

# **Improving quality of life in Stevenage**

## **What you can expect from your Council**

### **Draft**

The BVPI compendium will be included as tables at the back of the document as in previous years, together with a table that shows variance from target. An example of the layout of these pages is included with this document (page 125). The outturn figures will be reported through PPIG and Executive early June 2006.

(SBC Performance Management Pyramid)

To be inserted

## **Welcome to Stevenage**

Stevenage enjoys all the amenities and opportunities of a well planned town situated in pleasant surroundings in the Hertfordshire countryside. In 1946 Stevenage was chosen by the Government as the Britain's first new town to help ease the housing shortage in London. The town grew up around a number of residential neighbourhoods, each with a variety of local facilities including shops, schools, community centres and medical facilities. Today Stevenage is a thriving town of nearly 80,000 people. And during 2006 the town celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## **Industry and Commerce**

Much of our town's success is due to industry and commerce. We have two main business areas in the town – the Gunnels Wood area on the West side of the town, and the Pin Green area in the northeast. The town also provides further employment in shops and service industries, located primarily in the town centre and old town, but also in the schools and neighbourhood centres located throughout the town.

## **Transport Links**

Stevenage boasts excellent communication links - the town is located on the A1 (M) just 30 miles from Central London and only 15 minutes from the M25 Orbital. It is also on the main East Coast London to Edinburgh line, with Kings Cross only a 20-minute journey away.

## **Education**

Hertfordshire County Council is the education authority for Stevenage. Within Stevenage, we have 26 primary and 8 secondary schools\*, as well as 4 schools that offer support to children with special needs. The schools are modern and well equipped with generous sporting facilities. Hertfordshire LEA has a good record of achievement both at primary and secondary school levels. Further Education is provided by North Hertfordshire College, in a new campus situated close to the town centre which was opened by the Queen in March 2003. The College has an intake of approximately 15,000 students a year, the majority being part-time, but with a full-time population of approximately 2,200.

## **Housing**

As a new town, Stevenage was carefully planned from the start to create a high quality of life and a thriving community, with the pioneering planners recognising that families wanted good quality housing set amongst open spaces and trees with transport, schools and other facilities nearby.

The 2001 census revealed that there are 32,754 households in Stevenage. Currently 27% of households are Council homes.

## **Leisure**

Stevenage residents and visitors enjoy a wide range of cultural and leisure activities on offer in the town. Amongst the many attractions, we have a multi-purpose Arts and

Leisure Centre, a swimming pool, our own museum, several parks and play centres, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, a leisure park with a cinema, bowling alley, range of bars, restaurants and night clubs, and the Old Town with its old pubs and restaurants.

### **Shopping**

Shopping in Stevenage is concentrated into four main areas: the Old Town, the Town Centre, the Retail Parks and the local Neighbourhood Centres. The Old Town dates back to the 12th century and retains much of its old world charm. The town's pedestrianised shopping area has over 250 shops, offices, civic buildings, leisure facilities and our indoor and outdoor market.

### **Local Authority Political Make-up**

Political makeup at **May 2005:**

- 32 Labour
- 4 Liberal Democrat
- 3 Conservative

Average Council Tax 2005/06: £1009.35

\* Consultation is currently underway on the closure of Collenswood School and expansion of Barnwell School.

**Contents:**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
Welcome to Stevenage	2
Message from the Leader of the Council	5
Message from Ian Paske, Chief Executive	7
Stevenage Councillors	8
The Council's political and decision making arrangements	9
The role of the Council	12
What do you want from the Council – Engaging local communities	16
Reviewing our priorities	19
<b>The Council's Ambitions and Priorities</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Ambition – Community Leadership</b>	<b>26</b>
Priority – Develop partnership working	27
Priority – Make the town safer	29
Priority – Encourage a fair and inclusive community	32
Priority – Enhance the image of Stevenage	35
Comprehensive Performance Assessment Plan summary for Community Leadership programme	37
<b>Ambition – Regeneration of Stevenage</b>	<b>38</b>
Priority – Expand the town	40
Priority – Develop a vibrant town centre	43
Priority – Maintain a clean and green environment	45
Comprehensive Performance Assessment Plan summary for Regeneration of Stevenage programme	49
<b>Ambition – Good Housing for all</b>	<b>50</b>
Priority - Ensure the development of affordable homes	52
Priority – Improve our homes	54
Comprehensive Performance Assessment Plan summary for Good Housing for all programme	58
<b>Ambition – Transformed Council Services</b>	<b>59</b>
Priority – Make access to Council services easier	60
Priority – Use information technology to improve the quality of services	62
Priority – Ensure services are meeting customer expectations	64
Comprehensive Performance Assessment Plan summary for Transformed Council services programme	67
<b>Customer Service Centre</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Customer Service Standards</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>A-Z of service performance</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Capacity Building</b>	<b>98</b>
Use of Resources	98
People and Performance Management	118
Knowledge Management	121
Performance Measurement	121
BV and Performance Management Audit Reports	122
BVPIs - variation from target	123
- Compendium	125

### **Message from the Leader of the Council**

2006 is very special year for Stevenage, as it is the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stevenage as a New Town. A varied and interesting programme of events has been planned to reflect all aspects of civic and community life, and will give all Stevenage residents an opportunity to celebrate this milestone. I do hope that you will be able to join in these celebrations.

I am pleased to note that this has been another busy and successful year for Stevenage Borough Council and we have made significant headway with many of our ambitious plans.

- This Council supports the proposed development to the West of Stevenage and was therefore delighted when the First Secretary of State, John Prescott, informed us that he “is minded to grant planning permission “ for 3,600 homes, including over 900 “**affordable homes**”. This expansion is vital and greatly assists with both the “**regeneration of the town**” and attracting employment.
- According to an independent nationwide survey, Stevenage is one of the most successful areas of the country in which to conduct business, proof that Stevenage has much to offer businesses and their employees. We have recently launched the Gunnels Wood Business Partnership, working with about 350 companies to revitalise this area and help sustain “**economic development**”.
- Stevenage has been identified as a “Growth Area “ and received £4.8 million from the Growth Area Funds. This will contribute additional “**affordable homes** “and included in this new provision are improvements to the Town Centre Gardens.
- Recycling is just one of the “**good quality services**” this Council provides for its residents and it “**reduces the levels of waste**”. Last year the garden waste collection scheme was extended to cover the whole town. This scheme helps us to protect the environment and has already helped the Council to exceed the Government’s recycling target of 24%.
- The Customer Service Centre, which aims to satisfy most enquiries and requests in one call or visit, has been expanded to deal with more services and enquiries and this year it will include Environmental Services. Contact can now be made via the telephone, e-mail and website, both during and outside office hours, helping us to deliver our ambition of “**transformed Council services**”. The Council’s web site has recently been redesigned and offers an increased range of services, including planning applications, on line.
- This Council places a high priority in fulfilling our ambition of “**community leadership**” and this is why we continue to work with our partners to improve the quality of life in Stevenage for residents, employers and visitors. Last year a town-wide survey was conducted by MORI and the findings from this, plus our additional consultation exercises, have proved to be crucial in informing us exactly what the priorities for the town should be.
- The Housing Options Appraisal, which Stevenage Borough Council conducted last year, revealed that 87% of our tenants preferred the option of an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) to manage and maintain Council houses. We will hear shortly whether our bid has been accepted and if so, how

much money we will receive to bring our Council homes up to the decent homes standard and provide “ **good housing for all**”.

- Last year this Council took part in six highly successful Environmental Action Days with the Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue, the DVLA and Hertfordshire County Council. A campaign of action followed. Dumped rubbish, unwanted vehicles and graffiti were removed; those attempting to avoid paying Road Fund Licences were discovered; truants were caught and advice was given on home safety and fire alarms. All of these initiatives help to “**make the town safer**”.
- We will continue to work in the Stevenage Community Safety Partnership to keep our “**town safe and reduce crime and the fear of crime**”. In areas covered by our CCTV system we have already seen a 50% reduction in crime. The Council has introduced alcohol free zones to areas of the town where youth nuisance has been a problem. This action has helped reduce incidents of youth nuisance and these zones will be extended this year. Automatic Number Plate Recognition equipment is now in place and this has already proved effective in tracking known criminals travelling by car through Stevenage.
- Another of our priorities is to “**encourage a fair and inclusive community**”. Two key measures will help us to achieve this. Firstly we have increased facilities grants for disabled people and secondly we have introduced a new concessionary fare scheme. This offers free countywide bus travel, with no time restrictions, to residents with disabilities or who are aged 60 plus.
- The Best Value Performance Plan sets out in detail how we have performed in the past year and our plans for the town for the next 3-5 years. Please take the opportunity to read our plans and let us know what you think of them, as they are about your quality of life and your future.

**Brian Hall**  
**Leader Stevenage Borough Council**

Message from Ian Paske, Chief Executive – To be inserted



Councillors Details – to be inserted

## **The Council's Political and Decision-Making Arrangements**

### **The Constitution**

In October 2001 we adopted a Constitution in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 with a Leader and Executive model for its Member level decision-making structure.

### **Decision Making**

Under the Constitution decision-making is either the responsibility of the Council, or the Executive.

Specific matters are reserved for Council decision and these include the Budget and Policy Framework of the Authority. Other matters that are the responsibility of the Council may be delegated to Council Committees or Officers for decision; these include decisions on planning applications and licensing matters, other decisions are taken by the Executive

### **The Council**

The Council is made up of all 39 Stevenage Borough Councillors and meets at least 5 times a year including the Annual Council in May when the Mayor is elected and political appointments for the next Municipal Year are agreed.

### **The Executive**

The Executive meets on a monthly basis and comprises of the Leader of the Council, an Opposition Member and 8 other Councillors from the Majority Group who have a specific area of responsibility, or Portfolio. The Portfolios areas are –

- › Housing
- › Community & Culture
- › The Environment
- › Health & E-government
- › Resources
- › Community Safety
- › Performance & Improvement
- › Personnel

In addition to taking decisions on executive functions, the Executive also consider matters that are referred for Council decision, and make recommendations to Council accordingly.

The Executive has appointed a Performance, Priorities and Improvement Group who may commission specific Best Value Reviews and other work from the Council's four Review Panels.

## Scrutiny

All decisions taken by the Executive are submitted to the Scrutiny Overview Committee who may choose to review a decision and pass on comments to the Executive.

In addition to scrutinising decisions, the Scrutiny Overview Committee and its four Scrutiny Panels may review proposals for future policies and services prior to Council or Executive taking any decisions.

## Standards Committee

The Standards Committee comprises three Councillors and two independent, non-elected members, one of whom serves as Chair. This Committee is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Councillors published in November 2001, which set out the standards of ethics and probity to be followed by all Councillors.

## Area Committees

The six Area Committees each meet on a three monthly basis at local venues and give the communities of the respective areas the opportunity to be involved in discussions about issues and projects within their area. Each Area Committee has a devolved budget in the region of £30k.

## What was achieved in 2005/06?


- Successfully administered the General Election and Election to the Herts County Council on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2005
- Implemented the new arrangements in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 with 24 Licensing Committee hearings

## What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?

- The administration of a successful Pilot Scheme for the 2006 Local Elections with revised security arrangements
- Implement changes from Elections Administration Bill – likely to include:
  - Extended opening hours for local elections
  - Changes to annual canvas
- Introduce new electronic committee management system
- Support Civic Celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stevenage New Town

Performance indicator	Actual 2004/05	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
The number of people attending Area Committee meetings	478	650	411*	450
Percentage turnout for local elections	39.4%	39.4%	No local Elections held	40%
The percentage of electoral 'A' forms returned	91%	92%	90%	94%

Area Committee attendance has not achieved target this year. A Community Engagement and User Involvement Best Value Review is looking out how effectively the Council consults and engages with the local community. The review is drawing on earlier work and findings from a review of area committees and recommendations will be made by September 2006. Stronger communities is a feature of the recently agreed Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the following outcomes and targets form part of the Safer and Stronger Communities part of the submission – [see page 13](#) for more information.

	<p><b>Outcome:</b> Communities are empowered to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making and the delivery of services, and there is increased sense of belonging and citizenship.</p>
<p><b>Sub Outcome:</b> Communities are empowered to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making, and there is an increased sense of community cohesion.</p>	
<p><b>Targets:</b></p> <p>Increase the percentage of people surveyed who are satisfied with the opportunities for participation in local decision-making provided by their Council by 2% by 2009</p> <p>Increase the percentage of people surveyed who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area by 2% by 2009</p>	

## The role of the Council

Under the Local Government Act 2000, District Councils have a clearly defined role as community leaders as well as the traditional local service provider role. As a community leader, the Council is responsible for developing and contributing to the sustainable social, economic and environmental development of the town.

**The Council's mission:** "Council and community working together to improve quality of life" **and vision:** "A town we can all be proud of. A place where people want to live, work, invest, do business and visit", drive both its community leader and service provider roles. They are based on the view that the Council should be building partnerships with the people who live, work and visit Stevenage in order to improve quality of life for everyone.

To achieve its vision for the community, the Council has adopted a framework of **values**:

- ◆ Putting the community first
- ◆ Developing partnerships
- ◆ Providing quality services
- ◆ Being a good employer
- ◆ Working effectively

## The Council as Community Leader

The Council's greater responsibilities and powers to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of their local communities require a community leadership approach. This means that Stevenage Borough Council works closely with Hertfordshire County Council, police, health and North Hertfordshire College, to deliver services for the people of Stevenage. In turn, these public bodies also work in partnership with local voluntary organisations, community groups, and with local industry and commerce.

As a community leader we aim to deliver the priorities of local people. Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are a new contract between central and local government, which will enable us to improve local services through strengthened partnership working. LAAs require the organisations mentioned above to work in partnership for the benefit of their communities, using local understanding to provide a stronger joint framework for the community leadership role. The Council work locally with the Stevenage Partnership, which comprises providers of key services in the local area and is established as the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Stevenage. Over forty organisations are actively involved as members of the Partnership Board and they in turn represent many other public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations.

Both the Council and the Stevenage Partnership play a role in delivering on the agreed outcomes of the Hertfordshire LAA.

### Local Area Agreements



A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year agreement that sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area, represented by the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and other key partners at local level.

LAAs mark a radical change in central and local relations, by simplifying the number of funding streams from central government. By focussing on a core set of outcomes for an Area, the Agreements significantly simplify the arrangements, which have previously been in place, and give local areas much greater freedom to spend

### **The Stevenage Partnership**

Members of the Stevenage Partnership have a shared vision for Stevenage:

Our vision is to create a town that is prosperous, healthy, clean, green and safe. We want Stevenage to be a town with a strong sense of community in which people are proud to live, work, visit and do business. We want Stevenage to grow in a sustainable way and to be an important regional centre looking ahead and building on its new town heritage.

The Stevenage Partnership has developed this vision and strategy with the community to secure long-term success for Stevenage as a sustainable community and as a successful town in the national and regional context. The aim is to reflect the views and aspirations of everyone who has a stake in the future of Stevenage.

**The Stevenage Community Strategy – “Stevenage 2021 – Out Town, Our Future”** was published in 2004 and supports the following themes:

- A vibrant town centre and thriving neighbourhoods

- A prosperous town
- A creative town
- A healthy and caring town
- A safe town
- A learning town that invests in young people
- A town with strong communities and opportunities for all
- A town that's good to live in – housing, transport and the environment

A copy of the Community Strategy can be obtained by calling the Community Development Team on (01438) 242914 and is available on our website [www.stevenage.gov.uk](http://www.stevenage.gov.uk)

### **The Council as service provider**

Stevenage Borough Council has a long record of providing high quality, value for money services for the Community. High satisfaction ratings are regularly achieved and in the 2005 residents' survey conducted by MORI on behalf of the Council:

- 88% of residents were satisfied with Stevenage as a place to live
- 68% of residents were satisfied with the way Stevenage Borough Council runs the town

The Council takes every opportunity to offer the people of Stevenage a wide range of high quality services, which focus on improving quality of life for the town's communities. It works closely with the community to understand local needs and provides a wide range of services to meet them. The Council provides hundreds of services for nearly 80,000 residents as well as businesses and visitors to our town.

Some of these services are statutory and include:

**Agency services on behalf of Central Government** – Housing and council tax benefits, land searches, council tax and business rates

**Democratic services** – elections, committee and elected member support

**Environmental health** - dog wardens, pest control, food safety, health improvement, air and land pollution, noise control, health & safety, licensing of persons and premises, house renovation grants, disabled facilities grants, private sector housing, disrepair and fire precautions and facilities for houses in multiple occupation

**Environmental services** – abandoned vehicles, fly tipping, graffiti removal, car parks, cycle tracks, grass cutting, refuse collection, recycling, road/highway maintenance, transport and street cleansing

**Housing** - homelessness, housing advice, housing repairs and maintenance, housing management, provision of council housing, housing allocations, leaseholder management, sheltered housing and caretaking

**Planning** - building regulations, development control, district plan, economic development and regeneration

A range of other services are delivered by the Council beyond what we are required to do. But they are delivered by choice because they benefit the community.

**Community services** – community development, community alarms, community transport, community meals, CCTV, partnership services and grant aid, TV licences, concessionary fares and school milk, community safety partnership with Herts County Council and the police

The Council also provides the Stevenage community with access to **leisure, sports and cultural** opportunities - play schemes, parks and amenities, museum and leisure 50.

The Council works in partnership with and provides grant aid to Stevenage Leisure Limited a non-profit making organisation limited by guarantee. Stevenage Leisure Limited manage Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre; Stevenage Swimming Pool; John Henry Newman Leisure Centre; Fairlands Valley Park and Stevenage Golf Centre.

**A range of strategic and resource functions** allow us to maintain firm control of our finances through good planning and sensible financial management, which ensures the efficient and effective delivery of all direct services. These are:

Corporate policy, strategy, media, customer service, corporate communications, information technology, research, asset management, accountancy, audit, anti-fraud, human resources, training, procurement, insurance, facilities management, administration, health and safety and emergency planning arrangements



## **What do you want from the Council?**

### **Engaging Local Communities - The Council's Consultation Strategy**

The government places great importance on consultation, expecting local councils to be 'in touch with the people'. Stevenage Borough Council has a good track record of listening to the community. Its public consultation strategy 'Engaging Local Communities' sets out our approach to consultation and the annual consultation programme identifies a range of consultation approaches including public opinion surveys and user satisfaction surveys that are carried out in a co-ordinated way.

The Council wants to make sure that the community is properly informed about the Council, its role, its policies and its performance. It wants the community to take part in shaping and developing future services and setting priorities. And it wants all members of the community, including those in hard to reach groups such as young people, people with disabilities and minority ethnic groups, to have a voice in the democratic process and be involved in open decision-making.

The Consultation Strategy will be reviewed during 2006/07 so that recommendations from the Audit Commission User Focus Assessment are implemented and to ensure that our range of consultation techniques are enhanced through e-consultation opportunities that meet the Government's priority outcomes.

When involving residents, visitors or users of our town we will ensure that:

- ✓ We only seek views when it is clear why the information is needed and how it will be used
- ✓ We will consult before a decision has been taken, not after
- ✓ We effectively use previous consultation results to inform decisions
- ✓ We give all relevant stakeholders and sectors of the community the opportunity and the means to be involved
- ✓ Where appropriate and possible, we undertake consultation jointly with other agencies
- ✓ We achieve value for money when using companies to help us find out residents views
- ✓ We feedback to all participants of consultation exercises about decisions made and where a decision is contrary to the views of participants, reasons will be given
- ✓ We consult with service users, where appropriate, to find out their views on current service standards and areas for development.
- ✓ We consult on all major decisions and changes to be implemented by the Council that will affect either the whole or some of the community

### **The consultation programme**

When the Consultation Strategy was agreed in 2003 a programme of consultation was proposed so that all consultation is planned, adds value and informs the decision making process. And to ensure that consultation is carried out in a coherent and consistent manner.

This approach has worked well, particularly for major consultation exercises used to inform decisions about strategies and policies and to encourage managers to think about future consultation requirements each year as part of their approach to service planning.

### Consultation case studies

- During the summer of 2004/05 the council ran its first **Community Conference** using qualitative techniques to find out what was important to the community so that a review of the priorities in our Corporate Business Strategy could be carried out. Questions were also asked about the council's budget and where it spends its money and the results were used to inform the budget setting process. Building on its success, it is planned to run a second Community Conference during the summer of 2006.
- During 2005/06 we commissioned MORI to run a **town-wide residents survey**. Again the results were used to inform a review of our Corporate Business Strategy and to shape future service delivery.
- The results of the MORI survey were also used for the **main debate** item at Council in December 2005.

*Quote from Executive: 14 December 2005 (Council Resolution of 7<sup>th</sup> December):*

“This Council welcomes the results of the 2005 Mori Survey and pledges to the community that it will:

- Continue to listen
- Respond to what people say
- Keep people informed about council services - their value – their effectiveness and their availability...

To build a better town for the future.”

- At a more local level we carried out a **budget survey** at the Area Committees during November and December 2005. A presentation about the range of services we provide, how much we spend and how Council Tax is allocated was given to put our overall financial position and level of expenditure into context. Then people were asked to complete a questionnaire that focussed on questions about the council and how it spends the budget. These results together with results from the town wide survey were used to inform the budget setting process, identifying areas where budget savings could be made without affecting service delivery.
- During January 2006 the council held a breakfast meeting together with the Herts Chamber of Commerce to **consult with business ratepayers**. A total of 52 people from various companies attended the meeting. Presentations were made about the Council's finances and about proposals for regeneration of the town centre and future development in Stevenage.

Further examples of service related consultation exercises are given throughout this document

## Programme for 2006/07

- The Best Value Satisfaction Performance Indicator surveys (BVPI surveys) must be carried out every three years and Government determines the approach.
  - **BVPI General Satisfaction Survey** – This is a satisfaction survey used by the Office of the Deputy Prime minister (ODPM). The survey asks questions of residents and users about the quality of services delivered by their local council and their satisfaction with a range of quality of life issues affecting their local area. These surveys play a vital role in understanding what people think about local services across the country – what’s working and what’s not. They form one of the largest surveys conducted in the country and last time involved over 500,000 responses.
  - **BVPI Planning, Benefits and Housing Satisfaction Surveys** – these are all carried out at a national level for benchmarking purposes and are used locally to shape, deliver and improve services.
- **A Community Conference** during the Summer of 2006 to find out what is important to the community and to ask questions about the Council’s budget

**Vox Pops’** In partnership with the County Council we are planning to pilot a new ‘Vox pops’ consultation initiative during 2006/07. The plan is to ‘take to the streets’ of Stevenage with a video camera to gather spontaneous opinions of members of the public. People will be asked set questions for example ‘what makes them happy’ and what they would like improved.’ The footage will be broadcast on our website and officers and members will have the opportunity to respond. This approach will enable consultation to focus on sections of the community who may not otherwise participate in more traditional approaches.

## In the future we will

- Improve the use of the Council’s website for e-consultation and address the government’s priority outcomes for e-government using this as a tool.
- Pilot new ways to increase citizen participation such as vox pops and online questionnaires.
- Enable multi media resources on local policy priorities to be accessible to the public via website.
- Investigate other methods of involving the community in Council decisions
- Form a strategic view of e-consultation and incorporate it into the Council’s Consultation Strategy

## Reviewing our priorities

We shape council services and the future of the town by listening to the views of our stakeholders. Each year we review our priorities as part of our annual planning cycle. The process of review takes account of latest survey results linked to our consultation programme, and government, regional and countywide priorities and initiatives.

During 2005 MORI carried out a survey of residents across the town aged 16+. Face to face interviews took place with 1008 residents across the town to test their views on a range of issues including:

- Stevenage as a place to live
- Key council services and priorities
  - 54% of residents said facilities for young people require improvement. Facilities for young people are currently provided at the town's 112 equipped play areas, 15 community centres and 12 sports and leisure centres. The Council also supports numerous projects for young people such as the Mentoring Basketball Academy summer camps, Grants for Talented Young People, Crucial Crew and the primary schools sports festival.
  - 47% of residents said that installing CCTV cameras is important. Working in partnership with other local authorities including North Herts District Council we currently provide 66 closed circuit television cameras. Plans are underway to significantly extend this service including increased coverage of schools and community facilities.
  - Maintaining parks and open spaces is important for 41% of residents. The Anglia in Bloom award for *Best Small City* earlier this year is recognition of the time and money we have invested in green spaces around Stevenage. Work continues to maintain and improve these areas, as demonstrated by the £150,000 makeover of Peartree Park in Shephall and the construction of the town's first arboretum in Broadwater

The full MORI survey report is available on the Council's website at [www.stevenage.gov.uk](http://www.stevenage.gov.uk)

Using the town-wide survey results we revised the Council's ambitions and priorities for 2006/07.

**Ambition - Community Leadership**

**Develop partnership working** ✓

This is an area of national focus through Local Strategic Partnerships and the council's community leadership role. It is also crucial to the development of Local Area Agreements (LAAs).

**Make the town safer** ✓

Partnership working and investment in this priority are achieving improvements in the number of people feeling safe. Community safety initiatives across the town will continue through the Community Safety Partnership.

**Encourage a fair and inclusive community** ✓

Implementation of the action plan to meet the Council's Equalities and Diversity Strategy has started.

The scope of "Encourage a fair and inclusive community" will be reviewed during 2006/07 to take account of wider social inclusion issues – facilities for young people will become an explicit part of this priority.

**Enhance the image of Stevenage** ✓

The survey results here are good, both in terms of the profile of the town and provision of services. More work is needed to raise the profile of the council's communications strategy.

**Ambition – The regeneration of Stevenage**

**Expand the Town**  
✓

Stevenage West and other major redevelopment projects are yet to be realised.

**Develop a vibrant town centre**  
✓

A major redevelopment programme is underway.

**Revitalise local neighbourhood centres**  
✗

This is not a priority while we concentrate on the town centre and Stevenage West.

**Maintain a clean and green environment**  
✓

Clean, green streets and open spaces are important to Stevenage residents.

**Recycle more waste**  
✗

A major project was undertaken to meet the government's agenda for recycling and these targets have been achieved.  
Retain as an area of focus in 'Maintain a clean and green environment'

**Ambition – Good housing for all**

**Improve our homes**

**This new priority** reflects the Housing Business Strategy and Business Plan.

It means:

Creating a 3\* quality housing service

Setting up an ALMO

Delivering decent homes by 2010

**Ensure the development of affordable homes**

**This new priority** reflects the Housing Business Strategy and Business Plan and our aim to provide local social and affordable housing to meet local need.

**Ambition – Transformed council services**


**Make access to council services easier**

We aim to make our services accessible for all sectors of the community at times and by methods that suit them.

The Transforming Services programme is now improving access to Environmental Services.

**Use information technology to improve the quality of services**

The priority outcomes required through the National E-government agenda and Freedom of Information requirements place high importance on the use of IT to improve service delivery.



**Ensure services  
are meeting  
customer  
expectations**

✓



**New services priority**

Covers operational services that are not subject to major change but are maintained, kept up-to-date and from time to time may require up-grading.

These services:

- Have resources allocated to maintain good quality service provision
- Provide value for money
- Are customer focussed
- Perform well and aim for high



## The council's ambitions and priorities

In 2006/07 our ambitions and priorities are:

<b>Ambition</b>	<b>Community Leadership</b> – <i>to facilitate the provision of better public services, which reflect and meet the needs of local communities</i>
Priorities	Develop partnership working
	Make the town safer
	Encourage a fair and inclusive community
	Enhance the image of Stevenage
<b>Ambition</b>	<b>The Regeneration of Stevenage</b> – <i>to make Stevenage a town of regional significance with a sub-regional shopping centre and improved neighbourhood community facilities</i>
Priorities	Expand the town
	Develop a vibrant town centre
	Maintain a clean and green environment
<b>Ambition</b>	<b>Good Housing for All</b> – <i>to ensure all housing in Stevenage meets acceptable standards and those in need of housing receive quality advice</i>
Priorities	Improve our homes
	Ensure the development of affordable homes
<b>Ambition</b>	<b>Transformed Council Services</b> – <i>to ensure the provision of first class customer service and good quality services</i>
Priorities	Make access to Council services easier
	Use information technology to improve the quality of services
	Ensure services are meeting customer expectations

## Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

The Council achieved a 'good' rating from the Audit Commission for Comprehensive Performance Assessment in their May 2004 report. In that report the Audit Commission said: "*Stevenage Borough Council is a good council with the ambition and capacity to make significant improvements to services that meet a range of local people's needs*".

Like all Councils we were assessed for strengths and weaknesses against the Audit commission's Key Lines of Enquiry. Following the assessment and final report our CPA Improvement Plan was developed and this links directly to the Council's change programme. Each programme reflects the Council's ambitions and priorities.

On the following pages detailed information can be found about what we have achieved against each priority and what our plans are for the future – our improvement plan. Each of the four ambitions and associated programmes of work has a table that summarises our achievements and latest results against key success measures.

Significant improvements against these plans have been achieved for the community and in their Direction of Travel Assessment the Audit Commission recognised that: *“the Council has strengthened its management capacity and performance management framework to deliver the outcomes required in its CPA improvement plan.”*

More information about how the organisation is further improving its capacity to support improvements for the community can be found on pages xxx

### **Ambition: Community Leadership**

As community leaders we aim to develop and contribute to the sustainable social, economic and environmental well-being of our local communities. To achieve this we work in partnership with a number of organisations throughout the town.

We encourage all organisations that have an interest in the success of our town to work together. We aim to *develop partnerships* which add value and lead to improvements in the quality of life for everyone who lives, works and visits our town.

We work through the Stevenage Partnership (the local strategic partnership for Stevenage), which comprises the local public, private, voluntary and community sector to facilitate the provision of better public services, which reflect and meet the needs of the local communities.

The Stevenage Partnership has developed, in consultation with local communities, a shared vision and strategy to secure long-term success for Stevenage– ‘*Stevenage 2021 – Our Town, Our Future*’.

We work with the Stevenage Partnership on a number of its themes. In our role as community leaders we work with the Partnership to develop Stevenage as a prosperous, healthy, clean, green and safe town, which has a good supply of affordable housing, is *fair and inclusive and has a positive national image*.

We also work with the Community Safety Partnership, which is committed to tackling *crime and anti-social behaviour* in the town, as well as the ‘fear of crime’, a major issue for the town. There are other partnerships such as the Gunnels Wood Business Partnership, Health Improvement Steering Group, Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership and Cultural Alliance, which also link to the Stevenage Partnership.

Our role as community leader also involves working with partners on a countywide basis. Partners across Hertfordshire are currently working on a three-year agreement with the Government to deliver a series of outcomes and targets, called a Local Area Agreement. The Local Area Agreement has been developed following consultation with local people and organisations across the county.

Stevenage Borough Council is working closely with partners involved in the ‘Safer and Stronger Communities’ block to ensure that outcomes selected for this block accurately reflect the needs of people in Stevenage and the rest of Hertfordshire. Key issues that are being considered include levels of crime, antisocial behaviour, community cohesion, public open spaces and recycling.

#### **Community Leadership Priorities**

- Develop partnership working
- Make the Town safer
- A fair and inclusive community
- Enhance the image of Stevenage

## **PRIORITY: Develop Partnership Working**

### **Why is this a priority for the Council?**

We aim to work in partnership wherever it will add value to the work we do and improve the quality of life for residents.

Working in partnership can, and has, produced a number of enhanced benefits for the town's communities. We are committed to developing the capacity of existing partnerships as well as exploring new ways of working with our partners.

We work through a number of partnerships including the Stevenage Partnership to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of Stevenage, and the Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime throughout the town. The outcomes and achievements of these partnerships can be seen in this section as well as throughout this document. This section sets out how we have developed the partnerships and how we will contribute to their future development.

### **What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Developed the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership to lead on educational issues in the town
- ✓ Initiated the 'Every Child in Stevenage Matters' with the Stevenage Partnership and colleagues in the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership
- ✓ Ran 'healthy workplace' and smoking cessation initiatives for the Stevenage Partnership
- ✓ Successfully completed the Single Regeneration Bid Programme, which has enhanced Quality of Life in Bedwell and Shephall over the last seven years.
- ✓ Implemented the recommendations of the teenage pregnancy in Stevenage review, following a joint scrutiny event with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) Scrutiny Committee.

The Primary Care Trust (PCT) Scrutiny Committee consists of Stevenage Borough Council, North Hertfordshire District Council and Hertfordshire County Council.
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- ✓ Held an Annual Review of the Stevenage Partnership and its work programme?
- ✓ Implemented and monitored the partnership initiatives set out in the Community Strategy

- ✓ Developed a new Stevenage Partnership Quarterly Bulletin to keep all partners informed of partnership activities

### **What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Complete and implement the findings from the Stevenage Partnership review
- Complete an Equality Impact Assessment of the Community Strategy and Stevenage Partnership to ensure its policies are non-discriminatory and inclusive
- Work with partners to meet the challenging targets in the Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement which aim to provide a better quality of life for the Community
- Use Quality of Life indicators to monitor and report progress of the Community Strategy actions

### **What are our future plans?**

- Develop partnership working to sustain the drive for improved local services in Stevenage through to 2021
- Implement recommended actions following the Equality Impact Assessment of the Community Strategy and Stevenage Partnership
- Consider innovative ways to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being when implementing the Community Strategy and in the development of health partnerships and children's trusts
- Support the delivery of LAA outcomes with the Stevenage Partnership

### **How are we measuring progress?**

Success measures have been introduced for many of the actions in the Community Strategy, developed by the Stevenage Partnership, so that we can monitor progress. Some of the success measures reflect national indicators, such as the Quality of Life Indicators developed by the Audit Commission. These cover community cohesion and involvement, community safety, culture and leisure, economic well-being, education and life-long learning, the environment including air quality, health and social well-being, housing, transport and access to key services.

## **PRIORITY: Make the Town Safer**

### **Why is this a priority for the Council?**

We want to ensure that people who live, work and visit Stevenage *are* safe, and *feel* safe.

Fear of crime is often higher than justified by the actual risk of being a victim of crime. A recent survey (Townwide Survey 2005) found that 95% of Stevenage People feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood during the day and half of Stevenage people feel safe being out in their neighbourhood after dark.

The LAA Safer and Stronger Communities block includes measures aimed at making Hertfordshire a safe county. We work with the Stevenage Community Safety Partnership and other Community Safety Partnerships in Hertfordshire to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour, public disorder, and alcohol and drug misuse. We aim to create a safer environment for all those who live, work and visit Stevenage.

### **What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Reduced vehicle crime, domestic burglary, assaults, arson, crimes around licensed premises and those relating to drug and alcohol
- ✓ Increased number of Anti-social Behaviour Contracts
- ✓ Introduced Alcohol Free Zones in the town centre and Leisure Park
- ✓ Set up a Pub Watch Scheme for the town centre and leisure park pubs and clubs that will work with the Police, use banning orders and discourage under age drinking
- ✓ Implemented Community Safety Action Plans in six areas of the town
- ✓ Delivered the 'Safe Town' objectives in the Community Strategy
- ✓ Delivered the Community Safety Strategy 2005-08, which tells partners and the community more about what the Community Safety Partnership does.
- ✓ Communicated the crime incident report in a bi-monthly newsletter and published regular progress updates in Chronicle magazine
- ✓ Ran 6 Environmental Action Days with the Police, Fire Service and DVLA and Hertfordshire County Council which looked at applying Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and the removal of rubbish, fly-tipping, and untaxed vehicles in hotspot areas of the town.

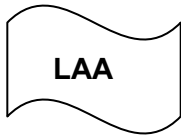
### **What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Continue to work with the town centre developers to help design out crime in the new town centre
- Enable localised information about community safety to be available to the community through the e-government programme
- Increase town centre car park security
- Continue to implement Community Safety Action Plans in six areas of the town
- Continue to fund three Police Community Support Officers

- Use a new Community Safety Bus to tour various locations in the town to raise awareness of crime and crime prevention
- Set up a new Unit in partnership with police to ensure a co-ordinated approach to tackling Anti-social Behaviour

### What are our future plans?

- Develop 'Payback' scheme which provides the opportunity for offenders to contribute to the well-being of the community
- Seek further external funding to increase policing and invest in partner services that will enable people to enjoy all the facilities Stevenage provides safely.
- Build respect in communities and reduce levels of anti-social behavior across the county by meeting the LAA Safer Communities targets by 2008/09.



**Outcome:** Being safe, feeling safe – To reduce crime, the harm caused by illegal drugs, and to reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime, and to build respect in communities and reduce anti-social behaviour; and to increase domestic fire safety and reduce arson.

#### Targets:

Reduce the percentage of people surveyed who consider teenagers hanging around on the streets to be a big or fairly big problem in their local area by 4% by 2009.

Reduce the percentage of people surveyed who consider vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles to be a big or fairly big problem in their local area by 4% by 2009.

Reduce the percentage of people surveyed who consider people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces to be a big or fairly big problem in their local area by 4% by 2009.

Increase the percentage of people surveyed who say that they feel very or fairly safe when outside in their local area after dark by 4% by 2009.

Reduce the percentage of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) that are breached by 10% over two years.

Table to be updated following 2005/06 out-turn

Indicator	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target	Target (3 years) 2009	Target (5 years) 2011	Target (10 years) 2016
Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households		9.23	8.5	To be determined by Stevenage Community Safety Partnership	To be determined by Stevenage Community Safety Partnership
Violent offences committed by a stranger per 1,000 population		6.18	5.81		
Violent offences committed in a public place per 1,000 population		14.22	13.37		
Violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises per 1,000 population		1.49	1.4		
Violent offences committed under the influence per 1,000 population		7.56	7.11		



**PRIORITY: Encourage a Fair and Inclusive Community**  
**Why is this a priority for the Council?**

We are committed to ensuring that our delivery of services and employment practices reflect the highest possible equality standards. This means that we recognise and value difference, and aim to be fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory in carrying out all our responsibilities.

We want to ensure that we provide fair and equal access to our services and we have non-discriminatory employment practices; and that all our customers and communities are consulted on decisions that affect them.

**What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Commenced a three year rolling programme of Equality Impact Assessments that over 3 years assessing all Council policies and services to ensure they are non-discriminatory.
- ✓ Areas assessed in year one are: The Customer Service Centre, Community Transport, Community Meals, Holidays for older people, Recruitment and selection and family friendly policies.
- ✓ Promoted awareness that the Council can provide documents in alternative formats and languages, and interpreters to help access our services.
- ✓ Ensured the Council comply with the 2005 amendment of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- ✓ Consulted staff and stakeholder groups on the content of the Equality and Diversity Policy prior to publication.
- ✓ Reviewed, developed and strengthened community forums and groups, including World Forum, REACT, Women’s Resource Centre, Learning Disability, to ensure that they comply with the Council’s Equality and Diversity Policy.
- ✓ **Achieved Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (assessment to be carried out in March 2006)**


As a result of an Equality Impact Assessment the Customer Service Centre will:

- Improve the range of communication formats used
- Consider the use of mobile technology to deliver services to people that cannot access services by other means
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training

**What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Complete Job Evaluation and implement the Equal Pay Review.
- Produce a Disability Equality Scheme (DES)
- Comply with future non-discriminatory legislation, custom and practice, for example, age discrimination
- Investigate a Gender Equality Scheme (GES) and take appropriate action as national guidance becomes available.
- Aim to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (March 2007)
- Extend the scope of this priority so that it picks up on wider social inclusion issues and maximise the use of technology.

### What are our future plans?

	<p><b>Outcome:</b> Communities are empowered to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making and the delivery of services, and there is increased sense of belonging and citizenship.</p> <p><b>Sub Outcome:</b> Communities are empowered to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making, and there is an increased sense of community cohesion.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> Increase the percentage of people surveyed who feel their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together by 2% by 2009</p>
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- Complete the 3-year programme of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure all council services and policies are non-discriminatory.
- Aim to achieve and maintain Level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government
- Introduce a town-wide social inclusion strategy

### How are we measuring progress?

Indicator	2005/06 actual	2006/07 target	Target (3 years) 2009	Target (5 years) 2011	Target 10 years 2016
Equalities Standard for Local Government level			3	4	4
The duty to promote race equality			100%	100%	100%
The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women			29.72%	35.14%	50%
The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities			8.10%	10.81%	10.81%
The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition			5.46%	6.86%	10.20%
The percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area	11.80%	11.80%	11.80%	11.80%	11.80%
The percentage of local			8.17%	9.53%	11.57%

authority employees from minority ethnic communities					
The percentage of the economically active minority ethnic community population in the authority area.	5.40%	5.40%	5.40%	5.40%	5.40%

Table to be updated following 2005/06 out-turn

## **Priority: Enhance the image of Stevenage**

Why is this a priority for the council?

Stevenage is a great town with a real sense of community and it has much to be proud of. We want to tell people that it is a good place to live, work, visit and do business. A positive image of the town combined with the council's good reputation will help to attract investment and funding and give Stevenage a significant role within the region.

Effective communication contributes to the council's reputation and the town's image. We are one of the best local authorities in the county for producing positive publicity about our town.

### ***Investing in effective communications***

There is a strong link between how well informed residents feel about what the council is doing and satisfaction with the council. The 2005 town-wide survey showed that **77%** of people who feel that Stevenage Borough Council is doing a good job feel informed.

*Chronicle* magazine is an excellent way of telling people in and outside of Stevenage about the council and the town. Every household receives a copy; it is distributed to organisations outside of the town and published on our web site. In the 2005 town-wide survey 90% of people said that they remember seeing the magazine, which is one of the best recall rates in the country.

Enhancing the image of Stevenage through clear and timely communication plans is essential when telling people about what we have achieved in all our priorities.

### **What was achieved in 2005/2006?**

- ✓ Produced documents in different languages and formats and promoted this service
- ✓ Published a new look *official guide to Stevenage*
- ✓ Increased media coverage of our regeneration and community safety projects

Signed up to the Local Government Association Reputation Project – see [page 44](#)

**What do we want to achieve in 2006/2007?**

- Produce publicity for *Britain in Bloom*, town centre regeneration, community safety projects and the town’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations
- Introduce training for staff so that the publications they produce for the public are easier to read and more informative
- Improve council branding so that people have a clear understanding of what services we provide to the community

**What are our plans for the future?**

- Improve our communications with ‘hard to reach’ groups so that no one in Stevenage is excluded from council services and information
- Achieve a Charter mark (award for excellence in customer service) for corporate policy and communications
- Share ‘best practice’ or what we do well with other organisations to improve as a local authority and to help others learn from our expertise

**How are we measuring progress?**

Indicator	2005/2006 actual	2006/2007 target	Target (3 years) 2009	Target (5 years) 2011	Target 10 years 2016
% of residents who can recall seeing ‘Chronicle’	90%	No survey in 2006/2007	85%	85%	85%
% of residents who feel the council keep them well informed	67%	No survey in 2006/2007	75%	75%	75%
Number of regional/national news stories			900	950	1050
% of those that were positive			89%	89%	89%

Priorities	Achievements 2005/06	How we will measure our success in achieving our ambitions?	
		Key measures	Most recent results
<b>Community Leadership Programme</b>			
Make the town safer	Reduced levels of theft, commercial burglary, vehicle crime and disorder	Percentage of residents surveyed who feel safe in the day	76% (2003 BVPI survey)
Develop partnership working	Published Community Strategy		95% (2005 Residents' survey)
Encourage a fair and inclusive community	Ran 3 pilot Equalities Impact Assessments	Percentage of residents surveyed who feel safe at night	28% (2003 BVPI survey)
Enhance the image of Stevenage	Completed BVR – Being Independent, action plans now being implemented	Percentage of residents surveyed who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	49% (2005 Residents' survey)
	Increased national and local media coverage		43% (2003 BVPI survey)
			69% (2005 Residents' survey)
		Percentage of residents surveyed who believe they can influence decisions made by the authority	20% (2003 BVPI survey)
		20% (2005 Residents' survey)	
		Percentage of residents surveyed who feel the Council keeps them well-informed	70% (2003 BVPI survey)
			67% (2005 Residents' survey)

Note: This table is a summary of the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan showing progress against the programmes of work for each ambition and latest results against key success measures.

## **AMBITION: Regeneration of Stevenage**

Stevenage is proud of its New Town legacy – providing families with homes, jobs and a thriving community in clean and pleasant neighbourhoods. Each of these principles contributes greatly to people's sense of well-being and quality of life.

Today, Stevenage is not attracting the necessary level of investment or tapping the culture, talents and skills of its people to sustain our New Town legacy into the long-term. The Council is working hard to address this situation through physical regeneration, economic development and housing growth.

The Council's ambition is for Stevenage to grow into an emerging regional city by 2021 that is prosperous, healthy, clean, green and safe. It will have a strong sense of purpose and will be a place in which people are proud to live, work, visit and do business. Stevenage will be an employment and housing growth area of regional significance where growth and physical, social and economic regeneration will be complimentary.

We have developed some ambitious plans for regenerating the town.

We want Stevenage to be at the forefront of the Government's economic and housing growth plans for the East of England. The Council will continue to drive the housing and employment expansion of the town to the west and north of Stevenage.

The Council is supporting strong economic growth. Central to this strategy is making Gunnels Wood the East of England's premier business park; supporting the provision of business advice, networking, mentoring and incubation services, particularly in sectors with a high growth potential; and working with schools and businesses to raise the level of aspirations and skills of local young people. We also have a major focus on the environment and promote sustainable business practices in all that we do.

The 2005 Townwide survey revealed that only 39% of residents are satisfied with the condition of the town centre. A comprehensive regeneration programme is underway and our objective is to re-establish the town centre as a major shopping and leisure destination in the region with new homes, civic facilities and contemporary public spaces.

We are planning to develop neighbourhood centres as the focus of local commercial and community life through environmental improvements, encouraging the growth of businesses and promoting community activity.

In the 2005 townwide survey residents told us that clean streets and good quality parks and open spaces were important in making their town a good place to live. Three quarters of residents were satisfied with the cleanliness of our streets and approximately two thirds were satisfied with the condition of parks and open spaces. The Council has secured funding to improve the town centre gardens. We hope to achieve 'Green Flag' status in 2008/09. This is an important part of our commitment to the Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement.

90% of residents are satisfied with the kerbside collection of recyclables and garden waste. The Government is keen for people to recycle more and have set annual targets for the amount of waste we recycle. We want to meet or exceed these targets for recycling. We aim to ensure that residents recycle as much of their waste as possible.

**Regeneration Priorities**

- Expand the Town
- Develop a vibrant Town Centre
- Maintain a clean and green environment



## **PRIORITY: Expand the Town**

### **Why is this a priority for the Council?**

We want Stevenage to be at the forefront of the Government's economic and housing growth plans for the East of England.

The demand for housing in Stevenage is greater than the supply of houses available. As Stevenage is relatively small geographically, the number of new sites for development is limited. The Council supports the proposed development to the West of Stevenage for up to 5,000 new homes as part of a wider expansion of the town of up to 15,000 new homes to 2021. Linked with the new homes would be several thousand new jobs and a variety of new community facilities, including new shops, schools, and health facilities. The development would make a significant contribution to meeting the growth needs of the East of England.

We also want to encourage the growth of the town's economy. To do this we are working with, and will continue, to work with developers and landowners to attract new businesses to Stevenage.

Expanding the town will help us to:

- Return the town to its original intention as a New Town – a *more self-contained, sustainable community*
- Redevelop and reshape parts of the town in need of *regeneration*
- *Link growth and regeneration* to the benefit of all the community – families, individuals and businesses
- *Develop a vibrant town centre* which will be a major shopping and leisure centre for the region
- Provide more *affordable homes*
- Address *health, education and inequalities issues* across the town

### **What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Presented the Council's case for more homes and jobs for Stevenage to Government Inspectors
- ✓ Obtained agreement in principle by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for 3,600 new homes and associated development at Stevenage West
- ✓ Set out a programme of work for the future planning of the town to 2021
- ✓ Undertook a major programme of research studies to better shape the vision for Stevenage to 2021
- ✓ Established the Gunnels Wood Partnership to take forward the regeneration of the Gunnels Wood area
- ✓ Adopted a Supplementary Planning Document for the Gunnels Wood area, to assist its regeneration
- ✓ Commenced the construction of 120 new homes at Ridgmond Park, including 39 affordable homes
- ✓ Worked with partners to explore the best ways of achieving our educational, health and affordable housing priorities
- ✓ Secured £4.8million of Growth Areas Funding for the delivery of housing and improvements to public parks

#### Growth Areas Funding:

Stevenage is part of the 'London – Stansted – Cambridge – Peterborough' growth area. The Sustainable Communities Plan (SCP), which was published by the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister in February 2003, committed funding to this area. The funding is for the remediation of brownfield land and the necessary site assembly, additional affordable housing, essential local infrastructure and the mechanisms required for delivery.

- ✓ Sponsored the second [Innovation@Stevenage](#) Exhibition that showcased the achievements of local companies. The event was attended by over 1000 local students
- ✓ Provided new modern facilities for Ridgemoond Training, the town's construction skills centre, and hosted a Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) planning challenge event for Stevenage students
- ✓ Worked with partners to explore the best ways of achieving our educational, health and affordable housing priorities

### **What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Achieve recognition of Stevenage as the designated growth point in Hertfordshire in the draft East of England plan
- Receive planning permission for the Stevenage West development from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
- Complete the housing development at Ridgemoond Park
- Backed by the Growth Areas Fund take forward housing and public parks projects
- Consult on the planning application for the town centre regeneration scheme
- Support the provision of business advice, networking, mentoring and business development services with the Stevenage Business Initiative and Business Technology Centre
- Issue planning permission for the town centre regeneration scheme
- Agree with partners the best ways of achieving our educational, health and affordable housing priorities
- Complete the first round of public consultation on the first set of Local Development Framework (LDF) documents to replace the current District Plan

#### **'Local Development Framework' – what is it?**

The Local Development Framework (or LDF) is a series of town planning documents produced by the council that together set out the vision for Stevenage to 2021. They will be used as the basis for determining all future planning applications.

The LDF conforms to national and regional planning policies but takes its local point of reference from the Community Strategy [\(see page 13\)](#)

The LDF comprises:

- a work programme called the Local Development Scheme (LDS)
- a Statement of Community Involvement - which sets out how and when the community will be consulted by the Council on planning matters
- an Annual Monitoring Report which sets out how we are progressing with the LDF

And seven planning documents:

- Core Strategy - the vision for the Borough to 2021
- Site-specific policies - sites to be developed and purpose of that development
- Four area Action Plans for - Gunnels Wood, the Old Town, the town centre and the new neighbourhoods planned to the west and north of the town

- Explore with Government the options for a Local Delivery Vehicle to co-ordinate the expansion of Stevenage

**Local Delivery Vehicles ( LDVs)** are a partnership between local authorities and representatives of other public and/or private sector bodies who facilitate, implement and deliver agreed development. The main functions of an LDV are as follows:

- Drive the growth of the area, in keeping with a strategic plan using its designated powers to stimulate private investment
- Co-ordinate delivery of local infrastructure in co-operation with respective statutory providers

**What are our future plans?**

- Agree with infrastructure providers what facilities are needed, and at what point, to expand the town
- Work with North Hertfordshire District Council on a Joint Area Action Plan for the urban extensions to the west and north of the town as part of our LDF
- Develop our LDF within the context of the adopted (2007) East of England Plan and set out a clear vision for the town to 2021
- Work with the developers for early completions on Stevenage West
- Identify land for development for employment, housing, shopping, health, education and other community uses
- Work with Government to establish an appropriate Local Delivery Vehicle
- Work with the Gunnels Wood Partnership to re-shape this important business area for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Following consultation, work with our partners to determine the town centre regeneration planning application and begin on-site works
- Enhance the provision of business advice, networking, mentoring and business development services, including the provision of “grow-on” business accommodation

**How are we measuring progress?**

Indicator	2005/06 actual	2006/07 target	Target (3 years) 2009	Target (5 years) 2011	Target 10 years 2016
The cumulative number of homes developed at West of Stevenage	0	0	0	400	2500
Percentage of new small businesses (1-10 employees) successfully trading after 12 months			75%	75%	75%

Table to be updated following out-turn 2005/06

## **PRIORITY: Develop a vibrant town centre**

### **Why is this a priority for the Council?**

A modern, contemporary regional town centre is a key priority in supporting our ambition for the regeneration and economic development of Stevenage. For our town centre to thrive we need to have the right blend of quality shops, leisure facilities, homes and public spaces to create a thriving economy.

Our town centre was designed over forty years ago and it has not kept pace with the times. Recent developments such as the Plaza, Westgate, The Forum and the Express Hotel have seen some improvement but there is still a long way to go. To improve the quality of the town centre we are driving forward a major redevelopment programme alongside on-going environmental enhancements.

Linked to this priority is the need to revitalise our network of neighbourhood centres.

### **What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Commenced a major environmental enhancement scheme in Queensway North and South by installing new paving, street furniture, attractive lighting and signage
- ✓ Agreed the master plan for the town centre regeneration scheme due for public consultation in late Summer 2006
- ✓ Agreed the strategy for maximising the number of affordable homes to be built as part of the redevelopment

### **What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Complete the environmental enhancement scheme in Queensway North and South
- Consult on the agreed master plan for the town centre regeneration scheme before submitting the outline planning application
- Work with our preferred developers to ensure that the outline planning application is submitted
- Carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment for the town centre scheme to ensure its development is sustainable

### **What are our future plans?**

- Open a quality retail scheme with a major department store and parking for shoppers
- Develop the southern part of the town centre as a residential area
- Open a transport interchange by relocating the bus station closer to the train station
- Work with the County Council to co-locate the museum with the library creating a new 'Discovery Centre'
- Continue the environmental enhancements in key pedestrian walkways by installing new paving, street furniture, attractive lighting and signage

**How are we measuring progress?**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2005/06 actual</b>	<b>2006/07 target</b>	<b>Target (3 years) 2009</b>	<b>Target (5 years) 2011</b>	<b>Target 10 years 2016</b>
Percentage of shoppers who think the town centre has improved	TBA	70%	75%	90%	98%
Ranking in national retail hierarchy	TBA	130	130	100	70

## **PRIORITY: Maintain a Clean and Green Environment**

Following the review of the Council's ambitions and priorities in 2005 'Recycle more waste' became an area of focus within this priority.

### **Why is this a priority?**

We aim to encourage residents to recycle by providing top quality, user-friendly services. We continually seek opportunities to provide new and enhanced recycling services to meet the public demand.

We must continually increase the amount of waste we recycle to meet with Government targets. Recycling is not just of national importance, but is also an important local issue.

Within the emerging Herts Local Area Agreement it is intended that 41.5% of the County's household waste be recycled or composted by 2008/09.

In Stevenage, each household produces over one ton of rubbish each year. This amount has been progressively rising, despite an increase in the quantity of material recycled.

Due to tighter regulations on how we can dispose of our waste and the reduction in space available at landfill sites, the need to reduce the amount of rubbish for disposal is crucially important.

In a recent survey (BVPI Survey 2003/04), 82% of residents told us that they were satisfied with the recycling services that we provide and 70% of people who would 'speak highly of Stevenage' are proud of its parks and open spaces. They did, however, say that we could improve on the cleanliness of the streets after collections are carried out, and that they would like to be able to recycle a greater variety of materials.

We want to provide and maintain public areas to the highest of standards, to create a town where we can all be proud to live, work and do business and by maintaining a clean and green environment of which we can all be proud, we can improve the quality of life for all in the town.

Research shows that residents' opinion of the Council overall is influenced more by improvements in street cleansing, grounds maintenance, refuse and recycling collections than other services.

The Council has signed up to the Local Government Association "Reputation Project" and through this we intend to focus on further improvements in this area.

Public space improvements are also a key theme of the emerging Herts Local Area Agreement.

### **Local Government Reputation Project:**

The Council has recently signed up to the Local Government Association's Reputation Project. At a national level the project aims to find out why public perception of councils remains low when significant improvement in council services has been achieved over the past few years.

Research shows that councils get higher satisfaction ratings when:

- Improvements to the street-scene and liveability are made.
- They inform the community about what the council does, why it does those things and how it has responded to community needs.

### What was achieved in 2005/2006?

- ✓ Introduced a town-wide collection scheme for garden waste alongside an information campaign to increase recycling
- ✓ **Met the Government recycling target of 24% of household waste (Including composted waste)**
- ✓ Completed the Open Spaces Assessment to support ongoing development and implementation of a series of strategies, including Parks Strategy, Open Spaces Strategy and an Environmental Strategy
- ✓ Promoted allotments to increase take-up across the town
- ✓ Developed availability of new sponsorship opportunities with local companies to fund environmental improvements across the town

Over 100 small companies are now recycling paper as a result of the Paper Recycling Project run by the Employers for the Environment (We have now saved the equivalent of 3,500 trees)

- ✓ Delivered further improvements to Peartree Park in partnership with Groundwork Trust including creating a multi-use games area on the old tennis court site, skate facility, new playground, trim trail, tree planting and improved lighting
- ✓ Participated in 6 environmental action days with Police, Fire Service and DVLA to target hotspots of fly tipping, anti social behaviour, environmental damage, abandoned vehicles and untaxed cars
- ✓ Took a lead role in the development of reward targets within the Safer and Stronger Block of the Hertfordshire LAA
- ✓ Anglia In Bloom “Best Small City” winner

#### **Britain in Bloom:**

Achieved Anglia in Bloom “Best Small City” winner in 2005 and following this success, Stevenage has been selected to represent the region in the “Best Small City” category of Britain in Bloom.

The Britain in Bloom competition is not just about flowers. The judges will also be looking at:

- Recycling schemes
- Conservation
- The cleanliness of the town


### What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?

- Take part in the “Britain in Bloom” competition
- Work with Herts Groundwork Trust to deliver a programme of local green space improvements
- Acquire further capital investment in public space improvements
- Develop and implement a series of Environmental Management and Green Space Strategies following the audit of public space
- Market test the cleansing and grounds maintenance services to ensure value for money
- Review environmental maintenance arrangements for flat blocks and courtyards with the caretaking service
- Implement the local Biodiversity Action Plan to assist with species conservation, habitat protection, and the creation of wildlife corridors

- Work with ENCAMS to develop education and enforcement activities, including encouraging local schools to become ‘ECO-schools’
- Implement the “Transforming Environmental Services” project to improve access to customer services and value for money, and limit environmental nuisance
- Extend the “Brown Bin” to include kitchen waste and cardboard

**What are our future plans?**

- To achieve the LAA target of 41.5% of the County’s household waste recycled or composted by 2008/09.

	<p>Outcome: Neighbourhoods are cleaner and greener, and communities take an active role in managing their own environment.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b></p> <p>Reduce the disposal of non-bio-degradable household waste to landfill through increasing recycling of non-bio-degradable household waste across the county from 6.66% to 9.16% by 2009</p> <p>Increase the number of Green Flag (or equivalent) accredited sites which feature or fringe on a super output area (SOA) within areas of high multiple deprivation within the top 25% regionally from 0 to 5 by 2009</p> <p>Increase the number of Green Flag (or equivalent) accredited sites outside the identified areas of multiple deprivation from 5 to 10 by 2009</p>
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**How are we measuring our progress?**

Indicator	2005/06 actual	2006/07 target	Target (3 years) 2009	Target (5 years) 2011	Target 10 years 2016
Percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness standards	75% (Residents’ Survey 2005)		70%	70%	70%
The proportion of relevant land and highways assessed for cleanliness in terms of the percentage of:					
a. Litter and detritus falling below an acceptable level					
b. Unacceptable levels of graffiti					



c. Unacceptable levels of fly-posting					
d. The year on year reduction in total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with flytipping					
Percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours of notification			95%	95%	95%
Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the Council is legally entitled to remove the vehicle.			95%	95%	95%
Percentage of household waste recycled and/or composted					
Percentage of residents satisfied with the provision of local recycling facilities (net)			90%	90%	90%
Percentage of residents satisfied with the provision of door-step recycling (net)	90% (Resident s' Survey 2005)		90%	90%	90%
Percentage of residents satisfied with the household waste collection service (net)			90%	90%	90%

**Table to be updated following 2005/06 out-turn (inc. new BV218 info/data)**

Priorities	Achievements 2005/06	How we will measure our success in achieving our ambitions?	
		Key measures	Most recent results
	<b>Regeneration programme</b>		
Expand the town	Secured Stevenage as a growth point in the draft East of England Development Plan	Percentage of shoppers surveyed who think the town centre has improved	66% (2004 Town Centre survey)
Develop a vibrant town centre	Appointed preferred developer for town centre regeneration	Percentage residents surveyed who are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	70% (2003 BVPI survey) 88% (2005 Residents' survey)
Revitalise local neighbourhood centres	Increased the range of shops available in the neighbourhood centres, serving the diverse needs of our community	Percentage residents surveyed who feel their neighbourhood has got better over the past two years	8% (2003 BVPI survey) 11% (2005 Residents' survey)
Maintain a clean and green environment	Commissioned a comprehensive assessment of open spaces in Stevenage	Percentage residents surveyed satisfied with the Council's recycling service	82% (2003 BVPI survey)
Recycle more waste	Implemented a green waste pilot scheme to raise amount of waste recycled by residents	Percentage residents surveyed satisfied with the cleanliness of streets	59% (2003 BVPI survey) 75% (2005 Residents' survey)
		Percentage residents surveyed satisfied with parks and open spaces in the town	74% (2003 BVPI survey) 67% (2005 residents' survey)

Note: This table is a summary of the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan showing progress against the programmes of work for each ambition and latest results against key success measures.

### **AMBITION - Good Housing For All**

The Council is proud of the part it has played over the last 50 years in developing the town by providing affordable homes and employment opportunities in a secure and pleasant environment for the benefit of all our community.

Our Housing Strategy sets out our key priorities for improving housing across the town. These priorities are shaped by national, regional and local priorities and will be addressed through a collaborative approach involving joint working and partnerships with other local authorities and public sector bodies.

The Housing Strategy presents our aims for housing in Stevenage. It sets out how we will:

1. Improve our homes
2. Improve the customer experience of our service
3. Ensure the development of affordable homes
4. Improve support to vulnerable people
5. Develop communities people are proud of

The Stevenage Partnership helps us set the strategic housing agenda for the town, ensuring that all agencies are working towards common goals.

#### Our Strategic Role:

##### Affordable Homes:

Stevenage was planned for 60,000 people, but is now home to almost 80,000. It is geographically limited with little space for the development of new homes. We develop affordable homes by acquiring national or regional funding, or through planning gain. In addition, we promote affordable housing in the development of the town centre and by supporting the development of Stevenage West.

##### Sustainable Communities:

The communities we provide are only sustainable if people want to live there. We aim to use the resources we have available to contribute to developing sustainable communities that people are proud of. We will work with the Stevenage Partnership, the Primary Care Trust (PCT), Police, Herts County Council, businesses and a range of voluntary organisations to do this.

##### Regeneration:

We want Stevenage to be at the forefront of the Government's economic and housing growth plans for the East of England. The Council will continue to drive the housing and employment expansion of the town to the west and north of Stevenage.

#### Our Service Role:

##### The Landlord role:

(Arms Length Management Organisation)

As the town's largest social landlord we have a responsibility to our tenants and leaseholders to provide an excellent service, and by example set high standards that other landlords should meet.

Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) The ALMO will be a separate organisation owned by the Council and run by a Board of Directors including Council, tenant and leaseholder representatives.
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The Government, for the first time, has set minimum standards of repair, heating and facilities for social houses throughout the country – the Decent Homes Standard. We are required to ensure that all social houses in Stevenage meet these standards by 2010. The Council does not have the financial resources to meet the Standard. An ALMO provides access to additional Government supported borrowing to meet the Decent Homes Standard for all our Council dwellings.

As a result of the Housing 'options appraisal' process, it was recommended that the Council set up an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) to manage its Housing Stock. It is anticipated that the ALMO will 'go live' in October 2006.

**Private Sector:**

We are committed to ensuring that private sector housing meets Decent Homes standards. Every five years we carry out a comprehensive private sector house condition survey and we have an established private sector empty property strategy, which brings empty properties in disrepair up to liveable standards.

**Homelessness and Housing Advice:**

We aim to give good quality timely advice to those in need of housing and ensure, with our partners, that there is appropriate housing available for those in need. This has become increasingly difficult, in recent years, as demand for local housing is rising at a greater rate than the number of available affordable homes.

**A Quality Service:**

In 2003/04 73% of our tenants were satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council, a new survey is planned for 2006. In addition 56% of our tenants were satisfied with the opportunities for participation in the way the service is run. We are committed to improving the service we provide to our customers and will be focussing on tenant participation and consultation. The actions we will take to address this are set out in the Housing Strategy - 'Improve the customer experience of our service'.

**Priorities for Good Housing for All**

- Ensure the development of affordable homes
- Improve our homes

**PRIORITY: Ensure the development of affordable homes**

**Why is this a priority for the Council?**

The 2004 housing needs survey calculated that 435 additional affordable homes need to be made available every year to meet the current and predicted future housing needs in the town. In 2004/05 only 33 houses were built.

As the town is relatively 'new' and geographically small there are a limited number of new or brownfield sites (sites which have previously been built on and can be redeveloped) that can be developed for affordable housing. However we ensure that on average a minimum of 40% of Council land that is released for development is for affordable housing.

**What is affordable housing?**

Affordable housing can be key worker housing, shared ownership and intermediate renting as well as the traditional social rented homes. The "affordable" factor is that the rent/mortgage costs of the eventual occupant will be less than the market level because of the subsidy.

In a recent survey nearly half of residents in Stevenage said that affordable housing was important to making somewhere a good place to live.

In order to alleviate the housing pressures in the town, it is important that the proposed expansion to the west of Stevenage is agreed. We will ensure, in partnership with the Housing Corporation, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and private developers that there is appropriate provision of social and affordable housing to meet local need as part of this development.

**What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Worked with The Haven, the homeless shelter, to provide move-on accommodation, to free up much needed emergency bed spaces
- ✓ Used the £5 million Growth Area Delivery Grant (GADG) *received* from central government to provide affordable homes at Ridgemoor Park and Austen Paths (GADG – now known as Growth Areas Funding (GAF), see page 39)
- ✓ Ensured that on average 40% of the homes built on land released by the Council are affordable
- ✓ In partnership with Registered Social Landlords, in 2005/06 the Council:
  - ◆ Completed a specialist housing scheme in Oxleys Road providing 20 units of supported accommodation
  - ◆ Started the development of 24 rented and shared ownership flats on the Austen Paths site
  - ◆ Enabled the development of affordable housing at sites in Fairview Road (198 homes), Ridgemoor Park (144 homes) and Brittain Way
- ✓ Promoted alternatives to traditional social rented homes through key worker and shared ownership opportunities at Brittain Way (18 homes) and Fairview Road (144 homes).
- ✓ Successfully filled 17 social rented properties at Great Ashby with nominations from Stevenage Borough Council.

**Working in partnership** – following a successful ballot by tenants the Stony hall estate was transferred to the William Sutton Housing Association in March 2005. Work has now started on a £15 million regeneration scheme to demolish six existing blocks of flats and replace them with new homes. The scheme will take five years to complete and will create 140 new affordable homes out of 184 units.

**What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Develop an affordable housing strategy by September 2006 to ensure we have a single approach to achieving delivery of affordable housing
- Subject to the adoption of the East of England Plan, identify suitable sites for housing and develop policies to deliver an appropriate supply of affordable homes
- Monitor developers' proposals for the regeneration of the town centre so that they include provision of private and affordable housing

**What are our future plans?**

- ◆ Implement the new affordable housing strategy to maximise the provision of affordable homes in Stevenage
- ◆ Support bids made by Registered Social Landlords to external bodies such as the Housing Corporation for grant funding to develop affordable housing

**How are we measuring progress?**

Indicator	2005/06 actual	2006/07 target	Target (3 years) 2009	Target (5 years) 2011	Target 10 years 2016
Percentage of affordable homes as a proportion of all new homes			Subject to approval of East of England Development Plan and Stevenage West development		
Number of affordable units built per annum					

## **PRIORITY: Improve our homes**

### **Why is this a priority?**

As the town's largest social landlord; we have a responsibility to our tenants to provide an excellent housing service, and by example set high standards that other landlords should meet.

### **Decent Homes**

We have started a programme to ensure that our houses meet and exceed the minimum Decent Homes Standard required by the Government. This is the most significant programme the Council has managed in recent years and it is important to ensure that works and resources required are carefully planned and programmed.

We are committed to ensuring that private sector housing meets Decent Homes standards.

The Environmental Health Unit deal with problems of disrepair in properties rented from a private landlord. We provide a wide range of grants and loans to assist people in maintaining their properties and our empty property strategy is designed to encourage owners of long-term vacant properties to return them to use.

#### **Decent Homes:**

To find out what work needs to be done we commissioned a stock condition survey in 2004/05. We are currently planning the work programmes, in partnership with our stakeholders, and establishing long-term contract arrangements to ensure that the Decent Homes work is completed by 2010. The framework for these major work programmes has been developed around asset management and procurement strategies. These programmes require significant funding.

### **What was achieved in 2005/2006?**

- ✓ Continued to upgrade our houses to meet the Decent Homes Standard
- ✓ Involved tenants in the review of the Stevenage Standard to:
  - Ensure the standard is in line with funding that will be available through setting up an ALMO
  - Standardise materials used in day to day repairs, voids and decent homes programmes
- ✓ Produced the 'Lettable Standard': the standard empty properties must meet before we will let them to a new tenant and improved the time taken to relet properties
- ✓ Developed Asset Management and Procurement strategies setting the framework for the delivery of Decent Homes and the other major work programmes.
- ✓ Planned Decent Homes and the other major work programmes up to 2010
- ✓ Introduced an electronic appointment system for repairs
- ✓ Commenced work in setting up the Arms Length Management Organisation

### **What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Continue with the programme to comply with the Decent Homes Standard by 2010
- Develop and introduce a re-investment panel, consisting of officers and tenant and leaseholder representatives who will monitor progress on achieving the decent homes standard

- Review the operating times of the repairs service and the emergency call out operation
- Ensure that affordable housing is delivered at the same standard regardless of the provider
- Consider and develop with tenants, options for the future of sheltered schemes in Stevenage
- Achieve relet times for empty properties at above national average

**What are our future plans?**

- ✓ Deliver on Decent Homes by 2010

**How are we measuring our progress?**

The proportion of LA homes which were not decent at 1 <sup>st</sup> April of each year			9%	0% (to be achieved by 2010)	Not applicable
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Table to be updated following 2005/06 out-turn

**A top quality housing service**

In order to secure the funding needed to deliver the Decent Homes programme, the Council and its ALMO must pass a Housing Inspection. The Inspection will be carried out by the Audit Commission’s Housing Inspectorate, and will take place in Autumn 2007; a year after the ALMO is set up. The early setting up of the ALMO is important to allow it to focus as soon as possible on improving quality of service.

The Council and the ALMO must pass the inspection with a minimum rating of two stars (out of a maximum possible three stars) and must also convince the Inspectors that prospects for further improvements are good, i.e. that the Housing Services provided by the Council and the ALMO will reach three stars. The government will release funding for Decent Homes only if the Council achieves those high standards in the inspection.

The inspectors will examine all areas of Housing Services and will focus on three themes in all the services;

- value for money
- access, customer care and user focus
- diversity and equalities

The inspectors will also examine the Council’s performance measured by Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) as shown elsewhere in this section. Our current BVPIs show that in most areas of the Housing Service, we are performing above the national average.

ALMO go live plan

SBC’s bid to ODPM for ALMO funding and status

**May 2006:** Shadow ALMO Board in place

**July 2006:** ODPM confirms funding

**October 2006:** Go Live



We commissioned an independent organisation, Tribal HCH, to carry out a mock inspection of Housing Services in December 2005 and their verdict was that at present the Council's Housing Services is a one star service and the prospects for improvement are uncertain.

The mock inspection identified that we need to address the three themes outlined above by:

- Establishing better measurements of unit costs vs customer satisfaction
- Embedding user focus and user involvement in all areas of Housing Services
- Making greater efforts to contact and involve hard-to-reach groups and individuals, such as the homeless.

The mock inspection also noted that many of our Housing Services are not "joined up" from the customer's viewpoint, although our customers continue to have a high regard for individual members of staff and for particular parts of the Housing Service, such as the Care-taking team.

#### **What was achieved in 2005/2006?**

- ✓ Used consultants for a 'mock inspection' of the housing service and achieved a one star rating
- ✓ Our tenant newsletter, *Housing For You*, was redesigned and re-launched as a newspaper.
- ✓ Held several successful Tenant Participation events, including *Have A Say Day* and *Have a Go Show*
- ✓ Identified *quick-wins*; small but significant service improvements selected by customers, by staff and by the mock inspectors that would make significant differences to service delivery in particular circumstances.
- ✓ Consulted with customers and staff about how best to deliver a large scale programme of improvements to Housing Services.

#### **What do we want to achieve in 2006/2007?**

- Develop and implement a Housing Improvement Programme
- At least 20% of *Housing For You* to be written by tenants
- Expand participation events to include locally based events, a *Have A Go Show*, in 05/06
- Implement at least 30% of *quick-wins* by 2006, and 70% by the end of September 2006, and notify staff and customers about the service improvements.
- Establish a separate Housing Improvement Team to support delivery of actual service improvements lead by a Housing Improvement Manager with a proven track record of delivering improvements, seconded from within the Housing Division
- Set up the Arms Length Management Organisation by October 2006

#### **What are our future plans?**

- Achieve a two star housing service by 2007
- Achieve a three star housing service by 2008
- Ensure that the Housing Services delivered by the ALMO are joined up with those Housing Services that will still be delivered by the Council.

**How are we measuring progress?**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2005/06 actual</b>	<b>2006/07 target</b>	<b>Target (3 years) 2009</b>	<b>Target (5 years) 2011</b>	<b>Target 10 years 2016</b>
Satisfaction of tenants with the overall service provided by their landlord	No Survey (2004 73%)		86%	86%	86%
Satisfaction of tenants with opportunities for participation in management and decision making in relation to housing services provided by their landlord	No Survey (2004 56%)		86%	86%	86%
Proportion of rent collected			99.20%	99.60%	99.60%
The average length of stay in i) Bed & Breakfast ii) hostel accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and are unintentionally homes and in priority need			0 weeks 5 weeks	0 weeks 5 weeks	0 weeks 5 weeks
The average time taken to relet local authority housing					

Priorities	Achievements 2005/06	How we will measure our success in achieving our ambitions?	
		Key measures	Most recent results
<b>Housing programme</b>			
<p>Work with partners to provide affordable</p> <p>Ensure tenants and those in need of housing receive a top quality housing service</p>	Comprehensively reviewed repair service, key areas for action identified	Percentage of tenants who are satisfied with the overall housing service provided by the Council	73% (2003 BVPI survey)
	Held a ballot at Stonyhall for a stock transfer, 92% were in favour. The estate will be transferred to the William Sutton Housing Association	Percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate	56% (2003 BVPI survey)
	Consulted tenants about the housing options	Affordable housing (house price/earnings affordability ratio):	(2004 NOMIS and Landreg)
	Continued work on decent homes	<p>Detached</p> <p>Semi-detached</p> <p>Terrace</p> <p>Flat/Maisonette</p>	<p>Women: 14.17 Men: 10.18</p> <p>Women: 9.59 Men: 6.89</p> <p>Women: 7.09 Men: 5.09</p> <p>Women: 4.61 Men: 3.31</p>

Note: This table is a summary of the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan showing progress against the programmes of work for each ambition and latest results against key success measures. The housing priorities changed in 2005/06 to reflect the Housing Business Strategy and Business Plan

## **Ambition: Transformed Council Services**

We provide a wide range of services to a diverse community – people who live, visit and do business in the town. We aim to consistently provide good quality services that are customer focussed and can be easily accessed.

We want our customers to consistently receive first class customer service. We aim to enable our customers to contact us by telephone, email or using an interactive website at times when they choose. Our achievements and future plans to meet these aims are set out under *'make access to Council services easier'*

We want to ensure that all services have resources allocated to maintain high quality service provision, provide value for money, are customer focussed and achieve high customer satisfaction results.

Use of new technology will be a critical success factor in our approach to transforming our services. We aim to use new technology to make our services more accessible, responsive and cost effective. We also aim to use technology to make our work more open and accountable. Our achievements and future plans to do this are set out under *'use information technology to improve the quality of services'* and *'Ensure services are meeting customer expectations'*

### **Priorities for Transforming Services**

- Make access to Council services easier
- Use information technology to improve the quality of service
- Ensure services are meeting customer expectations

**PRIORITY: Make access to Council services easier**

**Why is this a priority for the Council?**

We want our customers to have a good experience when they contact the Council and be satisfied with the outcome. We aim to make our services accessible for all sectors of the community at times and by methods that suit them.

The Customer Service Centre opened in August 2003 and has now successfully handled over **????** customer contacts and is providing a single point of access to a growing number of our services. We will continue to expand the number of services that are dealt with through our Customer Service Centre.

**What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Introduced New Customer Service Standards so that our customers know what level of service to expect from us
- ✓ Invested in ICT, information and training to increase the range and quality of services available through the Customer Service Centre
- ✓ Improved structure, design and content of our Website – [www.stevenage.gov.uk](http://www.stevenage.gov.uk) -
- ✓ Increased number of services available to customers via the internet using the Hertslink community portal and our website
- ✓ Extended customer appointment systems to deal with enquiries in the Walk-In Centre.
- ✓ Introduced an appointment system for housing repairs at the first point of customer contact.

The Customer Service Centre hosted an Open Evening for 'Hard to Reach Groups' during September 2005. The purpose of the event was to demonstrate our commitment to improved access to services and information. Customer Service Advisors used the open evening to talk to people about the facilities we already have and to find out where improvements could be made. As a result we identified improvement actions such as:

- ◆ Review all the Council's leaflets to make sure they show the various ways you can get in touch with us
- ◆ Make sure advisors are aware of the availability of interpreters and how to use them

**What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Provide more help for customers to access web services using the customer service centre
- Introduce electronic methods of communication such as subscription to text message alerts
- Introduce Customer Service Advocates to assist with enquiries from Hard to Reach Groups and/or enquiries of a sensitive nature.
- Improve 'real time' customer information by using electronic signs
- Achieve the Louder than Words Charter mark for customers who are hard of hearing.
- Improve communication between front and back office to enhance the 'one stop' customer experience.
- Improve 'out of hours' information, reporting of nuisance and service failures.

**What are our future plans?**

- Consider how we can use mobile technology to provide services to people directly in their own homes
- Improve the take up of web services by making ICT training available to residents by working with partners in the education and voluntary sectors
- Work with other agencies to facilitate the introduction of wireless technology into our town

**How do we measure progress?**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2005/06 actual</b>	<b>2006/07 target</b>	<b>Target (3 years) 2009</b>	<b>Target (5 years) 2011</b>	<b>Target (10 years) 2016</b>
% of calls answered within 30 seconds		85%	90%	90%	90%
% of visitors served within 20 minutes		95%	95%	95%	95%
% of calls abandoned		4%	4%	3%	3%
% of contacts fully resolved at point of contact on services handled by the customer service centre		85%	85%	90%	90%

Table to be updated following 2005/06 out-turn

## **PRIORITY: Use information technology to improve the quality of services**

### **Why is this a priority for the Council?**

We want to ensure we provide first class services that are cost effective. This requires the successful implementation of new technology combined with changed business processes to deliver improvements.

The Government set an ambitious target for all public services to be electronically available by December 2005. We put together a challenging programme, which focused on being able to deliver services through our Customer Service Centre, or on-line via the internet. Our current Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Statement sets out how the national targets have been achieved locally.

New technology alone will not improve quality of services. We recognise that we also need to reshape the way in which we work to maximise the benefits of new technologies. This has influenced how the programme has been put together and why it is focused on transforming services, not solely implementing new IT systems.

### **What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Delivered the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) priority outcomes for delivering services electronically
- ✓ Re-launched the Council's Internet site so that:
  - Information about Council services is easier to find
  - Residents can apply for a broad range of services electronically including submitting and commenting on planning applications
- ✓ Upgraded the IT used in our Customer Service Centre so that more services can be provided to residents in this way
- ✓ Purchased a Geographic Information system so we can analyse the way we provide services spatially
- ✓ Invested in electronic documents and records management and workflow systems to minimise the manual processing of information and improve service performance
- ✓ Linked ICT systems so that information can be shared easily between services
- ✓ Prioritised work on high volume services that are customer facing such as Housing Repairs and Environmental Service

### **What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Learn from the transformed services programme and roll out technology and better working practices in all areas of the Council
- Encourage the take up of on-line services
- Use IT systems to target the way that we provide services to residents, whether that be on-line, through the Customer Service Centre or directly to people's homes using mobile technology
- Use the National Government Connect programme to allow customers to access their personal information on-line securely.
- Continue to work successfully in partnership with other Hertfordshire local authorities to provide value for money to residents

### **What are our future plans?**

- Develop partnerships to ensure that support is provided to local residents who have difficulty using ICT and ensure that computers and kiosks are more widely available for use by residents who do not have a PC in their own home.

- Investigate how we can use mobile technology to improve the quality of Council services.

**How are we measuring progress?**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2004/05 actual</b>	<b>2005/06 target</b>	<b>Target (3 years) 2009</b>	<b>Target (5 years) 2011</b>	<b>Target (10 years) 2016</b>
Take up of on-line services	New Indicator	New Indicator	1000 transactions per week	1500 transactions per week	2500 transactions per week

We currently receive about 2,500 requests for service (transactions) every week in our Customer Service centre. Our target is to match this number of service requests by delivering services through the internet within 10 years



## **Priority: Ensure services are meeting customer expectations**

### **Why is this a priority for the Council?**

We aim to maintain good quality service provision that is customer focussed and provides value for money.

All services are important and from time to time they may require investment to improve or replace a facility through capital projects. This does not mean that the service itself needs changing. A recent example is replacement of the lining to the lake at Fairlands Valley Park. Other examples of capital projects to make improvements for the benefit of the community often rely on funding through Section 106 money (Planning gain) or other external funding. And a recent example here are the public realm improvements to the town centre including new paving and street furniture.

To ensure that services are meeting customer expectations, approaches to service delivery are continually monitored so that we can:

- Respond to users
- Improve service quality
- Increase efficiency
- Increase levels of customer satisfaction

### **How did we do this in our front line services?**

#### **Responding to users:**

- ✓ Completed the review of the housing allocations policy with a choice based lettings approach for all properties
- ✓ Held the Council's 3<sup>rd</sup> 'Have a Say Day' event for in November 2005 when more than 50 housing customers were asked to comment on issues affecting them, such as:
  - ◆ Allocation of homes
  - ◆ Housing repairs
  - ◆ Nuisance and neighbour disputes
- ✓ Visited tenants on a regular basis in order to improve access to services and improve satisfaction
- ✓ Adopted a Statement of Community Involvement that sets out how it will involve the community in preparing and reviewing local planning policy and planning applications
- ✓ Carried out a Health and Fitness survey with Leisure-Net Solutions Ltd in September 2005 to assess customer expectations

#### **Improving service quality:**

- ✓ Assessed the speed of processing planning applications and design standards to seek quality improvements.
- ✓ Expanded the range of housing advice services to prevent anyone in the town becoming homeless
- ✓ Improved our repairs service to meet customers' expectations

- ✓ Worked with Herts County Council, transport operators, businesses and voluntary organisations to help shape the future of transport provision in Stevenage

**Increasing efficiency:**

- ✓ Set up a team dedicated to making sure that properties are ready to let as quickly as possible. The team have reviewed the process used when work on empty properties is required to make sure that it is completed quickly and to standard.
- ✓ Reviewed homelessness wardens service and temporary accommodation management
- ✓ Developed and introduced handheld technology for housing staff
- ✓ Visited 20,000 Stevenage Households to raise awareness of recycling and increase participation in schemes
- ✓ Introduced interactive facilities on our website which lets customers view and comment on applications online?

**Increasing levels of customer satisfaction:**

- ✓ The Environmental Health Unit for animal control and noise nuisance carried out a series of Customer Satisfaction Surveys. The results are being used to shape and improve future service delivery
- ✓ Transformed a local play scheme following feedback from primary school children. Further consultation on local play provision is planned during 2006/07
- ✓ In the 2005 town-wide survey 90% of residents told us that they are satisfied with the Council's kerbside collection of recyclables and garden waste. Up to the end of December 2005, residents using the scheme had recycled 2,315 tonnes of paper, 1,285 tonnes of glass, 198 tonnes of cans and 3,600 tonnes of garden waste.

Some services attract huge investment such as Stevenage Leisure Limited, a non-profit making organisation limited by guarantee. Stevenage Leisure Limited manages leisure facilities on behalf of Stevenage Borough Council:

- Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre
- Stevenage Swimming Pool
- John Henry Newman Leisure Centre
- Fairlands Valley Park
- Stevenage Golf Centre

To ensure that services are reviewed to meet customer expectations the principles of Best Value:

- ◆ Challenge
- ◆ Compare
- ◆ Consult
- ◆ Compete

are used by to seek continuous improvement.

During 2005/06 a range of regulatory services were reviewed, to ensure that the council provides customer focus, value for money and efficient services that perform well and meet expectations.

Each review report produced an action plan that now forms part of the units service plan. Examples of improvements are shown in the following table.

Service	Improvements
Development Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improved process mapping for all application types to improve efficiency</li> <li>➤ Introduced a Planning Service Charter to improve service quality</li> <li>➤ Reviewed staff training requirements to further develop staff</li> </ul>
Planning Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introduced new interactive website area for planning representations</li> <li>➤ Achieved Government approval for Local Development Scheme</li> <li>➤ Improved recruitment to vacant posts</li> </ul>
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improved electronic communication to meet e-government targets</li> <li>➤ Run a pilot scheme to reconfigure 'out of hours' service</li> <li>➤ Implemented benchmarking arrangements with Herts and Beds authorities on customer satisfaction and other enforcement activity</li> </ul>
Taxi Licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Launched Stevenage Cab Safe Scheme</li> <li>➤ Reviewed the Knowledge Test for Taxi Drivers</li> <li>➤ Introduced a new enforcement regime</li> </ul>

**What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Develop service standards for front line services
- Carry out customer satisfaction surveys

**What are our future plans?**

- Publish service standards on the internet
- Use e-technology to consult our customers using the website

Priorities	Achievements 2005/06	How we will measure our success in achieving our ambitions?	
		Key measures	Most recent results
Make access to Council services easier	Repairs service transferred to the Customer Service Centre	Percentage residents contacting the Council who found staff:	
Use Information Technology to improve the quality of services	New Personnel and Payroll system implemented  GIS Manager appointed	friendly	86% (2001 Residents' survey) 85% (2005 Residents' survey)
		helpful	78% (2001 Residents' survey) 81% (2005 Residents' survey)
		efficient	69% (2001 Residents' survey) 74% (2005 Residents' survey)
		interested in their problem	66% (2001 Residents' survey) 71% (2005 Residents' survey)
		able to deal with their problem	60% (2001 Residents' survey) 72% (2005 Residents' survey)
		Percentage residents surveyed who found it easy to get hold of the right person	66% (2001 Residents' survey) 70% (2005 Residents' survey)
		Percentage residents surveyed satisfied with the final outcome after contacting the Council	55% (2001 Residents' survey) 60% (2005 Residents' survey)

Note: This table is a summary of the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan showing progress against the programmes of work for each ambition and latest results against key success measures.

## Stevenage Borough Council's Customer Service Centre

### Your one-stop for Council services

The Customer Service centre (CSC), which opened in August 2003, formed a key part in the Council's Changing Gear Programme to deliver First Class Customer Service. At the forefront of delivering our ambition of 'Transformed Council Services', the Customer Service Centre is the first point of contact for many of our services.

The ground level Centre contains a fully accessible 'walk-in' area, situated next to the telephone section where Customer Service Advisors provide an excellent level of help and assistance.

During 2005 the Council made investments in ICT, training and information systems to ensure that everyone who uses the Centre will go away with either their query resolved or with the information needed to move their query forward.

What's more, customers can now access information and services for themselves using the 'self-service' area, which will be fully staffed to help customers if it is needed.

The CSC Reception desk resolves many customer enquiries immediately but if their enquiry is more complex they can take a ticket to see an Adviser.

Customer waiting times have significantly reduced since we opened in 2003 (average waiting time now 10 minutes as opposed to 20 minutes), however we still have some busy periods so if customers do not wish to wait or wish to be seen in a private meeting room they can book appointments anytime between 8.30 to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday.

Customers can also book appointments to see specialist Housing and Benefits staff at the Centre and, if they are reporting a Repair, they can make an appointment for the work to be done at a time/date convenient to them.

There is lots of information about council and local services (such as voluntary and community groups and businesses) accessible from various information points within the Centre. There is also a 24 hour touch-screen kiosk located in the front door behind glass for information about both our and Hertfordshire County Council services.

With translation facilities, special equipment for people with sight, hearing or communication difficulties and our 'Here to Help' customer advocate service, the Centre has been designed to ensure everyone can access our services and information.

*The Customer Service Centre is situated in Danestrete, Stevenage (next to HSBC) the telephones are open from 8.0 am to 6.0 pm. and the Walk-In Centre from 8.30 pm. to 5.30 pm.*

**Telephone: 01438 242242 (an answer phone will operate during out of hours)**

**Textphone: 01438 242555**

**E-mail: [csc@stevenage.gov.uk](mailto:csc@stevenage.gov.uk)**

## Stevenage Borough Council Customer Service Standards

Stevenage Borough Council is committed to providing first class customer service. It is important that you understand what you can expect from the council.

You can access council services and information in different ways:

- ◆ By telephone – between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm in the Customer Service Centre
- ◆ Face to face – between the hours of 8.30am and 5.30pm in the centre
- ◆ Through the kiosk
- ◆ By e-mail
- ◆ Via the website
- ◆ By Minicom – 01438 242555 8.00am to 6.00pm
- ◆ By fax

When you visit us we will:

- ◆ Provide a clean, well-maintained and welcoming environment for all our visitors and staff
- ◆ Be responsive and treat you with courtesy and respect
- ◆ Identify ourselves by name and wear an identity badge
- ◆ Always try to get things right first time but if we are unable to help you we will give you advice about who you need to contact
- ◆ Provide you with accessible, up-to-date information about Stevenage Borough Council where possible.

When you contact us by telephone:

- ◆ Our Customer Service Centre will answer 85% of calls within 30 seconds. If we need to transfer your call to another part of the council the call will be answered within 15 seconds (or six rings) or the Customer Service Centre will take a message if appropriate
- ◆ We will let you know who or which service unit you are speaking to
- ◆ And if we are unable to help you, we will identify who can and either redirect the call, inform you of the correct telephone number or call you back
- ◆ Where answer phones are in use we will make sure you are greeted with a clear up to date message and return the call when requested to.

When you contact us by letter or e-mail we will:

- ◆ Acknowledge letters within two days and respond in full within 20 working days
- ◆ Acknowledge receipt of e-mails within 24 hours and respond in full within 20 working days
- ◆ Make sure our response lets you know who to contact should you want to question anything.

We will do our best to provide access to information and services in a way that suits all of our customers needs. We will:

- ◆ Not unlawfully discriminate
- ◆ Be accessible to all customers
- ◆ Provide a portable induction loop for customers with a hearing difficulty
- ◆ Where possible, provide an interpreter upon request for customers whose first language is not English
- ◆ Make published information available in Braille, large print and different languages upon request.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received from the council you have a right to complain. Some of the ways you can do this include:

- ◆ Referring to our complaints procedure on our website
- ◆ Asking to speak a manager in the Customer Service Centre
- ◆ Completing a complaints form, available from the Customer Service Centre
- ◆ Emailing your complaint to [csc@stevenage.gov.uk](mailto:csc@stevenage.gov.uk)
- ◆ Putting your complaint in a letter.

## **A-Z of service performance and achievements**

This section describes some of the services we provide for the benefit of the community on a day to day basis. It briefly describes some of those services, list achievements and in some cases gives performance information, including targets for improvement.

This is not a comprehensive list of all of our services. For more detailed information about all local services in Stevenage please refer to 'Your Guide to Local Services in Stevenage 2005/06' which is available from our Customer Service Centre (telephone 01438 242242, email: [csc@stevenage.gov.uk](mailto:csc@stevenage.gov.uk)).

### **Abandoned Vehicles**

We remove vehicles that have been abandoned on public roads or Council land. Burnt out or wrecked vehicles may be removed within 24 hours of being reported. Other vehicles are removed as quickly as legal processes allow.

- ✓ Removed close to seven hundred vehicles as abandoned and scrapped
- ✓ Removed almost forty vehicles at the owner's request

### **Access to Council Buildings**

It is estimated that there are around 8.3 million disabled people in the UK who have some impairment leading to difficulties with daily living. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requires the Council to remove all physical barriers in the built environment in order that disabled people can access our services. The level of alterations required is subject to a test of "reasonableness"; that is, it must take into account the size of the organisation and the resources at its disposal.

- ✓ Commissioned an Access Audit for all its buildings to determine the level of work needed. Financial provision of nearly £0.5 million was then made available to carry out the recommended alterations.
- ✓ Prioritised works to achieve economies of scale and value for money.
- ✓ Included in this year's programme is a project to equip all Council's play, parks and community buildings with induction hearing loops to assist our deaf and hard of hearing customers.

Did you know that 95% of blind people have some residual vision? That is why our improvements must also ensure that our public buildings are free from unnecessary clutter and are appropriately lit. Colour contrast is also important - so that our partially sighted customers can distinguish walls, floors, signs, door handles, stair nosings and handrails.



Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable and accessible to disabled people (excluding public conveniences)	62%	86%		

### Animal Control

This service covers the control of pests such as rats and mice, the dog warden service and provision of licenses to keep dangerous animals or run a pet shop or boarding establishment.

- 89 stray dogs were impounded; the vast majority of which were either returned to their owners or rehomed.
- Dealt with over 1,000 requests for pest control treatments with the majority being for rats, mice and wasps
- Received over 1,000 dog related complaints
- The Environmental Health Unit for animal control and noise nuisance carried out a series of Customer Satisfaction surveys. The results are being used to shape and improve future service delivery.

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
The percentage of requests for the treatment of public health pests responded to within 2 days	98%	95%		
% of requests for the dog warden service responded to within 3 days	97%	95%		

### Anti Fraud

This area covers the detection, prevention and investigation of suspected fraudulent claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit made against Stevenage Borough Council.

- ✓ We work in partnership with Hertsmere Borough Council. Staff work together resources are shared and costs reduced

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
The number of claimants visited per 1,000 caseload	220.4	205		

The number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload	5.5	6		4.3
Number of Cases Investigated	448	500		460
Number of Fraudulent Claims identified	146	170		160

**Benefits**

We administer and process Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit for residents.

Did you know that we handle over 25,000 items of post a year, all relating to benefit claims?

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
Average time for processing new claims	TBA	39 days		
Average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstance	TBA	10 days		
Percentage of cases for which amount of benefit due was correct, for a sample of cases checked post-determination	98.5%	98%		
The percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year	TBA	55%		

**Building Control**

We regulate the design and construction of buildings in respect of:

- The health, safety and welfare of people in and around buildings
- The conservation of fuel and power and,
- Access and facilities for persons with disabilities.

Did you know that we attended and resolved 39 dangerous structure incidents last year?

- Continued to provide an out of hours dangerous structure call out in partnership with North Hertfordshire District Council

- Continued to maintain commercial partnerships with North and East Herts NHS and Croudace to encourage them to use local authority building control.

Did you know that last year we controlled £115 million of building work in Stevenage?

Indicator	2004/0	2005/0	2005/0	2006/0
	5	6	6	7
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Building Control to determine building regulations for all full plan applications within the statutory 5 week period or 2 months where extended by the client/agent	100%	100%		
To carry out all statutory inspections of works in progress within the statutory period	100%	100%		

**Bus Passes/Concessions**

We administer a national scheme of half-fare bus passes for pensioners and some residents with disabilities, as well as providing our own fare free scheme.

Did you know that the Council spent £1.05 million providing the half fare and free fare scheme for pensioners and some residents with disabilities?

Indicator	2004/0	2005/0	2005/0	2006/0
	5	6	6	7
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Number of subsidised bus passes provided:				
National statutory scheme – ½ fares	700	700		
Local scheme – No. of free fares	5,650	5,700		

**Car Parks**

We operate 12 car parks within the town centre. Most are open for general use on a 24-hour basis. Recent improvements to the service include:

- ☑ A £1million programme of replacing car park equipment which allows customers to use credit/debit cards, pay with notes and top-up season tickets
- ☑ Chip enabled season tickets that can be renewed at multiple payment points instead of sending them back to Parking Services for renewal.
- ☑ Introduction of chip coins to save money and reduce waste

Did you know that the scheme to replace the parking equipment was the largest scheme in Europe in 2005/06?

- ☑ New Pay on Foot car parks for ease of use and to improve traffic flow at exits.

Did you know that Stevenage was the first to introduce Car Valeting ten years ago? This has contributed to the all time low crime rate in the town centre car parks.

### **Civic Events**

We run a number of events in recognition of the town and its residents.

- ☑ Organised the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service in partnership with the Royal British Legion
- ☑ Held an Armistice Service in the Town Centre on 11 November to observe the two minutes silence
- ☑ Held the Annual Council and organised the inauguration of the incoming Mayor
- ☑ Organised visits of representatives from our Twin Towns – Ingelheim, Autun, Shimkent and Kadoma
- ☑ Commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day with a screening of the feature film “Hotel Rwanda”.

Did you know that Stevenage’s Twin Town of Ingleheim recently awarded Honorary Citizenship to Councillor Brian Hall in recognition of his personal commitment to the town-twinning programme that has helped develop Anglo-German relationships for over forty years?

### **Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)**

We currently provide 66 closed circuit television cameras around Stevenage – in the town centre, old town, neighbourhood centres and the retail parks. We have 5 Automatic Licence Plate Recognition cameras and 20 mobile cameras in use.

Did you know that Stevenage is part of the Herts. CCTV Partnership, which has the largest coverage in the UK and geographically one of the largest CCTV networks in Europe?

- ☑ Installed 5 fixed Automatic Number Plate Reading Cameras at major highway intersections and through routes.
- ☑ Installed new software in control rooms. The software allows integration of several camera systems now in use.
- ☑ Installed 20 mobile cameras to target 'Hot Spot' crime areas.
- ☑ We have 10 cameras installed in four schools around Stevenage schools with loudspeakers that sound an alarm on any movement within the school boundary.

## Community Development

The Community Development Team co-ordinates and supports a diverse range of community activities in Stevenage for all residents including older people, young people and black and minority ethnic people. The Community Development Team also works with a range of voluntary groups to help build capacity and develop activities and services on offer to Stevenage residents. Some examples are:

- ☑ Carried out a scrutiny review of the Stevenage Community Centres, which includes recommendations for strengthening their position in local neighbourhoods and improving the support offered by the Council.
- ☑ Supported the creation and development of a new committee to manage the Great Ashby Community Centre
- ☑ Supported Community Centres providing Christmas lunches to older people living in The Oval and Pin Green
- ☑ Co-ordinated a feasibility study looking into new community facilities at Symonds Green
- ☑ Supported Douglas Drive Day Centre to promote activities on offer to Stevenage's older residents.
- ☑ Helped the Stevenage Credit Union to increase collections in neighbourhood areas

Did you know that we helped the Stevenage Credit Union to secure external funding of £7000 to support collections in three schools? This has led to 219 young savers being enrolled and £7,375 being saved by them.

- ☑ Supported Stevenage Youth Council
- ☑ Held Youth Clubs in a number of areas in conjunction with Mentoring Basketball Association (MBA)
- ☑ Co-ordinated 'Summer Fest' – a programme of youth activities during the summer holiday period.

Did you know that the Summer Fest programme ran for 4 weeks over the summer holidays and included sports, art and music through a range of trips, courses and activities? There was contact with over 3,000 young people, with 53 nationally recognised qualifications achieved.

- ☑ Supported 'Celebrate', a celebration of culture and achievement in Stevenage's black and minority ethnic communities.
- ☑ Supported the Asian Women's Group and the Gujarati Hindu Men's Association.
- ☑ Completed the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the Neighbourhood Regeneration Programme.
- ☑ Developed a Forward Strategy for assisting funded projects to continue even when the Neighbourhood Regeneration Programme ends.
- ☑ Managed the Council's Grant-Aid Programme to support voluntary and community organisations involved in social, community and recreational activity to support Stevenage residents.

Did you know that the Council distributed over £500,000 in grant aid to 44 voluntary and community organisations, and contributed a further £84,320 as rent in kind?

**Community Meals**

Any resident who is over 60 years of age or has a disability and has difficulty preparing a meal for themselves can qualify for our meals service.

- ☑ Continue to monitor a set of 'Quality Standards' and a programme of continuous service improvement with Apetito (the service provider)
- ☑ Exhibited at the Asian Women's Network Open Day to promote ethnic meals
- ☑ Promoted our meals and other services at the Carer's Open Day.

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
Number of meals supplied	71,094	71,589		
Level of customer satisfaction with the service	90%	95%		

**Community Safety**

We work in partnership with Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire County Council and over sixty other local bodies to promote and develop crime reduction and community safety initiatives in order to make Stevenage a safer town.

- ☑ Set up a Pub Watch Scheme for the town centre and leisure park pubs and clubs to discourage underage drinking
- ☑ Introduced an Alcohol Free Zone in the town centre and leisure park

Did you know that we have increased the frequency of street meetings with local residents, young and old to one a month? The aim of these meetings is to help local residents make improvements to where they live.

- ☑ Increased the number and use of mobile CCTV cameras.
- ☑ Increased the number of anti-social behaviour contracts.

Did you know that we have introduced 24 new Neighbourhood Watch Schemes?

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	8.72	9.96		
Violent offences committed by a stranger per 1,000 population	6.99	6.57		
Violent offences committed in a public place per 1,000	16.1	15.13		
Violent crime committed in connection with licensed premises per 1,000 population	1.68	1.58		
Violent offences committed under the influence of drugs/alcohol per 1,000 population	8.55	8.04		
Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	9.74	10.86		
Criminal damage per 1,000 population	28.85	25.03		
Disorder per 1,000 population	90.3	89.8		
<b>PSA 1: all crime (which includes)</b>				59.86
Theft or unauthorised taking of a vehicle		3.66		
Theft from a vehicle		7.2		
Vehicle interference		0.67		
Domestic burglary		9.9		
Theft or unauthorised taking of a cycle		1.93		
Theft from a person		2.9		
Criminal damage		25.03		
Common assault		5.4		
Woundings		8.13		
Robbery		0.87		
% increase feeling safe during the day	76%	79%		
% increase feeling safe during the night	28%	31%		

### Community Transport

We provide specialist transport for older people with a disability, for day care, community centre visits and shopping as well as excursions out of Stevenage.

- Introduced a greater choice of journeys including new venues

Did you know that, on average, we organise two trips a week including to places such as Clacton-on-Sea?

Indicator	2004/0	2005/0	2005/0	2006/0
	5	6	6	7
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Number of journeys	8,552	9,000		
Level of customer satisfaction	No survey			

### Development Control

The Development Control service deals with all development enquiries and planning applications.

- ✓ Improved our performance dramatically in dealing with planning applications within target dates.
- ✓ Awarded planning delivery grant of £113,558 from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister because of our improvements

Did you know that we have introduced interactive facilities on our website which lets customers view and comment on applications online?

Indicator	2004/0	2005/0	2005/0	2006/0
	5	6	6	7
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	39%	60%		
Percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	58%	65%		
Percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	75%	80%		



## Electoral Register and Elections

We maintain a rolling register of all residents who are eligible to vote and we undertake all the arrangements for voting at Local and County Council Elections, the General Election and elections to the European Parliament. In 2005/06, both a General Election and elections to Hertfordshire County Council were held.

Did you know that nearly 50% of those registered to vote in the Town have requested postal votes?

Indicator	2004/05	2005/06	2005/06	2006/07
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
The percentage turnout for local elections	39.4%	39.4%		

Local elections were not held in 2004/05. The figure represents turnout at the previous local election.

## Environmental Maintenance

We maintain a range of green space throughout the town including parks, woodlands and grassed areas. We are also responsible for street cleansing. Residential areas are cleaned weekly, whilst the Town Centre, High Street and local centres are cleaned daily. These works includes the removal of fly tipping, graffiti, fly posters and abandoned shopping trolleys.

- 81 % of streets were of high or acceptable standard of cleanliness on random inspection
- The Stevenage in Bloom Forum achieved a Silver Gilt Medal at the Anglia in Bloom awards in 2005 and continues to engage volunteers in promoting and organising the Stevenage in Bloom competition

Did you know that Stevenage was chosen as a finalist in the Britain in Bloom competition, representing the Anglia Region?

- Encouraged Stevenage schools to become Eco Schools. The environmental campaigns team have talked to over 5000 school children about a range of environmental issues.
- Nineteen schools have signed up to the Encams Eco School Programme:
  - Two schools have achieved silver medals and three schools have achieved bronze medals
- Participated in six environmental action days in partnership with the Police, the Fire Service and the DVLA to tackle abandoned and untaxed vehicles, fly tipping and graffiti.
- Undertaken a study of all Open Space in the town including community green space, young people's provision, parks, allotments and natural spaces to find out the best way to manage, improve and protect them.

- ☑ Agreed five new sponsorship deals for roundabouts and floral displays with three more in the pipeline
- ☑ Planted a Community Arboretum in Broadwater in November 2005.

Did you know that the planting of the Community Arboretum represents the four seasons?

**Estates Service**

The Estates Service manages around 350 commercial properties including 179 shops in Neighbourhood Centres throughout the town. This helps to ensure that a wide range of local neighbourhood services are available to all residents

The service is also responsible for carrying out valuations of Council properties, providing property related advice to other services, ensuring that the Council uses its properties effectively and selling surplus land and properties.

- ✓ Completed the sale of the Council's depot in London Road, and purchased modern replacement facilities elsewhere in the town
- ✓ Achieved over £7 million from sales of land, which will be used to provide new housing

Did you know that the sites sold in the last year will result in 190 new affordable homes being built in the coming year?

- ✓ Carried out improvements at a number of Neighbourhood Centres including Archer Road and The Oval.
- ✓ Completed a deal in respect of Austen Paths Neighbourhood Centre which will result in its redevelopment in 2006/07 to provide 24 new homes and a modern general store.

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/0 7 Target
The percentage (indicator in development)				

**Food Safety**

The Environmental Health Division inspects the standard of food premises and enforces hygiene and safety standards.

Indicator	2004/0 5 Actual	2005/0 6 Target	2005/0 6 Actual	2006/0 7 Target
Percentage of food hygiene inspections	99%	100%		

in high risk premises which were carried out				
--	--	--	--	--

### Garage Management Services

This is a new service, which was set up by the Council in 2004 to transform the way that the Council manages its 7000 garages. Some achievements to date include the following:

- Reduced empty garages from approximately 1300 to under 800
- Introduced improved arrangements for routine maintenance of garages including regular inspections of all compounds.
- Completed a comprehensive condition survey of all garage compounds. This will form the basis for a programme of improvements that will start in 2006/07.
- Employed CCTV cameras in compounds with particular community safety problems

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
Number of void garages as a percentage of total stock	16.87%	15%	11.4%	9%

### Health Improvement

The Environmental Health and Licensing Units:

- Launched 'Back Weeks' to raise awareness of health and safety issues with the HSE, the Primary Care Trust, North Herts District Council and Herts Fire and Rescue. About 200 businesses attended a launch seminar
- Ran two promotions about child safety seats in cars in partnership with HCC Road Safety Unit and Herts Fire and Rescue and the Police
- Issued an award winning hand washing training pack to all primary schools in Stevenage.

Did you know that 1500 year six students from 32 schools in Stevenage attended Crucial Crew, which promotes accident prevention, crime reduction and protection of the environment by the use of scenarios and exercises?

### Housing Repairs and Maintenance

Our housing repairs and maintenance service includes the delivery of pre-planned investment strategy, responsive repairs, aids and adaptations, the emergency call-out service and other maintenance services as required to our houses.

- Introduced an electronic appointment system for repairs

Did you know that in the last year 432 properties have been upgraded to meet the Decent Homes Standard?

- Reviewed and introduced a 'Voids Lettable Standard' which has reduced turnaround times for empty properties

Indicator	2004/0	2005/0	2005/0	2006/0
	5	6	6	7
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Decent Homes:				
a) the proportion of LA homes that were non-decent at 1 April 2004;	28%	24%		
b) the percentage change in proportion of non-decent LA homes between 1 April 2004 and 1 April 2005	14%	29%		
Percentage of urgent repairs completed on time	89.90%	TBA		
Average time to complete non urgent repairs	23.11 days	TBA		

**Housing Services – Caretaking**

We provide a caretaking/cleaning service to most flat blocks in the town. Recent improvements to the service include:

- Improved Special Junk Collection Service in flat blocks.
- Reduced the average junk collection times from 10 days to 2 days.
- Increased frequency of blitz-cleaning in all our small flat blocks
- Improved customer satisfaction with all Caretaking Services including 100% satisfaction for the attitude and appearance of our staff

Did you know that Caretakers carry out settling-in visits for all new tenants in our Tower Blocks?

**Housing Services - Community Alarms**

Our Careline service assists older and disabled people to live independently and provides personal safety and security in their home by enabling users to summon help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- ☑ Continued to upgrade community alarm equipment incorporating new developments in communication technology
- ☑ Work in partnership with Herts. County Council, District Councils and RSLs in developing Telecare to Hertfordshire. Telecare includes detectors and monitors such as motion and falls detectors that can be linked to our existing community alarms system. This offers more choice and independence to our users and enables more people to remain in their homes.

Did you know that almost 1000 older and disabled people in Stevenage use Community Alarms?

Indicator	2004/0	2005/0	2005/0	2006/0
	5	6	6	7
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Number of community alarms installed	165	150		
% of calls answered by the Careline Centre				
within 30 seconds	91%	80%		
within 60 seconds	96.7%	98.5%		

### Housing Services – Homelessness and Housing Advice

The Homelessness and Housing Advice teams are responsible for delivering the Council’s statutory duties to house the homeless and to offer independent housing advice to those who request it.

- ✓ Appointed a Temporary Accommodation Officer to ensure the continued best use of temporary accommodation
- ✓ Reduced the overall numbers of people living in temporary accommodation.

Did you know that we have increased the amount of the Homelessness Grant received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by £15,000? It is now £50,000 for the year 2006/07

Indicator	2004 /05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
Average length of stay in (i) bed and breakfast	0 days	0 days		
(ii) hostel accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	35 days	35 days		
Percentage of homelessness decisions made within 33 days	78%	80%		

### Housing Services – Housing Needs

The Housing Needs Team manage applications for housing from those not currently housed by the Council and applications for transfer from existing tenants. We also allocate Council housing and nominate applicants to Registered Social Landlords for housing within their own stock.

- Completed the first stage of the review of the Allocations Policy
- Managed the 'Open Access' scheme to reduce the number of empty and difficult to let sheltered studio flats from over fifty to nil.
- Implemented the Harrow Court Local Lettings Policy

Did you know that we have introduced online bidding for our pilot Choice Based Lettings?

### Housing Services - Sheltered Housing

We have 18 sheltered housing schemes which provide independent living for older people with the peace of mind of regular contact from a warden or supported housing officer and assistance in an emergency 24 hours a day.

Did you know that the Sheltered Housing Focus Group has been running for three years? It meets every two months to discuss issues concerning living in sheltered accommodation or affecting older people generally. The group regularly has speakers and also discusses improvements to the sheltered housing service.

- Upgraded security in a number of housing schemes including installing CCTV at half of our sheltered schemes.
- Extended the Extra-Care scheme at Silkin Court in partnership with HCC and Caring Hands.

Did you know that over 1000 people live in Council run sheltered schemes?

Indicator	2004/0	2005/0	2005/0	2006/0
	5	6	6	7
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Utilisation – occupied units as a % of available units	95.5%			
Service users who maintained independent living as % of all users	99%			

**Housing Services - Tenancy Services (Management of Council Housing)**

The Tenancy Services Section is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Council’s housing, including rents, debts and tenancy issues including nuisance and anti-social behaviour, tenancy issues and disputes, lettings and terminations, and tenant participation.

- Implemented pre-and post-letting courtesy phone calls to new tenants
- Introduced courtesy visits to new tenants are carried out within four weeks of the commencement of their tenancy.

Did you know tenants who have been granted a decorating allowance receive cheques or decorating vouchers at the time of letting and not days or weeks later?

- Increased the number of successful Court actions against tenants who persistently cause nuisance, including two evictions.
- Doubled the number of cases where our evidence from CCTV has supported Police prosecutions for crime.
- Reopened our Payment Advice Line (PAL) at Christmas, which accepts credit and debit card payments, in order to help tenants catch up any missed rent.

Did you know that our Housing Newsletter, *Housing For You*, has been changed into a tabloid-style colour newspaper at the request of our customers?

- Held our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual customer conference, *Have A Say Day*

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
Rent collection and arrears: proportion of rent collected	98.5%	98.60%		
Satisfaction of tenants of Council housing with opportunities for participation in management and decision making in relation to services provided by their landlord	No Survey	No Survey		
Satisfaction of tenants with the overall service provided by their landlord	No Survey	No Survey		
Does the Authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in Rented Housing	Yes	Yes		
Rent arrears:				
As a % of debit	2.31%	2.1%		
Number of tenants in arrears	22.35%	20%		
% owing £250 or 13 weeks rent	4.46%	4.3%		

### Licensing

Since 24<sup>th</sup> November 2005, Stevenage Borough Council has been responsible for the licensing of premises and for issuing personal licenses for the sale of alcohol and provision of regulated entertainment and late night sale of hot food.

During the transition period between February 2005 and November 2005, we processed:

- 187 premises licences
- 214 personal licences for people living in the area.

Did you know that we licensed 100 hackney carriages and 178 private hire vehicles in order to ensure that the travelling public are provided with safe and high quality taxi provision in Stevenage?



**Markets**

The Council runs an Indoor Market in the Town Centre, which is open from 9am to 5.30pm Wednesday to Saturday. There are currently 52 different trades in the Indoor Market ranging from a very popular café run directly by the Council, a hairdressing salon, a tattoo artist, and a greengrocer specialising in Oriental, Afro Caribbean and Asian foodstuffs.

- The Council took over the direct management of the Outdoor Market in Danestrete, which operates on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Indicator	2004/0 5 Actual	2005/0 6 Target	2005/0 6 Actual	2006/0 7 Target
Average occupancy rate of Indoor Market stalls	98%	98%	99%	99%

**Museum**

Our award -winning museum offers a range of exciting special exhibitions plus regular displays charting the history of Stevenage and the surrounding areas. The museum is free to visit and provides many subsidised activities, but to help keep costs down we also tour our exhibitions to other museums around the country.

Did you know that our exhibitions have toured as far as Scotland and Devon?

Indicator	2004/0 5 Actual	2005/0 6 Target	2005/0 6 Actual	2006/07 Target
The number of visits/ usages to the museum per 1,000 population	999.20	875		
The number of those visits/ usages that were in person per 1,000 population	454.50	510		
Number of exhibitions and events	199	120		
Number of visitors to Stevenage Museum	36,096	42,000		
Percentage of users very satisfied with the museum service	94.8%	90%		
Number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups	3,302	4,000		

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**Noise Problems**

Every year we deal with over 600 domestic noise problems such as barking dogs, noisy parties, noise from amplified music and noise in the street.

- The Council served 18 noise abatement notices and took legal proceedings against 4 people who failed to comply with these notices

Indicator	2004/0 5 Actual	2005/0 6 Target	2005/0 6 Actual	2006/07 Target
Number of complaints received regarding noisy neighbours per 1000 population	6.8	6.5		

**Nuisance "For Sale" Vehicles**

It is illegal for vehicles to display 'For Sale' notices on vehicles parked on public land. we remove such vehicles if earlier requests to withdraw are ignored.

- More than 300 car owners have, on request, removed illegal "For Sale" advertisements from vehicles parked on public maintained land

**Children's Play Services**

The Play Section promotes the Child's Right to Play - to develop, provide and support a range of quality opportunities that meet the identified play needs of children and young people. By working together with children, young people, their families, local people and organisations we aim to create memorable play experiences for the children and young people of Stevenage.

The Play Section works with children up to 14 years old. The Section works in partnership to deliver opportunities within the community, such as.

- ◆ Strategic Development of Children's Play Services
- ◆ Play Centres
- ◆ Community Outreach Play Development and Holiday Playschemes
- ◆ The Play Rights Initiative: a play development project funded by Hertfordshire Children's Fund
- ◆ The Toddler Groups Initiative

In 2005/06 we have

- Completed a Stevenage wide Play Policy and Play Strategy
- Held first partnership Stevenage and North Herts play conference in February 2006

- Developed lunchtime and after school play opportunities in primary schools in Bedwell
- Supported 32 toddler groups in the community

Did you know you could develop local play opportunities in partnership with the Play Development Officers?

## Planning Policy

The Planning Policy team are responsible for making sure that the needs of Stevenage are considered within the region when levels of new house-building and other forms of development are being debated.

The team translates regional requirements into local policies, setting a new vision for Stevenage to 2021. The policies are set out in the Local Development Framework.

The Council has adopted a Statement of Community Involvement that sets out how it will involve the community in preparing and reviewing local planning policy and planning applications.

Did you know that almost **xxx** of all new homes in Stevenage in 2005/06 were built on previously developed (brownfield) land?

In 2005/06 we have:

- Presented the case for more homes and jobs for Stevenage to Government Inspectors.

Did you know that Stevenage has 168 listed buildings and 5 Conservation Areas?

Did you know that more people commute to work in Stevenage than commute out of Stevenage?

- Undertook a major programme of research studies to better shape the vision for Stevenage to 2021
- Set out a programme of work for future planning of the town to 2021

Did you know that the Gunnels Wood area is the largest employment site in Hertfordshire and one of the largest in the East of England?

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
The percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	78%	25%		
The percentage of development sites allocated in the District Plan developed in accordance with District Plan policy	100%	100%		
Percentage of affordable housing completed on suitable sites	20%	25%		
Proportion of environmental assets maintained and enhanced in accordance with District Plan policies. Targets:				
• Net loss of Principal Open Spaces	0%	0%		
• Net Loss of Wildlife Sites	0%	0%		
• Net loss of Green Links	0%	0%		

### Private Sector Housing

The Environmental Health Division deal with problems of disrepair in properties rented from a private landlord. Landlords of shared houses can be required to install fire precautions and additional amenities. In addition we provide a wide range of grants and loans to assist people in maintaining their properties. An in-house occupational therapist is based at the Council to streamline the application process for disabled adaptations.

- Assisted 186 householders with grant/loan aid
- Reduced CO2 emissions from private sector dwellings by over 300 tonnes as a result of energy efficiency grants
- Completed an inspection programme of houses known to be in multiple occupation

Did you know that we run a handyman scheme to help over 60's with small repairs and improvement to their homes? This scheme is run in partnership with the Primary Care Trust, Herts County Council and Anchor Staying Put – a home improvement agency.

- Continued to implement our empty property strategy, designed to encourage owners of long-term vacant properties to return them to use.
- Established a partnership arrangement with an insulation installer and energy companies to enable provision of low cost loft and cavity wall insulation in residential properties.

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority	5.5%	5%		
The number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation during the year as a direct result of action by the local authority	10	12		
Percentage of private sectors dwellings returned to occupation	New indicator	New Indicator		

### Property Searches

We provide a land searches register service and process search inquiries in respect of land and property within the town.

Did you know that we complete Property Searches in 3-4 working days?

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
The percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days	100%	100%		

### Recycling

We provide a combination of recycling collections and neighbourhood recycling centres, as well as promoting home composting and a range of waste reduction and re-use measures. A weekly “twin box” kerbside collection of paper, glass and cans is available to all houses in the town. The scheme is supported by the “Waste Wizard” public engagement programme. Promotional activities include; advertising, exhibitions and schools activities. In March 2005, a Town wide garden waste collection scheme was introduced.

- Currently 98% of houses and flats receive weekly collections of paper, glass and cans. Evidence suggests that approximately 70% of households use facilities provided

- ☑ Collected 3,600 tonnes of garden waste since the introduction of the Garden Waste Collection Scheme in March 2005.
- ☑ Up to the end of December 2005, residents using the scheme had recycled 2315 tonnes of paper, 1285 tonnes of glass and 198 tonnes of cans

Did you know that 90% of residents are satisfied with our service?  
(2005 Townwide Survey)

- ☑ Continued to promote, in partnership with the County WasteAware scheme, a greater awareness of waste issues throughout the County
- ☑ For the second year running, we have visited 20,000 households to raise awareness of recycling and increase participation of schemes
- ☑ Expect to exceed government target to recycle or compost 24% of household waste by 2005/06

### Refuse Collection

We collect domestic refuse weekly from the boundary of every household in Stevenage and also provide a (paid for) bulky waste service.

- ☑ 99.9% of collections were completed on scheduled day each week
- ☑ 98% of junk collections within 10 working days

### Regeneration

The Regeneration Team promotes physical renewal, sustainable growth and economic development in Stevenage and supports the Council's work in social and neighbourhood renewal.

Did you know that Stevenage is home to one of the largest employment areas in Hertfordshire - based around Gunnels Wood Road?

- ☑ Launched the Gunnels Wood Business Partnership, a company set up to support the needs of local businesses and promote the Gunnels Wood area as a world class location to do business. The Partnership was originally facilitated by the Council's Economic Development Unit, but has been set up as a not-for-profit company in its own right with Nick Gibson, a local businessman, appointed as Chief Executive Officer.
- ☑ Work has begun on re-branding the Gunnels Wood Business Partnership, with new coordinated signage installed in the Gunnels Wood Area.
- ☑ Continued to grow and develop the Pin Green Business Partnership and helped to win funding of £40,000 from the East of England Development Agency for security and environmental works to the Pin Green employment area.
- ☑ Installed an Automated Number Plate Recognition System in the Pin Green employment area to help cut the level of crime and anti-social behaviour being experienced by businesses.

- ☑ Commissioned and completed studies on skills and employment, employment land and premises and a new Masterplan to help shape the development of the Gunnels Wood Area. The studies are actively being used to prioritise investment projects.
- ☑ Held the 2<sup>nd</sup> ‘Innovation @Stevenage Exhibition in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to raise levels of aspiration and skills amongst local young people.

Did you know that the Innovation Exhibition was sponsored by the Council using funding from the European Union? It enabled 1400 local students to see the innovation of local companies.

- ☑ Continued to support the Employers for the Environment (E4E)’s Recycling Project, which is in its third year and has signed in excess of 100 businesses to its paper-recycling scheme. The Council is part of Encourage, an EU funded partnership, which supports E4E in promoting environmental issues amongst businesses.
- ☑ The Council has worked with Herts. Business Incubation Centre (HBIC) to take forward a feasibility study for an extension to the Business and Technology Centre, creating supported facilities for expanding small enterprises.
- ☑ Continued to support In Credit, Stevenage Business Initiative and the Herts. Business Initiative Centre.
- ☑ Our External Funding Officer has focused on raising awareness of external funding opportunities amongst voluntary sector groups, organising awareness events, assisting in the writing and preparation of funding bids, monitoring applications and success rates and persuading funding bodies to direct their resources into Stevenage. Considerable efforts were made to strengthen the Council’s links with the Lottery, in particular the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- ☑ The Council has progressed the physical regeneration and sustainable growth of Stevenage through its involvement in the town centre regeneration scheme, Stevenage West and the Growth Area Fund backed schemes. We secured a grant of £4.8 million for the delivery of housing sites and improvements to public parks and spaces.

Description	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target
<b>Funding</b>				
Number of representatives attending funding fairs	156	75		
Number of organisations assisted with one to one advice	137	100		
Total amount raised for Council-run projects	£1,300,000	£1,000,000		
Total amount raised for voluntary/community organisation run projects	£150,000	£200,000		
Total number of voluntary/community organisation project approvals	40	35		
<b>Small Business Success</b>				

Percentage of new small businesses (1-10 employees) successfully trading after 12 months	75	75		
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### Stevenage Leisure Limited

Stevenage Leisure Limited is a non-profit making organisation limited by guarantee. Stevenage Leisure Limited manages eight of the town's major leisure facilities on behalf of Stevenage Borough Council and others.

Local facilities include: Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre; Gordon Craig Theatre; Fitness@theleisurecentre; Stevenage Swimming Centre; John Henry Newman Leisure Centre; Fairlands Valley Park & Sailing Centre; Shephall Leisure Centre and Stevenage Golf & Conference Centre.

Stevenage Leisure Limited made some significant achievements:

- In June 2005, the Stevenage Community Trust held a very successful gold tournament at the Stevenage Golf and Conference Centre.
- The Stevenage Community Trust held a Fun Run at Fairlands Valley Park

Did you know that Xcession, the Internet Café based at the Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre, won the 'Learn Direct Real Award' for 2005 - a regional achievement accreditation in learning?

- In August 2005, the Gordon Craig Theatre had a 100% sell-out success for its Community based musical, '42<sup>nd</sup> Street'.
- The second 'Innovation @ Stevenage' exhibition was held at the Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre
- SLL, in partnership with Stevenage Borough Council, agreed a £1.3 million redevelopment of the Stevenage Swimming Centre. This will create a Wellness Centre, Health Spa and additional access and parking facilities.

Did you know that the Stevenage Swimming Centre has a streamlined 33 metre main pool that is 'deck level' allowing easy access for all?

- SLL organised the November 5<sup>th</sup> Fireworks display. Positive feedback and the huge turnout proved the event was a big success
- In December 2005, the first Civil Partnership Ceremony was held at the Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre. It was the first event of its kind in Stevenage and featured on the local news.
- In January 2006, SLL was nominated for a Gold Medal Award for our success in analysing training needs at every level of the organisation, and for organising Team Leader training for 20 Duty Managers.
- Sponsored the Youth Achievement Award at the Comet Sports Awards.



- Ran 'Cultural Showcase 2006' – an event to demonstrate how culture and leisure services can contribute to the Community Strategy Theme – 'A Creative Town'

Indicator	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Forecast	2006/07 Target
Number of visits to:				
◆ Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre				
○ Sports and Leisure	138,000	140,000		
○ Special (Non Concert) Events	31,000	32,000		
○ Fitness @ tlc – Members	43,000	44,000		
○ Fit: Non Members (Pay & Play)	32,000	33,000		
○ Theatre & Concert Hall	140,000	142,000		
○ Visual Arts & Boxfield Gallery	47,000	48,000		
○ Conference Rooms	42,000	43,000		
◆ Stevenage Swimming Centre	244,000	245,000		
◆ Fairlands Valley Park Sailing Centre	9,000	10,000		
◆ John Henry Newman Leisure Centre	61,000	62,000		
◆ Stevenage Golf Centre – Main Course	33,000	34,000		
◆ Stevenage Golf Centre – Pitch & Putt	15,000	16,000		
◆ Stevenage Golf Centre – Conference/Events	8,500	9,000		
◆ Shephall Leisure Centre	38,000	39,000		

### Television Licenses

The Council runs a scheme that enables elderly Stevenage residents to obtain a refund against the amount they pay for a television licence. We give a refund of up to £25.50 on the TV licence to people aged 65 and over.

Did you know that people over 75 are entitled to a free licence under a Government scheme?

Indicator	2004/05	2005/06	2005/06	2006/07
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	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Number of television licence subsidies provided	2,700	2,700		

## Transport

We work with Herts County Council, transport operators and businesses to help shape the future of transport provision in Stevenage. We involve voluntary organisations, particularly those that represent disabled people and environmental groups

Did you know that Stevenage has an updated cycleways map available from the Customer Service Centre?

- Set up a new Parking Enforcement Service in Stevenage in partnership with East Herts and Welwyn and Hatfield District Councils
- Strengthened partnership arrangements between the County Council and Borough Council through the Highways Joint Member Panel, to deliver local highway services. The Highways Joint Member Panel funding was made available to Local Area Committees to enable additional transport and highway schemes to be implemented.
- Improved parking and access areas for disabled users of the Leisure Centre.
- Commenced improvement works to the rear entrance of the Westgate Shopping Centre to improve access for people with disabilities
- Undertook preliminary work to develop a Stevenage Borough Council Green Transport Plan
- Continued to work with developers, the County Council and other organisations to agree a brief for a new Bus Station to achieve better links with the Railway Station.
- Adopted Parking Strategy for the town
- Investigated a range of parking problems and developed priorities and solutions in accordance with the Stevenage Parking Strategy
- Spent £100,000 on providing new off-street parking facilities at five residential streets that suffer acute parking congestion

Did you know that Stevenage Borough Council has spent over £1million in the past ten years on providing new off street parking facilities?

## Capacity Building

The Council has a range of priorities with associated programmes of work to deliver improvements for the community. The programmes link directly to our CPA Improvement Plan.

In their 2004 CPA report the Audit Commission said *“The Council has put many building blocks in place to achieve further improvement in key service areas .....*”

The capacity building programme focuses on projects that will better enable the organisation to support these priorities and make further improvements.

The programme focuses on the following key areas:

- ✓ Use of Resources
- ✓ People and performance Management
- ✓ Process and knowledge management

In terms of its people and its results the programme aims for excellence across the organisation, concentrating on: The role of excellent leadership, performance management of people and performance management processes.

This programme will ensure that the right people, with the right skills, using the right processes and systems to deliver the council’s ambitions are in place.

*“Capacity is the right organisation, systems, partnerships, people and processes to deliver against a particular agenda or plan” (Capacity Building in Local Government ODPM 2003)*

### **Use of Resources (UOR):**

The Use of Resources is an annual assessment of all Councils carried out by the Audit Commission. It contributes to our overall Comprehensive Performance Assessment score.

The use of resources judgement assesses how well the council manages and uses its financial resources. The assessment focuses on the importance of having sound and strategic financial management to ensure that resources are available to support the council’s priorities and improve services. It covers:

- financial reporting;
- financial management;
- financial standing;
- internal control; and
- value for money.

Auditors form judgements for each of these themes. The overall use of resources score is based on combined scores for each of the areas covered. Following on-site inspection in December 2005, we achieved an overall **performance level of 2** – defined by the Audit Commission as ‘At standard’.

Each judgement area consists of a number of key lines of enquiry (KLOE) that reflect statutory and professional requirements and best practice. The KLOE form the criteria of the auditor’s judgements.

Descriptions of performance against each key line of enquiry showing what the Council needs to do to achieve performance levels 3 and 4 were included in the KLOE. The following sections detail the KLOE for each theme, our achievements last year and our plans for future improvements to reach these levels.

**Financial reporting:**

Key line of enquiry:

- The council produces annual accounts in accordance with relevant standards and timetables, supported by comprehensive working papers
- The council promotes external accountability

**What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Reported accounts to members that include explanatory papers highlighting key issues for consideration
- ✓ Achieved an earlier closedown timetable for preparation of financial statements

**What are our future plans?**

- Enhance capacity within the finance team to enable key staff to be available during audit to answer queries on the accounts
- Use the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) summary to report key financial information to the public

### **Financial Management:**

Key lines of enquiry:

- ◆ The council's medium term financial strategy, budgets and capital programme are soundly based and designed to deliver its strategic priorities
- ◆ The council manages performance against budgets
- ◆ The council manages its asset base

### **What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Completed sale of the Council's depot at London Road and relocate the depot and Household Waste site to purpose built facilities (relocation will take place during summer of 2006).
- ✓ Completed sale of several residential development sites achieving capital receipts of more than £10 million. More than 370 new homes will be built on these sites, over 150 of which will be affordable homes
- ✓ Reduced number of empty garages throughout the town from 1,350 to fewer than 650
- ✓ Completed comprehensive condition survey of all 7,000 Council owned garages
- ✓ Extended the role of the capital review group to enhance capital programme and asset management arrangements.

### **What do we want to do in 2006/07?**

- Dispose of several development sites.
- Complete a comprehensive review of the Council's operational properties.
- Put in place a comprehensive maintenance improvement programme in respect of the Council's garages, and identify surplus garage compounds suitable for redevelopment.
- Fully update the Council's Asset Management Plan.
- Begin to develop the next phase of the Council's rolling disposals programme (covering the period beyond 2007/8 when the current programme comes to an end).
- Complete a strategic review of the Indoor and Outdoor Markets

### **What are our future plans?**

- Implement proposals for the regeneration of the Neighbourhood Centres, including regeneration of the Oval
- Relocate a number of key services and partners of the Council into more appropriate premises, freeing up their existing sites for redevelopment

### **Asset Management:**

#### **Why is asset management important to us?**

We want to ensure that:

- ◆ Properties owned by the Council are used for the benefit of the community
- ◆ Surplus or under used properties are sold to support our capital programme, or put to better use

Our non-housing properties are one of our most valuable assets and they have a significant impact on the delivery of services to our customers, and on our financial position. By managing our properties effectively we can help to improve the delivery of services to our customers and help ensure that we are in a good financial position.

- Bring forward residential development sites to meet the need for additional housing and, in particular, affordable housing
- Introduce performance measurement and benchmarking for use of the Council's asset base

**How are we measuring progress?**

Indicator	Performance (2005/06)	Target 2005/06	Target 3 Years (2009)	Target 5 years (2011)	Target 10 years (2016)
Occupancy rate of Council owned property	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
The percentage of rental income received	95%	95%	96%	97%	97%

Table will be updated following outturn

### **Financial Standing:**

Key line of enquiry:

- ◆ The council manages its spending within the available resources

#### **The Overall Financial Position:**

The Executive maintains a strategic overview of the Council's financial position. For a number of years we have had a medium term financial strategy in place for our General Fund, which is continuously revised and updated.

The interrelationships between the Revenue and Capital accounts have become increasingly complex. Consequently we have developed an overall medium-term strategy, integrating the General Fund, HRA and Capital accounts, which seeks to strike a balance between limited resources and growing expenditure pressures.

Two of the key issues concern the cessation of the statutory 'negative subsidy' transfer from the HRA to the General Fund and the introduction of the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) to address housing stock condition issues. The Government has put in place transitional arrangements, which authorities can use to make transfers to cushion the General Fund, but the maximum amount of these diminishes year by year. We are financing the bulk of the Housing major repairs programme from capital receipts, which will enable a transfer to be made under the transitional arrangements.

We have been 'debt-free' - had no outstanding long-term borrowing since March 2001, which has delivered substantial financial benefits.

From 2004/05 the Government introduced pooling of housing capital receipts under which 75% of dwelling sales and 50% of other housing receipts are to be paid over. For debt free authorities like Stevenage the new arrangements will be phased in over 3 years.

As well as striking a balance between the needs of the HRA and the General Fund, in both areas we have sought to achieve savings and maximise resource deployment opportunities. Balances on financial resources will be used in a phased and planned way to protect services and bridge the gap between net expenditure and core resources over the medium term.

#### **What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Managed spending within available resources put appropriate performance measures in place
- ✓ Introduced clear priorities on financial planning to maintain a balanced budget position and retain an adequate level of reserves in the medium term

#### **What are our future plans?**

- Improve monitoring of financial health indicators by members

## General Fund Financial Strategy and our approach to Efficiency Improvements

The current medium term financial planning process has been in place for a number of years and is an essential part of the budget setting process. Our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provides a financial forecast of the cost of providing our General Fund services, and the resources that are likely to be available, over the medium term – thereby giving early warning of predicted ‘budget gaps’.

Our financial position has been difficult over the last few years, with each budget round bringing further budget cuts, fee increases and rounds of efficiency savings. The Corporate Planning process has helped focus and redirect resources to priorities, but with increasing pressures and expectations on us to deliver more with less, there is a need to step back and look to the medium term financial position and work out how this can be achieved.

This year we aim to identify savings and other measures for implementation

A key objective in the achievement of Best Value is the demonstration of continuous improvement within all the services we provide. As a result, it is expected that efficiency savings will be delivered.

Every effort is made to provide a comprehensive range of services within the financial parameters set by Council. To achieve this, we formally review the level of service provision as part of the annual budgetary process. This process also includes the identification of savings and new service priorities.

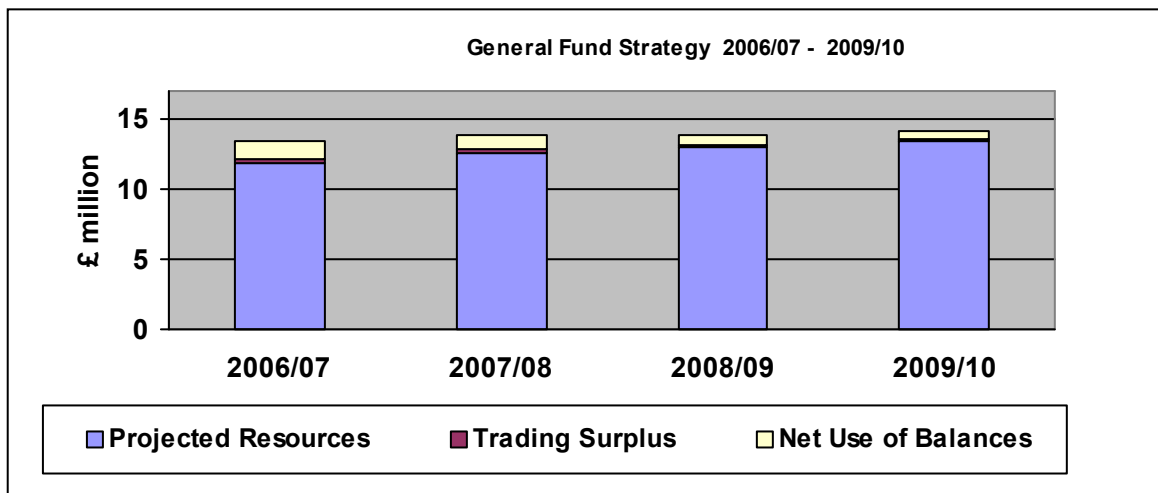
Our medium term financial strategy identifies the need to review our spending on services to achieve ongoing financial efficiencies. As part of this years budget process we identified £683,000 of savings in 2005/06 and £1.4 million in 2006/07 with £1.1 million of these savings being ongoing. These savings are achievable without the need for service reductions.

The continued identification of efficiency savings, in line with the Governments Spending Review, is necessary to ensure we maintain a sustainable revenue position. Consequently, plans for growth and changing priorities are now more clearly linked to available funding and distribution.

A Business Process Reengineering project is being undertaken that will review all major services. The review has already identified opportunities to make savings through efficiencies resulting from the introduction of new ICT systems and further transfers of services to the Customer Service Centre. The General Fund Financial Strategy position is shown in summary below:

	<b>2006/07</b> <b>£'000s</b>	<b>2007/08</b> <b>£'000s</b>	<b>2008/09</b> <b>£'000s</b>	<b>2009/10</b> <b>£'000s</b>
<b>Service Expenditure</b>	13,817	13,819	13,835	14,107
<b>Trading Surplus</b>	(176)	(225)	(225)	(225)
	<b>13,641</b>	<b>13,386</b>	<b>14,366</b>	<b>15,169</b>
<b>Projected Resources</b>	<b>(11,912)</b>	<b>(12,608)</b>	<b>(12,988)</b>	<b>(13,384)</b>
<b>Net Use of Balances</b>	<b>1,729</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>498</b>





### General Fund Budget 2006/07

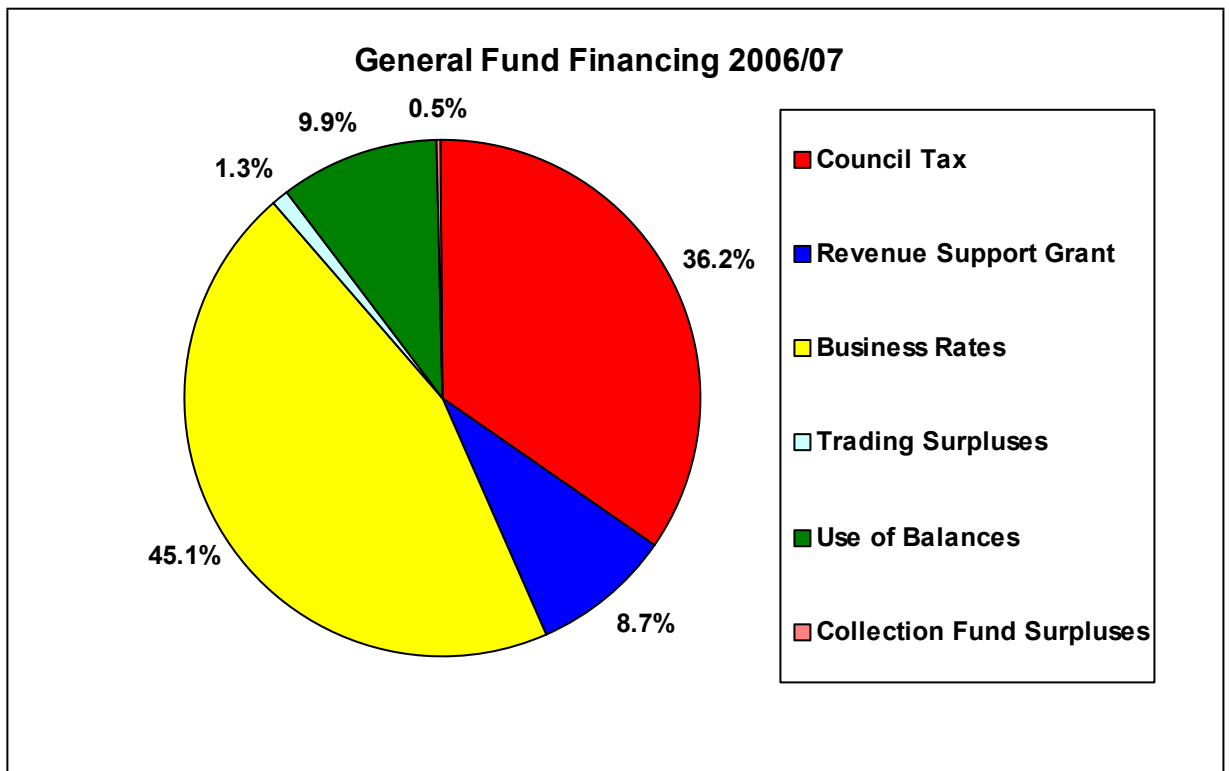
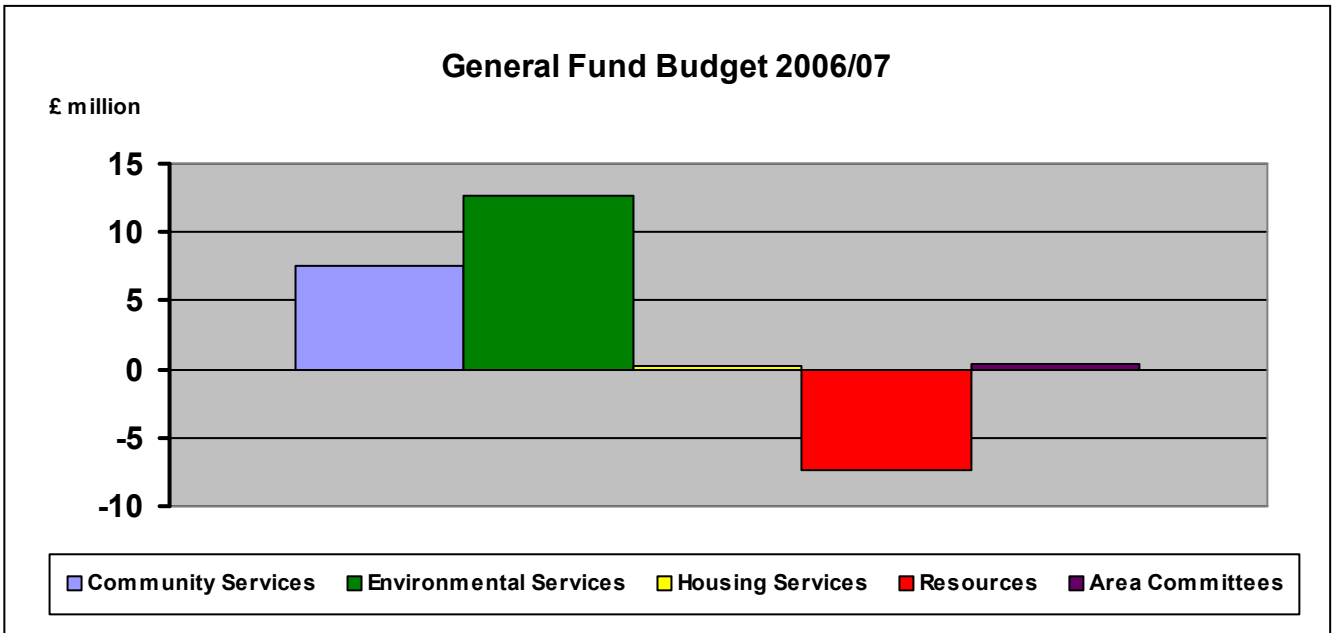
The General Fund includes all expenditure and income chargeable to taxpayers.

We raise money from fees and charges and local taxpayers. We also receive money from Central Government.

We currently collect £39 million from business ratepayers and pay this into the Government's national rating pool. Allocations to councils from this pool are based on population statistics.

The General Fund Budget for 2006/07 analysed by Portfolio Area and Source of Finance, together with the estimate and probable outturn for 2005/06 is shown below.

Portfolio Area	2005/06 Estimate £'000s	2005/06 Probable £'000s	2006/07 Estimate £'000s
Community Services	6,651	7,460	7,684
Environmental Services	11,080	12,020	12,841
Housing Services	( 376)	(193)	206
Resources	(5,166)	(6,884)	(7,310)
Area Committees	377	398	396
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>12,566</b>	<b>12,801</b>	<b>13,817</b>
Financed By:			
Council Tax	4,540	4,540	4,661
Revenue Support Grant	3,936	3,936	1,167
Business Rates	2,301	2,301	6,046
Trading Surpluses	215	215	176
Use of / (Contribution) to Balances	1,511	1,746	1,729
Collection Fund Surpluses	63	63	38
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>12,566</b>	<b>12,801</b>	<b>13,817</b>



### Direct Service Organisation (DSOs)

The Council provides most of its direct service requirements through its own DSOs. A summary of the 2006/07 DSO estimates is shown below:

DSO	Income £'000s	Expenditure £'000s	Surplus £'000s
Building Maintenance	3,321	3,321	0
Street Cleansing	1,642	1,586	56
Refuse Collection	2,798	2,683	115
Grounds Maintenance	2,807	2,802	5
	<b>10,568</b>	<b>10,392</b>	<b>176</b>

### Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure is accounted separately from revenue expenditure, although revenue resources can be used as a means of financing capital ventures.

As a 'debt-free' authority, we were able to utilise all of our capital receipts from the disposal of assets for re-investment in capital expenditure. From 2004/05 under housing capital receipt pooling legislation 75% of dwelling sales and 50% of other housing receipts are paid over to Central Government. Debt free authorities can phase in the new arrangements over 3 years.

A summary of our capital programme for 2006/07 is shown below, together with the sources of funding.

Capital Programme	2006/07 £'000s
<b>Housing</b>	7,125
<b>General Fund</b>	5,365
- Buildings	724
- Car Parking	643
- Environmental Improvements	
- Information Technology	699
- Improvement Grants	423
- Other	1,741
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>16,720</b>
<b>Resources</b>	
- Capital Receipts & Contributions	10,014
- Major Repairs Allowance	6,002
- Other	704
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>16,720</b>

### Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account is the account where all income and expenditure is chargeable to rent payers. The account is “ring fenced” from the General Fund which cannot support it in revenue financing.

A summary of the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2006/07 and the estimate and probable outturn for 2005/06 is shown below:

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2005/06 Estimate £'000s</b>	<b>2005/06 Probable £'000s</b>	<b>2006/07 Estimate £'000s</b>
HRA Subsidy Withdrawal	16,352	16,352	16,990
Repairs	6,276	6,246	6,689
Major Repairs	6,120	6,120	6,002
Supervision and Management	8,223	8,767	9,246
Revenue Contribution to Capital		92	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>36,971</b>	<b>37,577</b>	<b>38,927</b>
<b>Financed By:</b>			
Rents	27,303	27,335	28,717
Interest	1,612	1,653	1,529
Use of/(Contribution to) Balances	(157)	366	551
Fees and Charges	1,465	1,475	1,525
MRA Subsidy	6,120	6,120	6,002
Support People Grant	560	560	560
Defects Grant	68	68	43
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>36,971</b>	<b>37,577</b>	<b>38,927</b>

If you require further information about our resources or approach to efficiency improvements, please call Scott Crudgington - Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on (01438) 242185 or email [scott.crudgington@stevenage.gov.uk](mailto:scott.crudgington@stevenage.gov.uk).

**Internal Control:**

Key lines of enquiry:

- ◆ The council manages its significant business risks
- ◆ The council has arrangements in place to maintain a sound system of internal control
- ◆ The council has arrangements in place that are designed to promote and ensure probity and propriety in the conduct of its business

**What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Implemented a new Risk Management Strategy
- ✓ Successfully introduced Strategic and Operational Risk Registers
- ✓ Carried out training on Risk Management for key Members, Strategic Management Board and senior managers
- ✓ Successfully managed risk in major projects

**What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Report key strategic risks to key Members twice yearly and to Programme Management Board quarterly
- Carry out further training for officers and members as appropriate
- Establish an Audit Committee for audit governance matters independent of Executive and Scrutiny

**What are our future plans?**

- Develop members' roles with respect to risk management
- Develop our approach to risk in relation to partnership working, and the assurances around managing those risks

**Why is managing risk important to us?**

We want to ensure that risk is effectively managed to enhance its ability to:

- ◆ deliver strategic and operational objectives successfully
- ◆ safeguard the Council's assets
- ◆ protect the Council's reputation
- ◆ be accepted as part of the culture (i.e. embed in Service Plans)
- ◆ Adhere to best practice guidance / surpass CPA requirements

Risk can be defined as the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives. Risk management provides a framework for us to identify, understand and manage risks by mitigating, transferring or accepting them. Risk management, therefore, as well as providing a means of overcoming threats, provides the means to maximise the opportunities available to an organisation.

Risk management is about making the right decisions at the right time and about achieving objectives once those decisions have been made. Effective risk management arrangements will result in:

- ◆ Ability to identify and take advantage of opportunities
- ◆ Increased likelihood of achieving strategic and operational objectives
- ◆ Better planning and prioritisation of resources
- ◆ Early warning of problems before they occur
- ◆ Relevant staff having the skills to identify and manage risk within their services
- ◆ Increased stakeholder confidence



To assist Councils with the value for money self-assessment the Audit Commission launched web based Value for Money Profile tools. They pull together information that is currently available on Council spending and performance and allow comparisons between councils to be made.

### **What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Used the Value for Money profiles tool to find out how well the Council's overall and service costs compare with other authorities.
- ✓ Reviewed a range of regulatory services to ensure that the council provides customer focus, value for money and efficient services that perform well and meet expectations.
- ✓ Carried out a Business Process Re-engineering exercise of environmental services as part of the Transformed Services ambition
- ✓ Published Customer Service Standards so that our customers know what level of service to expect from us

### **What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Enhance the Council's service planning arrangements to include Value for Money targets for each of the services
- Carry out Internal Audit reviews to consider Value for Money issues as part of the Council's audit programme
- Make the Council's Budget Book and summary financial information available to the public and include unit cost information for the Council's key frontline services
- Introduce service specific standards for frontline services

## **Procurement**

Procurement is a key means of improving value for money. We want to ensure that citizens and taxpayers receive best value through planned, skilful and innovative procurement in respect of all goods, works, and services

### **Why is procurement important to us?**

Procurement is the process of acquiring goods, works and services from third parties. The process spans the whole life cycle from identification of needs, through to the end of a service contract or the end of the useful life of an asset. It includes option appraisal and the critical 'make' or 'buy' decision.

Our Corporate Procurement Strategy identifies 9 principles, which outline our aims for procurement. These principles have been established to support our core values and strategic ambitions and are summarised below:

**High Professional Standards and Best Practice** - Procurement shall be conducted in a professional manner and ensure the highest standards of transparency, probity and accountability, in accordance with contract standing orders and financial regulations. Staff

engaged in procurement and contract management shall be suitably qualified and trained for the purpose.

**Best Value** - The Council will support in-house providers where they offer value for money and operate in the best interests of the Council. Each service review will carry out an options appraisal as to how, if at all, the service will be provided in the future. Best value procurement will generate the most advantageous balance of quality, service and cost and will be driven by desired outputs and results.

**Management and Control of Contracts** - Arrangements shall ensure that all contracts are adequately managed and monitored with a view to achieving completion of service delivery on time, within budget, and in accordance with the specification.

**Assessing and Minimising Risk** - The risks associated with all procurement shall be assessed and minimised accordingly.

**Social, Economic and Environmental Well-being** - All major procurement shall recognise the impact on social, economic and environmental well being.

**E-Procurement** - E-procurement is the phrase commonly applied to 'doing business' electronically and generally relates to the contractual relationship between the Council and its suppliers. The Council will take full advantage of e-Procurement and will keep abreast of new solutions that are appearing in the marketplace.

**Workforce Matters** - The Council will take action to ensure that, when dealing with staff transfers, TUPE and the 'Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts' will be fully adopted.

**Equality for All** - The Council values diversity and will ensure that suppliers, contractors and partners act in a fair and non-discriminatory way. Equality considerations will be included in strategies and plans and will influence each stage of procurement and contract management. The Council will adhere to all legislation and Codes of Practice, including the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000).

**Partnering and Collaboration** - The Council will support collaborative, partnership and alternative arrangements and its procedures will be flexible to allow for this. The Council acknowledges the importance of partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors, with other public organisations acting locally and with the Government itself to deliver best value. The Council will encourage new methods of procurement that will deliver services more efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Procurement Principles have been established to achieve the following:

- ◆ Commitment to encouraging competition where appropriate
- ◆ Commitment to achieving value for money
- ◆ Commitment to continuous improvement
- ◆ Commitment to quality and equality
- ◆ Commitment to operational efficiency
- ◆ Commitment to effective management, systems and procedures



**What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ New Corporate Procurement Strategy for 2006/07 to 2008/09 established and approved
- ✓ Savings in excess of £100,000 achieved by the Corporate Procurement function
- ✓ The Council's first reverse e-auction conducted for office furniture, resulting in a 30% saving
- ✓ The establishment of a 'Selling to the Council' website showing upcoming contracts and contracts let.
- ✓ Training provided on letting contracts, including the new EU Procurement Regulations
- ✓ New Contract Standing Orders and best practice guidance in place, including the establishment of standard contracts and forms and tender templates
- ✓ Joint procurement and pilot implementation of the Herts and Beds E-marketplace
- ✓ The establishment of a 'Senior Procurement Officer' post within the Corporate Procurement team to assist with tender exercises and deliver further efficiencies to the Council
- ✓ Electronic payment mechanism now in place (BACs)

**What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Develop electronic ordering, goods receipting and invoice approval with appropriate workflows and business process re-engineering
- Complete the installation of the Council's e-marketplace solution
- Encourage and assist small, local and minority suppliers to do business with the Council electronically and provide guidance and assistance on how to become e-enabled in a cost effective manner
- Update the current stores and purchase ordering modules within the current financial system
- Develop a Competition Strategy and Service Review toolkit
- Develop further best procurement practice guidance
- Achieve the savings target of £50,000 through various procurement activities, including review of staffing agencies, recruitment advertising and mail services.
- Relocate the stores function to Cavendish Road.

**What are our future plans?**

- Deliver Corporate Procurement savings of £600,000 over the next 3 years
- Review the role and structure of the Corporate Procurement Function
- Work with the Regional Centre of Excellence and other procurement professional organisations to identify more opportunities for joint working or for shared delivery of services
- Increase involvement in departmental efficiency reviews to identify opportunities for partnership arrangements

- Make sure there is a structured approach to education, training and development for all officers with procurement responsibilities across the Council.
- Develop measurement systems and collate data for Herts regional procurement performance measurement
- Test a 'sustainable procurement' toolkit and continue to develop targets for high priority sustainable procurement.
- Review Contract Standing Orders and other procurement guidance on a regular basis to ensure controls and standards are in place, streamlined, secure value for money and do not prevent new ideas
- Achieve 'Fairtrade Town' status

#### How are we measuring progress?

Indicator	Current Performance (2005/06)	Target 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10
Procurement Savings - Direct (year on year savings carried over)	£100,400	£150,000	£200,000	£250,000	£300,000
Procurement Savings - Indirect (year on year savings carried over)	£16,800	£20,000	£25,000	£30,000	£35,000
Percentage of milestone activities completed in the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government (cumulative)	50%	90%	100%	100%	100%

#### Efficiency:

Efficiency is a measure of productivity – how much you get out in relation to what is put in. High quality and high costs may mean good value is provided, but only if others in similar circumstances do not achieve similar standards at lower costs. We aim to maintain standards and lower costs.

#### Efficiency Savings:

#### What did we achieve in 2005/06?

Although the Council was not targeted to achieve savings in 2004/05, the ODPM requested that all local authorities submit a 2004/05 Backward Looking Annual Efficiency Statement. Ongoing year on year savings from this statement will contribute to the Council's cumulative efficiency target. Our 2004/05 Backward Looking Annual Efficiency Statement was submitted to the ODPM in June 2005, showing that the Council saved a total of £612,232, of which £558,104 was cashable. You can view the detailed statement on our website [www.stevenage.gov.uk](http://www.stevenage.gov.uk).

The 2004/05 results demonstrate that the Council has proactively sought efficiencies. The Council has embarked on several long-term efficiency programmes and is dedicated to providing best value for money for its citizens and taxpayers.

Our 2005/06 Backward looking Annual Efficiency Statement is still in progress and will be submitted to the ODPM in June 2006. Efficiencies realised to date show that the Council is on course to exceed its efficiency target

Key areas where efficiencies for 2005/06 have been achieved include:

- ✓ Office furniture reverse e-auction, saving £25,000 for the Daneshill House refurbishment project in 2006
- ✓ Re-tendering of the Council's full colour print requirements, saving £20,000 per annum
- ✓ Telecomms fixed line contract negotiation, saving £50,000 per annum
- ✓ Mobile phone tariff and fleet reduction saving £33,000 per annum
- ✓ Decriminalised parking enforcement partnership with East Herts District Council saving £45,000 per annum
- ✓ Abandoned vehicles collection and disposal contract procured in collaboration with other local authorities saving approximately £11,000 per annum
- ✓ Document Management System contract negotiation providing a one-off saving of £11,000
- ✓ Introduction of on-line VDU workstation training and development resulting in a £20,000 non-cashable saving
- ✓ Introduction of Handy Person Scheme partnership saving £23,000 per annum
- ✓ Introduction of Energy Efficiency Partnership saving £25,000 per annum
- ✓ Council-wide inflation suppression, saving approximately £200,000
- ✓ A potential reduction in sickness absence for from 11.7 to 9.6 days per full time employee

### **What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

The Forward Looking Annual Efficiency Statement (AES) states what gains we will annually make. This is signed by the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer. Our Annual Efficiency Statement for 2006/07 is as follows:

## **Stevenage Borough Council Annual Efficiency Statement 2006/07**

### **Strategy for Securing Efficiency Gains**

- We will draw together the efficiency improvement programmes currently in operation across the Council in order to deliver a joined up approach to targeting efficiency gains and deliver both the Governments Efficiency Target and address the current budget gap identified in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- These efficiency programmes include:
  - Implementation of E-Government / ICT utilisation
  - Strategic Organisational Change Programme
  - Business Process improvement
  - HR Strategy Review
  - Base Budget Review and Review of Fees & Charges

- Strategic Procurement & Cost Reduction
- Asset Management & Rationalisation

**Key Actions to be Taken During the Year**

- Identify what we must do - current activities that must be continued – duties, compliance and governance activities
- Determine what we should continue to do - identify current activities that add value to the Council's Services
- Determine how we can reduce cost – Determine opportunities to gain economies of scale – such as shared services, partnerships or alternative sourcing.
- Identify what we should stop doing - discretionary activities that add no or little value or are not in line with the Council's ambitions
- Identify who else we could work with to improve the way services are delivered and reduce overheads.

**Expected Efficiency Gains :**

	<b>Expected Annual Efficiency Gains</b>	<b>...of which is Cashable</b>
Adult Social Services		
1. Community meals joint contracting exercise	£5,000	£5,000
Children's Services	-	-
Culture & Sport	-	-
Environmental Services		
1. Electronic payments for pest control	£5,000	£0
2. 'Scores on the Doors' promotion to reduce restaurant / takeaway inspection time and frequency	£1,000	£0
Local Transport		
1. Herts concessionary fares scheme contract re-negotiation	£100,000	£100,000
Local Authority Social Housing		
1. Outsourcing administration	£15,000	£10,000

of home contents insurance scheme for tenants and leaseholders		
2.Introduction of Opti-time to reduce non-productive staff time	£10,000	£0
3.Letting of long term contracts as per the Housing Procurement strategy	£10,000	£10,000
4.Reduction in number of weeks properties are void	£35,000	£35,000
5.Bring gas management back in-house	£100,000	£100,000
Non-School Education Services	-	-
Supporting People	-	-
<b>Cross Cutting Efficiencies</b>		
<i>Corporate Services</i>		
1. Savings from BPR and E-Government Initiatives	£100,000	£60,000
2. Corporate Administration restructure	£9,000	£9,000
3.Centralisation of corporate training budgets and link to performance management programme	£14,000	£14,000
4. Facilities Management restructure and contract re-negotiations	£10,000	£10,000
Procurement		
1. Staffing Agencies Tender & BPR	£30,000	£20,000
2. Recruitment Advertising Tender	£15,000	£15,000
3. Mail	£5,000	£5,000
4.IT hardware	£10,000	£10,000
5. Other procurement savings exercises	£40,000	£20,000
Productive Time	-	-
Transactions		
Implementation of e-Pay facilities	£5,000	£2,500
<i>Miscellaneous Efficiencies</i>		
1. Inflation Suppression	£200,000	£200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£719,000</b>	<b>£625,500</b>

**What are our future plans?**

The efficiency agenda is a developing area. It is expected that through the Council's active participation in the Regional Centres of Excellence we will become better placed to significantly exceed the efficiency targets set for the Council. This approach is essential in order to address the Council's current forecasted budget gap and to achieve the objectives set out in the Government's 2004 Spending Review.

**Why are we improving the efficiency of our organisation?**

Following the 2004 Spending Review and the completion of the Gershon review, the Government announced the new efficiency agenda. The efficiency agenda is about improving productivity – getting more from the same resource, or achieving the same results for less resource. Cuts in service do not count as efficiency gains.

The Spending Review 2004 requires local government to achieve efficiency gains totalling £6.45 billion by 2007/08. Each local authority is expected to achieve 2.5% per annum efficiency gains compared to their 2004/05 baseline. Local authorities will have full flexibility on how and where to achieve those gains.

At least half of the efficiency gains made should be cashable, which means they will release funding for use elsewhere in the Council, either for reinvestment in frontline services or holding down Council Tax levels.

The target efficiency gain for Stevenage Borough Council is calculated as an additional 2.5% of 2004/05 baseline expenditure each year. This means the following set of efficiency gains are required by the Council:

<b>Stevenage Borough Council Target Efficiency Gain 2005/06 to 2007/08</b> <b>Council Gershon Baseline Expenditure : £19.1 million</b>				
	<b>Year on Year Improvement</b>	<b>Total Improvement Relative to 2004/05</b>	<b>Year on Year Improvement – Cashable</b>	<b>Total Cashable Improvement Relative to 2004/05</b>
<b>2005/06</b>	£477,000	£477,000	£238,500	£238,500
<b>2006/07</b>	£477,000	£954,000	£238,500	£477,000
<b>2007/08</b>	£477,000	£1,431,000	£238,500	£715,500

## People and performance management

*“Capacity is the right organisation, systems, partnerships, **people** and processes to deliver against a particular agenda or plan” (Capacity Building in Local Government ODPM 2003)*

The most important council value according to staff is providing quality services, with 86% of staff saying that this is ‘very important’.

Ensuring that services are meeting expectations requires continuous monitoring and improvement.

Our staff are seen as the key to improvement as only they can provide the capacity to meet the increasing needs of our communities. Our staff support the achievement of the Council’s vision and ambitions for the town and its people. This is achieved through a multi-skilled and flexible workforce.

We can achieve service improvement by employing people who:

- ◆ have the skills and knowledge to do their jobs effectively
- ◆ do not feel threatened by change and challenge
- ◆ can be flexible enough to embrace different methods of working
- ◆ are managed, developed and rewarded appropriately.

The results of our 2004 independent MORI staff survey were extremely positive and showed that we achieved:

- ◆ Increased levels of job satisfaction
- ◆ A better place to work compared with other organisations
- ◆ More employees feeling proud to work for the Council
- ◆ Communication becoming more open
- ◆ Better informed employees
- ◆ Improved completion rates for appraisals

73% of staff are satisfied with their present job

59% of staff would ‘speak highly’ of the Council’s services. This is above the MORI average for local authorities, which is 27%.

62% of staff feel that the Council keeps them fully or fairly well informed about key decisions that affect them

Overall, the results from the 2004 MORI survey showed a considerable improvement over the 2002 survey. A trend we expect to continue in 2006.

### What was achieved in 2005/06?

- ✓ Introduced a revised recruitment and selection policy
- ✓ Supported the achievement of level 2 of the Local Government Equalities Standard
- ✓ Implemented the use of Equality Impact Assessments on all new HR policies

- ✓ Implemented a new Managing Absence Policy to reduce absence levels across the Council
- ✓ Implemented a Council wide Workforce Development Plan
- ✓ Introduced new policies on Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Parental Leave, Adoption Leave and Secondments
- ✓ Implemented a new payroll system and commenced the implementation of a new integrated HR system
- ✓ Recognised as an investor in People under the revised standard:
  - ◆ The first Council in the East and South East of England
  - ◆ One of the first Council's in the UK re-accredited under the new Profile review.

### Investors in People

In the liP report the Council was perceived to be an organisation that highly values its employees, and strives to make improvements.

The assessors made a number of recommendations for improvement:

Recommendation	Improvement
Introduction of a Competency Framework linked to 360-degree Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Introduced a draft competency framework linked to on-line 360 degree appraisal process</li> <li>✓ Commence a pilot of the competency framework with senior managers in 2006/07</li> <li>✓ Review corporate development and training programme</li> </ul>
Undertake a Skills Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Carry out a Skills Audit during 2007</li> </ul>
Introduce a formal succession planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Revised the recruitment and selection policy</li> <li>✓ Introduced a secondment policy</li> <li>✓ Preparing a succession planning policy and procedure</li> </ul>
Introduce a reward and recognition strategy (Without a reward and recognition policy in place it will not be possible to for the Council to exceed Level 1 - the basic liP standard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Major theme within the Council's Workforce Development Plan</li> <li>✓ Developing a strategy that places greater emphasis on flexibility and employee choice</li> </ul>
Introduce a knowledge and information sharing policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Initiatives underway (see page 121)</li> </ul>
Increase employee involvement in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Research on best practise to improve staff involvement is being carried out</li> </ul>



**What do we want to achieve in 2006/07?**

- Support the establishment of the Councils Arms Length Management Organisation to manage it's Housing stock in particular the transition of staff to the new organisation and support to staff remaining with the Council.
- Work to achieve level 3 of the Equalities Standard for local government
- Implement the National Single Status Agreement
- Deliver savings in terms of improvements to recruitment advertising and use of agency staff
- Undertake an equal pay audit
- Complete the implementation of an integrated HR/Payroll System to improve efficiency and the quality of information available to managers
- Continue to develop the leadership capacity of the organisation by developing appropriate structures and individual managers to lead service planning and delivery improvements. We are developing a set of management competencies to assist this process.
- Support the implementation of a new stress management policy

**What are our future plans?**

- Develop modern reward systems for staff that attract, retain and develop a skilled and flexible workforce
- Introduce a pay management strategy
- Develop career pathways for staff in both technical/professional areas and support staff roles
- Undertake a skills audit in support of workforce planning and development

## Knowledge Management:

Knowledge Management is about helping customers and staff find and use information they need.

### What was achieved in 2005/06?

A new website was launched in December '05, with over 1,000 pages of information about Council services. **These pages will have been viewed over 250,000 times by March 2006.**

- ✓ Speech enabled the Council website so that customers are able to listen to, rather than read, the information **(will happen by end of March '06 or soon thereafter)**
- ✓ Over 70 people were provided with the information they requested using the Freedom of Information Act within the 20 day time limit

### What are our future plans?

- Develop the quality of the information provided via [stevenage.gov.uk](http://stevenage.gov.uk) to encourage use
- Improve how information is structured, stored and presented to make it more accessible, including the use of electronic maps
- Investigate and evaluate the use of electronic learning to provide staff with improved access to training
- Explore the potential for sharing information within the Council, and other public services, to improve service delivery for our customers

## Performance Measurement:

Local Authorities are required to monitor their performance against a nationally determined set of indicators.

These performance indicators enable government to monitor our progress, let us compare with other councils and importantly provide our residents with information about how well we are performing and whether we are achieving targets set to improve services.

The Council's performance against these indicators is increasingly being used in national assessment frameworks, such as Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The Council have chosen to monitor the national indicators, BVPIs, on a quarterly basis to ensure that consistent progress is made.

In addition all services have a set of indicators that reflect local standards and targets.

We actively encourage a performance management culture to:

- ◆ Manage resources effectively to achieve our ambitions and priorities
- ◆ Demonstrate the link between service performance and the priorities and ambitions (The Golden Thread) so it is clear how they contribute to the success of the Council
- ◆ Facilitate timely access to performance measures for service managers

- ◆ Ensure that performance information is used to drive improvement so that services are improved for local people
- ◆ Monitor and review our performance

**What was achieved in 2005/06?**

- ✓ Introduced 'Best Value Performance Indicator Clinics' – The purpose of the BVPI Clinics is to ensure improvement by solution finding, learning and action planning.
- ✓ Delivered a corporate software system for reporting and administering Best Value Performance Indicators.

**What are our future plans?**

- Develop the corporate software system to include local performance indicators and corporate health indicators
- To establish and deliver the performance monitoring and information needs for Housing.

**Best Value and Performance Management Audit Report to be inserted**

**Compendium of Statutory Best Value Performance Indicators**

As part of the national performance management framework, Central Government determines a set of statutory performance indicators. The indicators are chosen because the Government believes that they reflect key performance areas for councils and it gives local people an opportunity to assess their Council's performance against a range of services. Each year analysis of the performance is carried out nationally which enables a comparison of the 'best' and 'worst' performers across the country.

The tables on pages \*\*\*\* contain Stevenage Borough Council's performance figures against those indicators for last year (2005/06) compared to the targets set, and target information for the next five years. An explanation has been provided below, where relevant, for those indicators where the council varies by 10 percent or more against the 2005/06 target.

BVPI reference	Performance 2005/06	Target 2005/06	Variance from Target	Status indicator	Performance Trend	Explanation
<b>Resources Portfolio – Councillor Sharon Taylor</b>						
<b>Personnel Portfolio – Councillor Ken Vale</b>						
<b>Housing Portfolio – Councillor Ann Webb</b>						
<b>Environmental Health and E-Government Portfolio – Councillor Richard Henry</b>						

Community and Culture Portfolio – Councillor Sue Myson						
Environment Portfolio – Councillor John Gardner						
Community Safety Portfolio – Councillor Bob Clark						

The images below are an example of the BVPI compendium. The 'Status against target' and 'Performance Trend' columns have been introduced this year.

Ref	Performance Indicator	Performance Data 2004/05	Performance Data 2005/06				Targets					
			Target	Actual	Status (Against Target)	Performance Trend	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Resources Portfolio - Councillor Sharon Taylor												
BV 8	The percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services that were paid by the authority within 30 days of such invoices being received by the authority	93.50%	100.00%	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 9	Percentage of council tax collected	95.80%	28.70%	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 10	The percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the authority	98%	30%	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 156	The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable and accessible to disabled people	62%	88%	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 179	The percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days.	100%	100%	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 174	The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population	Not avail	3.75	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 175	The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action	Not avail	100.00%	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 76	a. Number of claimants visited per 1,000 caseload	198.55	205.00	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	b. Number of fraud investigators per 1,000 caseload	0.37	0.45	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	c. Number of fraud investigations per 1,000 caseload	65.66	76.00	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	d. Number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload	5.60	6.00	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 78a	Average time for processing new claims	66.36 days est	39	TBA	R			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 78b	Average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstance	14.50 days est	10	TBA	R			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

Ref	Performance Indicator	Performance Data 2004/05	Performance Data 2005/06				Targets				
			Target	Actual	Status (Against Target)	Performance Trend	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
BV 79a	Percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct on the basis of the information available to the determination, for a sample of cases checked post-determination	98.80%	98.00%	TBA	G		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 79b	(i) The percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year	47.80% est	55.00%	TBA	G		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	(ii) The percentage of total amount of debt outstanding at April 2004 and amount of overpayments identified in the year (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year.	New Indicator	0.00%	TBA	G		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	(iii) Overpayments written off in the year as a percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment debt at April 2004 and Housing benefit overpayments identified during the year.	New Indicator	0.00%	TBA	G		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

Personnel Portfolio - Councillor Ken Vale											
BV 11a	The percentage of top 5 % of local authority staff that are women	18.91%	24.32%	TBA	A		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 11b	The percentage of top 5 % of local authority staff from a minority ethnic community	2.70%	8.10%	TBA	G		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV11c	The percentage of top 5% of local authority staff who have a disability.	New indicator	Amended Indicator	TBA	A		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 12	The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	11.43 days	9.61 days	TBA	A		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 14	The percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce.	0.83%	0.34%	TBA	A		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 15	The percentage of employees retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total workforce.	0.25%	0.34%	TBA	R		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 16a	The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition	3.30%	4.02%	TBA	A		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 16b	The percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area	11.80%	11.80%	TBA	G		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 17a	The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities	3.08%	6.81%	TBA	G		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 17b	The percentage of the economically active population from minority ethnic communities in the authority area.	5.40%	5.40%	TBA	G		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 2a	The level (if any) of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms.	1	2	TBA	A		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 2b	The quality of the authority's Race Equality Scheme.	63%	89%	TBA	A		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

Ref	Performance Indicator	Performance Data 2004/05	Performance Data 2005/06				Targets					
			Target	Actual	Status (Against Target)	Performance Trend	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
<b>Housing Portfolio - Councillor Ann Webb</b>												
BV 63	Energy efficiency: the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	69.2	88.2		G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 64	The number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished during 2005/06 as a direct result of action by the local authority	10.00	12.00		R			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 66a	Local authority rent collection and arrears: Proportion of rent collected	96.50%	99.00%		A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV66b	The number of local authority tenants with more than seven weeks of (gross) rent arrears as a percentage of the number of the total number of council tenants	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV66c	The percentage of local authority tenants in arrears who have had Notices Seeking Possession served.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV66d	The percentage of local authority tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 164	Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing?	Yes	Yes	TBA	N/A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 183(i)	The average length of stay in Bed and Breakfast accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	0 weeks	0 days	TBA	R			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 183(ii)	The average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	5 weeks	5 weeks	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 202	The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the local authority.	0	0-10	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA



Ref	Performance Indicator	Performance Data 2004/05	Performance Data 2005/06				Targets					
			Target	Actual	Status (Against Target)	Performance Trend	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
BV 203	The percentage change in the average number of families, which include dependent children or a pregnant woman, placed in temporary accommodation under the homelessness legislation compared with the average from the previous year.	9.72%	5.00%	TBA	G		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV213	The number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local authority's housing advice service(s) and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV214	The proportion of households accepted as statutorily homeless by the same Authority within the last two years.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 184a	The proportion of LA homes which were non-decent at 1 April 2005	28%	28%	TBA	R		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 184b	The change in proportion of non-decent LA homes between 1 April 2005 and 1 April 2006	14%	14%	TBA	R		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV211a	The proportion of planned repairs and maintenance expenditure on HRA dwellings compared to responsive maintenance expenditure on HRA dwellings	New Indicator	60%	TBA	A		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV211b	The proportion of expenditure on emergency and urgent repairs to HRA dwellings compared to non-urgent repairs expenditure to HRA dwellings.	New Indicator	15%	TBA	A		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV212	The average time taken to re-let local authority housing.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	R		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
<b>Environmental Health and E-Government Portfolio - Councillor Richard Henry</b>												
BV 166a	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health	100.00%	100.00%	TBA	A		↓	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV216a	The number of 'sites of potential concern', within the local authority area, with respect to land contamination	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV216b	The number of sites for which sufficient information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of all 'sites of potential concern'.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV217	The percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 157	The number of types of interactions that are enabled for electronic delivery as percentage of the types of interactions that are legally permissible for electronic delivery	61.61%	100.00%	TBA	G		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

Ref	Performance Indicator	Performance Data 2004/05	Performance Data 2005/06				Targets					
			Target	Actual	Status (Against Target)	Performance Trend	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
<b>Community and Culture Portfolio - Councillor Sue Myson</b>												
BV 170a	The number of visits to/usages of museums per 1,000 population.	999	1000	TBA	G		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 170b	The number of those visits that were in person per 1,000 population.	456	475	TBA	G		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 170c	Number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups	3302	4520	TBA	A		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV226a (formerly BV177)	The total amount spent by the Local Authority on Advice and Guidance services provided by external organisations.	New Indicator	Amended Indicator	TBA	A		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV226b	The percentage of monies spent on advice and guidance services provision which was given to organisations holding the CLS Quality Mark at 'General Help' level and above	New Indicator	Amended Indicator	TBA	A		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV226c	Total amount spent on advice and guidance in the areas of Housing, Welfare Benefits and consumer matters which is provided directly by the authority to the public.	New Indicator	Amended Indicator	TBA	A		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
<b>Environment Portfolio - Councillor John Gardner</b>												
BV199	The proportion of relevant land and highways assessed for cleanliness in terms of:											
	a) The percentage of litter and detritus falling below an acceptable level.	17%	13%	TBA	A		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	b) The percentage of unacceptable levels of visible graffiti	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	c) The percentage of unacceptable levels of visible fly-posting	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	d) The year-on-year reduction in total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with flytipping.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 82a	(i) Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings, which have been recycled.	16.81%	18.00%	TBA	G		↓	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	(ii) Total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the Authority for recycling.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	R		↓	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 82b	(i) Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been sent for composted	2.92%	6.00%	TBA	G		↓	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	(ii) Total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the Authority for composting.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	R		↓	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

Ref	Performance Indicator	Performance Data 2004/05	Performance Data 2005/06				Targets					
			Target	Actual	Status (Against Target)	Performance Trend	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
BV 84	a) Number of kilograms of household waste collected per head	396	415	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	b) The percentage change from the previous financial year in the number of kilograms of household waste collected per head.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 86	Cost of waste collection per household	£40 est	£40.20	TBA	R			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 91	a) Percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by a kerbside collection of recyclables.	97.0%	100.0%	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
	b) Percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by a collection of at least two recyclables	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	R			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land.	78.00%	25.00%	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 109a	Percentage of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	37.00%	60.00%	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 109b	Percentage of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks	67.00%	65.00%	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 109c	Percentage of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks	74.00%	80.00%	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV200a	Did the Local Planning Authority submit the Local Development Scheme (LDS) by 28 March 2005 and thereafter maintain a 3-year rolling programme.	Amended Indicator	Amended Indicator	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV200b	Has the local planning authority met the milestones which the current Local Development Scheme (LDS) set out?	Amended Indicator	Amended Indicator	TBA	R			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV200c	Did the Local Planning Authority publish an annual monitoring report by December of last year?	Amended Indicator	Amended Indicator	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 204	Percentage of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications.	33.00%	30.00%	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 205	Quality of planning service checklist.	72.00%	80.00%	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV218a	The percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours of notification.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV218b	The percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the Authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	A			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV219a	The total number of conservation areas in the local authority area.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV219b	The percentage of conservation areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	G			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV219c	The percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals.	New Indicator	New Indicator	TBA	R			TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

Ref	Performance Indicator	Performance Data 2004/05	Performance Data 2005/06				Targets					
			Target	Actual	Status (Against Target)	Performance Trend	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
Community Safety Portfolio - Councillor Bob Clark												
BV 126	Domestic Burglaries per 1,000 households	8.72	9.96	TBA	A		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV127a	Violent crime per 1,000 population	Amended Indicator	CDRP	TBA	A		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV127b	Robberies per 1,000 population	Amended Indicator	0.87	TBA	A		↑	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV 128	Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	9.74	CDRP	TBA	A		↓	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV225 (formerly BV176)	An assessment of the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further domestic violence.	New Indicator	CDRP	TBA	A		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
BV198	The number of drug users in treatment per 1,000 aged 15 - 44	New Indicator	CDRP	TBA	A		→	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA