LDF Scheme

The new Local Development Framework scheme has been agreed and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement submitted - this sets out how the community will be involved in preparing each of the LDF documents. The Council has produced its 'options report' for the key first part of the LDF - The Core Strategy

Current Progress

Progress Local Development Framework to enquiry stage

In line with the agreed scheme, LDF policies will be prepared that translate the ambition of Ashford's Future and the community's views into a reality. Detailed policies on sustainable construction and energy efficiency and the creation of new cultural and community facilities as part of developments will be set up. In order to establish these policies, the core strategy of the LDF will go through a period of public consultation and it is hoped it will be ready for a public enquiry by late 2006. In addition, the Local Strategic Partnership will help promote wide participation in the LDF.

Detailed design of ring road remodelling

By 2006, an overall concept for the new ring road scheme will have been completed and the first phases designed in detail, so that work can begin to radically improve the ring road.

Major Sites Charter

By summer 2005 the Council and partners will have agreed a detailed manual to help it deliver substantial new developments on key sites in and around the town. This will make sure that developers and investors have confidence in the Council's commitment to change.

Performance Indicators

BV106 and SP1, 2, 3 and 4 all monitor the provision of additional housing on sites either previously developed—saving green field sites, or of affordable housing which increase provision of housing to council resi-

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV106 - New Homes on a brownfield site	14%	75%	83%
SP1 Percentage affordable housing on sites of 25+	19.76%	20%	20%
SP2 - Number of affordable housing on sites of 25+	17	150	17
SP3 - New Housing density	38.5	30	38.8
SP4 - New homes granted permission	246	800	n/a

BC1 and 2 help to measure the efficiency of Building Control, By monitoring these areas we can aim to increase service productivity and provide a better service to residents.

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BC1 - % Plans checked on time	85.91%	100%	New
BC2 - % Structural calculations checked on time	91.77%	100%	New

BV200 and 205 ensure that the Council plans effectively for the area and also to monitor the quality of service in the Planning Department.

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV200a - Authority has a local plan	Yes	Yes	Yes
BV204 - % Appeals allowed against refusal	30.4%	40%	New
BV205 - Quality of Services Checklist	83.3%	100%	New

BV109 is measured to ensure that Planning Authorities determine all planning applications in a timely manner.

Measure	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2003/04 Actual
BV109a - Major Planning Applications determined in 13 weeks	52.5%	45%	41.17%
BV109b - Minor Applications determined in 8 weeks	71.12%	65%	71.48%
BV109c - Other Planning Applications determined in 8 weeks	84.52%	80%	83.87%

Adopt LDF

By 2007, the core strategy of the Local Development Framework will have been through its enquiry and adopted, and a simple user guide will be published. This guide will help all developers in submitting proposals to Ashford Borough Council and ensure that all new construction is sustainable.

Phase One—Ring Road works complete

By the end of 2007, the first phase of the ring road redevelopment works will have been completed. This will form part of the remodelling for the town centre network.

Stanhay Site Completed

With the revival of the town centre, comes the redevelopment of the Stanhay car park, which will be remodelled in order to provide a major new retail space in the town centre for a range of new shops, due to open in early 2008.

For further information, please contact:

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Performance Indicator Tables

The following pages contain the results and targets for the Best Value Performance Indicators for the previous two years, 2003/04, 2004/05 and targets for the next three years, 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08

The Indicators are presented in the sequential order used by the ODPM.

Summary of results

BVPI's On Target

39	On Target	60.0%
23	Not on Target	35.38%
3	We do not record this indicator	4.62%

BVPI's Performance compared to last year

39	Better than 2003/04	62.90%
16	Worse than 2003/04	25.81%
3	Same as 2003/4	4.84%
4	No data from last year	6.45%

There are a total of 28 New Indictors for 2005/06

Corporate Health

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV1a - Does Authority have a community strategy?	No	Yes	Yes	Not required	Not required	Not required
BV1b - Community Strategies - by when will a full review be complete?	Apr 07	Apr 07	Apr 07	Not required	Not required	Not required
BV1c - Community Strategies - Has authority reported progress towards its implementation	No	No	No	Not required	Not required	Not required
BV2a Equality Standard (Levels 0-5)	0	1	2	2	3	3
BV2b - Duty to promote race equality	26%	26%	20.00%	25%	30%	35%
BV8 - Invoices paid in 30 days	88.54%	88.95%	95%	95%	96%	97%
BV9 - % Council Tax collected	97.43%	97.83%	98.10%	97.8%	97.9%	98%
BV10 - Non Domestic Rates collected	98.97%	99.65%	98.80%	98.9%	99%	99.1%
BV11a - Top earners are women	20%	21.50%	25%	25%	25.5%	26%
BV11b - Top Earners that are ethnic minorities	0%	0%	2.40%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
BV11c - Top Earners that are disabled - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.6%	9.0%	10.45%
BV12 - Working days lost due to sickness	9.94	8.61	6.49	6.5	6.25	6.0
BV14 - Retirement Rate (excl. Ill health)	0.59%	0.76%	0.20%	0.14%	0.14%	0.14%
BV15 Ill Health Retirement Rate	0.20%	0.19%	0.30%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%

Corporate Health

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV16a - % Employees declaring Disability	4.41%	3.82%	5.00%	6%	7%	8%
BV16b % Economically active disabled people in borough	10.45	10.45%	10.45%	10.45%	10.45%	10.45%
BV17a % Employees from ethnic minority	2.7%	1.9%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
BV17b % Economically active ethnic minority in borough	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%
BV156 - Suitability of authorities buildings for the disabled	50.00%	66.67%	50.00%	66.67%	66.67%	66.67%
BV157 - Interactions enabled electronically	64%	86.19%	85%	100%	100%	100%
BV180a - Energy Consumption of Authorities Properties	n/a	n/a	n/a	Not required	Not required	Not required
BV180b - Energy Consumption of street lighting	n/a	n/a	n/a	Not required	Not required	Not required

Housing

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV62 - Private sector dwellings made fit	0	6	4	Not required	Not required	Not required
BV63 - Average SAP rating of LA's dwellings	64.02	66	66	67	68	69
BV64 - Private sector dwellings returned to occupation	0	3	4	6	8	10
BV66a - Housing rent collected	97.61%	99.09%	99%	99%	99%	99%
BV66b - Proportion of rent collected. Number of tenants with more than 7 weeks arrears - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	15%	14.5%	13%
BV66c - Proportion of rent collected. % of tenants who have had notices served—NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	53%	52%	63%
BV66d - Proportion of rent collected. % of Local Authority Tenants that have been evicted as a result of rent arrears	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.24%	0.22%	0.20%
BV74a - Satisfaction of tenants with overall service of landlord	80.60%	81%	83.00%	83%	83%	83%
BV74b - Satisfaction of tenants with overall service of landlord - BME tenants	68%	68%	82%	83%	83%	83%
BV74c - Satisfaction of tenants with overall service of landlord - non BME tenants	81%	81%	82%	83%	83%	83%
BV75a- Satisfaction of tenants with participation	61%	61%	60%	60%	62%	62%
BV75b- Satisfaction of tenants with participation - BME groups	45%	45%	60%	60%	62%	62%

Housing Cont...

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV75c- Satisfaction of tenants with participation - non BME groups	61%	61%	60%	60%	62%	62%
BV164 - Tackling racial equality	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
BV184a - Local Authority Homes that were non-decent	4.06%	2. %	4.41%	0%	0%	0%
BV184b - Percentage Change in non decent in the year	48.28%	66.1%	25%	0%	0%	0%
BV185 - Responsive Repairs appointments kept		no info		Not required	Not Required	Not required
BV211a - Repairs & Maintenance Service: Planned vs. Responsive - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	62%	65%	68%
BV211b - Repairs & M maintenance Service: urgent vs. non urgent - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.5%	9%	8.5%
BV212 - Average time taken to re-let council Dwellings - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	28	21	21

Homelessness

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV183a - Homeless stay in Bed and breakfast accommodation	4 weeks	9 weeks	1 week	1 week	1 week	1 week
BV183b - Homeless stays in hostels**	N/A	N/A	N/A	0 weeks	0 weeks	0 weeks
BV202 - Number of people sleeping rough	New	3	3	<5	<5	<5
BV203 - % change in temporary accommodation placements	New	-26.37%	-26.37%	-5%	-5%	-5%
BV213 - Number of homelessness cases prevented - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	15	20
BV214 - Households accepted as homeless - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	35	35	35

** We do not have a hostel service and have been advised by the audit commission that we need to report this indicator as not applicable

Housing Benefit & Council Tax

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV76a - Benefits claimants visited	519	311	300	325	350	360
BV76b - Benefit Fraud investigators per 1,000 caseload	0.44	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
BV76c - Benefit Fraud Investigations per 1,000 caseload	28.48	37	22	38	39	40
BV76d - Benefit Fraud Prosecutions per 1,000 caseload	3.48	5.4	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7
BV78a - Speed of processing new claims	47 days	42.8 days	36 days	35.0	34.0	33.0
BV78b - Speed of processing change of circumstance	10.5 days	8.4 days	8 days	8.0 days	7.0 days	6.0 days
BV79a - Housing Benefit Processing Claims accuracy	96.80%	98.4%	98.40%	98.40%	98.40%	98.40%
BV79bi - Recoverable HB overpayments from Period—New Definition	58.60%	45.1%	82.17%	60.0%	61.0%	62.0%
BV79bii - Recoverable overpayments recovered as a % of overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	40.0%	36.0%	32.0%
BV79biii - Amount of overpayments written off as a % of debt outstanding at start of period and overpayments identified - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%

Waste & Cleanliness

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV82a -% Household waste recycling	13.67%	13.36%	18%	21%	22%	23%
BV82aii—Tonnage of waste recycled - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	89.25 kgs	93.5 kgs	97.75 kgs
BV82b % of waste composting	0.41%	0.60%	0.59%	3%	4%	5%
BV82bii - Tonnage of waste sent for composting - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	17 kgs	21.25 kgs	25.5 kgs
BV82di - % of waste which have been landfilled - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	75%	73%	71%
NB82dii-Tonnage of waste which have been landfilled	N/A	N/A	N/A	318.75 kgs	310.25 kgs	301.75 kgs
BV84a - Household waste collected per head	404.74 kg	413.93 kg	425 kg	425 kg	425 kg	425 kg
BV84b - % change in waste collected per head from last year - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0
BV86 - Cost of waste collected per house	£35.61	£37.51	£37.60	£39.29	£41.06	£43.52
BV91 - Kerbside Collection of at least 1 type of recyclable	78.35%	82.1%	78.35%	78.35%	78.35%	78.35%
BV91b - Kerbside Collection of two recyclables - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	78.35%	78.35%	78.35%
BV199a - Land and Highways assessed as unclean. Litter and detritus	54.69%	16.33%	25%	24%	25%	26%
BV199b - Land and highways assessed as unclean. Graffiti - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	12%	8%	4%
BV199c - Land and Highways assessed as unclean. Fly posting - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	3%	2%	1%
BV199d - Land and Highways assessed as unclean. Fly Tipping - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	4%	4%	4%

Environment & Environmental

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV166 - Environmental Health Checklist	84.2%	84.2%	84.15%	94.15%	94.15%	94.15%

Planning

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV106 - New Homes on a brownfield site	9.3%	14%	5%	7%	10%	15%
BV109a - Major Planning Applications determined in 13 weeks	41.17%	52.50%	45%	55%	60%	60+%
BV109b - Minor Applications determined in 8 weeks	71.48%	71.12%	65%	70%	72%	74%
BV109c - Other Planning Applications determined in 8 weeks	83.87%	84.52%	80%	85%	85%	85%
BV179 - Land searches in 10 days	35.27%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BV200a - Authority has a local plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
BV200b - Has the Local Authority met the milestones that the current Local Development Scheme sets out? - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes
BV200c - Did the Local Authority publish an annual monitoring report by December of last year? - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes
BV204 - % Appeals allowed against refusal	New	30.4%	40%	35%	32.5%	30%
BV205 - Quality of Services Checklist	New	83.3%	100%	95%	100%	100%

Culture and Related Services

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV170a - No of museum visits per 1,000 population	31	26	32	32	32	32
BV170b - Number of museum visits that were in person, per 1,000 population	31	26	32	32	32	32
BV170c - Number of museum visits that were in school groups	92	NR	92	92	92	92
BV177 - Community Legal advice	86.2%	97.7%	94%	See BV226	See BV226	See BV226
BV219a - Amount of Conservation areas within the Borough - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	43	43	43
BV219b - Percentage of conservation areas with up to date character appraisals -NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.3%	30.23%	51.16%
BV219c - Percentage of conservation areas with Management Proposals - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.3%	30.23%	51.16%

Community Safety and Well-being

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV126 - Domestic burglaries per 1000 population (amended for 2004/05 therefore 03/04 result not)	8.69	4.4	8.69	4.18	4.00	3.87
BV127a - Violent offences (committed by a stranger) per 1,000 population	2.51	2.2	2.38	2.09	2.00	1.94
BV127b - Violent offences in a public place, (robberies) per 1,000 population	7.08	7.2	6.73	6.84	6.55	6.34

Community Safety and Well-being

Indicator Number and Description	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2004/05 Target	2005/06 target	2006/07 target	2007/08 target
BV127c - Violent Offences in connection with licensed premises, per 1,000 pop	0.48	0.69	0.46	Not required	Not required	Not required
BV127d - Violent offences committed under the influence, per 1,000 population	3.36	2.63	3.19	Not required	Not required	Not required
BV128 - Vehicle Crime per 1,000 population	8.78	8.00	8.78	7.6	7.28	7.04
BV174 - Racial Incidents per 100,000 population	7	1.8	5	4	3	2
BV175 - Racial Incidents with further action	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BV176 - Domestic Refuge places per 10,000 population	0	0	0	0	0	0
BV225 - Actions against Domestic Violence	N/A	N/A	N/A	To be reviewed	To be reviewed	To be reviewed
BV226 - Advice and Guidance Services - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	£120,000	£124,000	£128,000
BV226b - Advice & Guidance Services - CLS Quality Mark - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	98%	98.2%	98.4%
BV226c - Advice & Guidance Services - direct Provision - NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0

Local Performance Indicators - Targets for future years

All the following are local performance indicators which only require targets for the 2005/06 financial year, These have been presented by service.

Corporate Health

Indicator Number and description	2005/06 Target
CH1a - Resignation rate of non-managerial posts	10%
CH1b - Resignation rate of managerial posts	4%
P&D3 - Cost of Overtime as a % of wage bill	1%
CG1 - Internal Audits per Auditor	12
CG2 - Percentage audit recommendations accepted	100%
CG3 - Best Value Reviews completed	100%
CG4 - Lapse time between draft & final audit report (within one month)	90%
PS6a - Percentage of drawings, council houses completed in 10 days	80%
PS6b - Planning consultations completed in 10 days	100%
PS7a - % of rent collected on occupied commercial properties	??
PS7b - % of rent collected on occupied commercial premises (AA)	??
PS8a - % of potential income achieved (Ellingham)	92%
PS8b - % of potential income achieved - shops	90%
PS9a - Amount of arrears - Ellingham	??
PS9b - Amount of arrears -Shops	??
PS10 - % of floor space let Ellingham	92%
PS11 - Number of void properties Ellingham	8

Financial Services - including Revenues and Benefits

Indicator Number and description	2005/06 Target
RB1 - Cost of Council tax administration per account	£16
RB2 - Cost of processing a benefit claim	£95
RB3 - Percentage correspondence replied to in 10 working days	90%
RB4 - Sundry Debtor income collected	94%
RB5 - Percentage of new Housing Benefit claimants from awareness campaign	5%

Housing

Indicator Number and description	2005/06 Target
H1 - Council properties with a current Gas Safety Certificate	100%
H2 - Responsive repairs commitment against target	£1m
H3 - Rent loss on void property	0.76%
H4 - Arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the rent roll	0.3%
H6 - Bed & Breakfast costs: How much is recouped on expenditure	40%
H8 - % calls answered in 1min.30 secs	85%
H9 - Ave time to answer	40secs
H10 - Longest wait time under 10mins	??
H11 - Calls abandoned	??

Communications & Marketing Services

Indicator Number and description	2005/06 Target
C1 - Satisfaction of employees with internal communications (I. Hill)	80%

Legal and Democratic Services

Indicator Number and description	2005/06 Target
LDS3a - Publication of executive minutes in 3 working days	100%
LDS3b - Publication of non executive minutes in 3 working days	95%
<i>LDS4 - % increase in productive hours recorded for legal services</i>	<i>Not set</i>
LDS5 - ncome for legal services	£103,40
LDS6 - Time lapse- draft enforcement notice from instruction	28 days

Environmental Services

Indicator Number and description	2005/06 Target
HT1 - Increase in car park visitors	1%
HT2 - Disabled car park spaces per 100 spaces	6
HT3a - Penalty charge notices Issued per 1000 popn.	12.5
HT3b - PCN's appealed to NPAS	1%
HT3c - Successful appeals to NPAS	40%
HT3d - Percentage PCN's cancelled	20%
E1a - Response to life-safety alarms (30 secs)	80%
E1b - Response to life safety alarms (60 secs)	98.5%
E1c - Response to other alarms (90 secs)	80%
E1d - Response to other alarms (180 secs)	98.5%
E2 - Completion of annual food inspections	100%
E3 - Dog fouling complaints	27
E4 - Complaints about environmental pollution (response in 3 days)	100%

Cultural Services

Indicator Number and description	2005/06 Target
CS3 - External funding levered into community projects	5:1
CS5 - ABC playground areas meet minimum safety standard	100%
CS6 - ABC owned play grounds /1000 children under 12	2
CS10 - Availability of Sports Pitches	0.5
CS19 - Areas of parks & green space	No Target
CS20 - Number of additional arts/sports/cultural initiatives that aim to encourage participation	5
SL1a - Number of Stour Centre visits /1000 population	300,000
SL1b - Number of Julie Rose visits /1000 population	100,000
SL2 - % Visits to Stour Centre by concession groups	5%
SL3 - % Visits to Julie Rose by concession groups	5%

Planning and Development Services

Indicator Number and description	2005/06 Target
SP1 - % Affordable housing granted permission on sites over 25 dwellings	20%
SP2 - Number of affordable homes granted permission	150
SP3 - Average density of new housing on major developments (25 dwellings+) / hectare	30
SP4 - Number of homes granted permission	800

ICT & Customer Services

Indicator Number and description	2005/06 Target
ICT1 - Staff helpdesk calls sorted within 2 days	80%
ICT2 - Public seen in under 15 minutes	84%
ICT3 - Percentage of mission critical computer systems available to the user service	99.5%
ICT4a - Percentage of calls answered on time (2 minutes)	85%
ICT4b - Average time taken to answer by call centre operator.	1min 30s
ICT4c - Longest wait times in call centre, no more than 10 mins	100%
ICT6a - % Calls dealt with at First Point of Contact	80%
ICT6b - % Visits dealt with at First Point of Contact	80%