

Appendix A

Draft Corporate Plan: 2008 - 2013

**Stevenage Borough Council: Making a
Difference**

Stevenage Borough Council – Making a Difference: 2008 - 2013

SBC Performance Management Diagram (revised) – to be added

Contents - to be added

Welcome to Stevenage:

Stevenage is situated in pleasant surroundings in the Hertfordshire countryside. In 1946 Stevenage was chosen by the Government to be Britain's first new town. As a new town, Stevenage was carefully planned to create a high quality of life and a thriving community. The pioneering planners recognised that families wanted good quality housing set amongst open spaces with facilities nearby. Industrial, commercial and residential areas are segregated.

The town is particularly strong in the aerospace and pharmaceutical industries. MBDA and EADS Astrium are world leaders and Stevenage was chosen by Glaxo SmithKline as the location for their £700 million European Research Centre.

Stevenage boasts excellent transport links: The town is situated 30 miles north of London off the A1M with easy access to the M25 Orbital. It is on the main London to Edinburgh line with Kings Cross just a twenty minute journey.

The town has grown around a number of residential neighbourhoods, each with a variety of local facilities including shops, schools, community centres and medical facilities.

The pedestrianised town centre has over 250 shops, offices, leisure facilities and an indoor market, and the civic buildings. Interactive kiosks provide information on the town and local services. Plans for major regeneration are well underway.

Residents and visitors to Stevenage enjoy a wide range of cultural and leisure facilities: Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre houses the Gordon Craig Theatre and Boxfield Art Gallery. Stevenage Leisure Park includes a cinema, bowling alley and a range of restaurants, bars and nightclubs. Fairlands Valley Park in the centre of Stevenage is one of the many green spaces in the area.

The Old Town has many pubs and restaurants and dates back to the 12th century. The Old Town is lively and vibrant, but retains much of its old world charm.

You can find out more about the history of Stevenage by visiting the Stevenage museum.

Stevenage has four twin towns: Autun in France, Ingelheim in Germany, Kadoma in Zimbabwe and Shimkent in Kazakhstan.

Message from the Leader of the Council: Sharon Taylor

“Making a Difference” establishes our plans for the future of the town. I am confident that these plans will continue the development of Stevenage as a very special town. We hope all of our community will work with us to achieve this. Everyone can help to make Stevenage “a town we can be proud of, a place people want to be”.

We want to encourage local people to help **shape our community** by improving opportunities to get involved and have a real say in the decisions that affect their lives. We want to make it easier for everyone to find out about their council, talk to their councillors, help develop their local services, and help us tackle the issues that are really important to you.

We have some exciting plans for the Town Centre which many people in the town have contributed to. The **regeneration of Stevenage** will transform shopping in Stevenage, provide homes in the town centre and bring new businesses into Stevenage. The planned expansion of Stevenage to the west of the A1M will provide homes for the town’s growing population and attract new families too.

Stevenage was originally planned around a series of self sufficient neighbourhoods. These now need revitalising. Our Neighbourhood Action Teams, Local Action Meetings and proposals for the Neighbourhood Centres will re-establish them as the focus of local community life.

We want our communities to be places where people want to live and work, now and in the future by making sure that we **create sustainable communities**. Sustainable communities provide decent homes, protect the environment and are safe places with easily accessible community facilities. Not just now but for future generations of Stevenage residents.

We are working in partnership with Stevenage Homes Ltd in order to ensure that every council house in Stevenage meets the government’s Decent Homes standard and to identify where we can provide new affordable homes.

We are committed to SoStevenage, a partnership which brings together those involved in children and young people, healthier communities and older people, safer stronger communities and economic development and the environment

Your views on these plans are important. They will affect everyone who lives, works or studies in Stevenage and those who visit here. Please write, email or phone us with your comments, we would love to hear from you.

Introduction from the Chief Executive: Peter Ollis

Stevenage Borough Council is proud of its record in providing a broad range of high quality services to the Town and its people. We need to be accessible, accountable, effective and efficient while meeting the demands placed on us by Central Government, including those which were published in the Local Government White paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' in October 2006.

This Corporate Plan sets out how the Council will adapt to make sure that we provide value for money services which meet the needs of the community. Our performance and financial data are subject to annual external assessments and inspections by the Audit Commission to make sure that we continue to improve; we currently hold an assessment as a 'Good' Council.

A key to our continued success is effective partnership working. In terms of the community, we will consult with and listen to local people to make sure we know what they want and need from the Council. We will work closely with other agencies so that we can deliver effective and joined-up services – to show our commitment to this, we are part of the county-wide Hertfordshire Pathfinder team, one of only five counties from across the country selected to demonstrate innovative ways of providing more effective local services.

Our Investors in People (IIP) report produced in 2005 assessed that the Council was an organisation which highly values its employees, and strives to make improvements. We are proud of the quality of the people who work for the council and of the commitment they show.

We manage our financial affairs accurately, delivering robust, sustainable and affordable budgets which look five years ahead, and we look after our assets well, ensuring that they are appropriately maintained. We use modern technology and effective channels of communication to support council performance and improve efficiency.

We will work to this Corporate Plan in the coming year to meet our obligations and aspirations to deliver ever better services.

Contact your Councillor: - To be added

Stevenage Borough Council: Making a Difference

Stevenage Borough Council: Making a Difference sets out the Council's approach to meeting the needs of the community. It is the Council's main strategic planning document.

The Council shapes council services and the future of the town by listening to the views of its stakeholders and it has a reputation for providing high quality, value for money services for the community. The Council achieved a 'good' rating from the Audit Commission in their Comprehensive Performance Assessment completed in May 2004.

The Council Mission:

“Council and community working together to improve quality of life”

Under **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**, the Council has a clear role as a community leader as well as the traditional service provider role. We work with local public, private, voluntary and community organisations in **SOstevenage**, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Stevenage to create a better quality of life for the people of Stevenage.

SOstevenage comprises 35 organisations that are providers of key services in the local area and its members 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 **SOstevenage** vision is set out in the town's community strategy, 'Stevenage 2021: Our town – our future', which can be found at:
stevenage.gov.uk/townandcommunity

Stevenage 2021: Our town – our future will contribute to the delivery of the Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement.

Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement

The Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) contains a range of targets, agreed with the government, aimed at improving the performance of public services over three years.

All ten Hertfordshire district councils and Hertfordshire County Council have signed up to the agreement. The countywide LSP, 'Hertfordshire Forward' will coordinate the LAA, but district councils, district LSPs, police, health and a number of voluntary and community organisations will also be involved.

The current LAA agreement runs to March 2009. All areas nationally are required to begin a New LAA to run from 2008-11. This means that the first LAA and the New LAA will run together for one year. Partners have agreed a

new set of indicators and targets with government, based on Hertfordshire Forward's Sustainable Community Strategy. The measures are drawn from the national indicator set and can be found on the Hertfordshire Forward website: hertslink.org/hertfordshireforward

Many of the actions identified in this document will contribute to the delivery of the town's Community Strategy, 'Stevenage 2021: Our town – our future', and countywide priorities identified in the Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement.

The Council's Vision:

'A town we can be proud of, a place people want to be.'

The vision reflects the council's commitment to working with **SStevenage** to create a better quality of life for the people of Stevenage, and to working with the community to make sure that everyone feels valued and is proud of the contribution they make to the town.

The Council's Values:

The Council has adopted a framework of values to ensure that it continues to provide high quality services, and to show its commitment to working in partnership with the community.

The values show the Council's commitment to the community it serves by recognising the importance of:

- ✓ ***Putting people first***
- ✓ ***Delivering value for money*** services, and
- ✓ ***Working together*** both as one organisation and in partnership with other agencies as appropriate.

Monitoring Progress

Progress on the delivery of this strategy will be monitored regularly and reported to Strategic Directors. Annual reports will be published and made available on the Stevenage Borough Council website: www.stevenage.gov.uk

How we make decisions:

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

How we make decisions:

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. Specific matters are reserved for Council decision and these include the Budget and Policy Framework of the authority

Decision Making

Decisions that are not reserved for meetings of all Councillors are taken by either the Council's Executive, headed by the Leader of the Council, or delegated by Council to one of its Committees.

The Council's Constitution also allows for some decisions to be taken by Officers

The Executive

The Executive meets on a monthly basis and comprises of the Leader of the Council, an Opposition Member and 7 other Councillors from the majority group who have a specific area of responsibility, or portfolio. The portfolios areas are –

- › Housing
- › Community Health and Older People
- › Children and Young People, Culture, Sport and Leisure
- › Economy, Enterprise and Transport
- › Resources
- › Safer and Stronger Communities
- › Environment and Regeneration

Collectively the Executive take 'Key Decisions' as defined in the Council's Constitution. A 'Key Decision' may be defined generally as one involving significant expenditure (or saving) or is significant in terms of affecting the community.

Individual Executive Members with portfolios may take 'Non-Key Decisions' relating to their specific area of responsibility. The Executive may also delegate decisions to Officers of the Council.

Council Committees

Other decisions are delegated by Council to its series of Committees, as follows -

Scrutiny Overview Committee

The Council established a Scrutiny Overview Committee to meet the requirements set out in the Local Government Act 2000. All decisions taken by the Executive are submitted to this Committee which may choose to review a decision and pass on comments to the Executive, or call a decision in for further consideration by the Executive.

In addition to scrutinising decisions, the Scrutiny Overview Committee and its scrutiny topic groups may, as policy development work, pre-scrutinise proposals for future policies and services prior to Council or Executive taking any decisions.

Regulatory Committees

The regulatory Committees of the Council include the Planning & Development Committee, the Licensing Committee and the General Purposes Committee

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 decisions about issues and projects within their area.

Standards Committee

The Standards Committee comprises Councillors and non-elected Members, one of whom serves as Chair. This Committee is responsible for the implementation of the new Code of Conduct for Councillors published in July 2007, which sets out the standards of ethics and probity to be followed by all Councillors.

Audit Committee and Statement of Accounts Committee

The Audit Committee is an Advisory Committee of the Council which also has a non-elected Member serving alongside Councillors, considers the financial probity of the Council. The Statement of Accounts Committee meets just once a year to consider the previous year's accounts and is asked to approve them on behalf of Council.

Stevenage/Herts. County Council (HCC) Highways Joint Member Panel

This Panel comprises the 6 County Councillors for Stevenage, together with a Councillor from each of the Area Committees and may offer advice and make recommendations to the Hertfordshire Highways Unit of HCC.

Our Ambitions and Priorities

Our ambitions and priorities have been determined by analysing:

- The Local Government White Paper: Strong and Prosperous Communities published in October 2006
- Presentations from leading experts on the future of local government
- Results of community consultation, surveys and focus groups
- Local data and demographics

Member seminars and officer workshops and away days were carried out to link the resulting information to national, regional and countywide priorities and the Council's capacity and resources to deliver.

During 2006 Ipsos MORI carried out a postal survey of residents aged 18+ across the town. Over 1,200 surveys were completed and returned. Overall 61% of residents are satisfied with the way Stevenage Borough Council runs things. This is the second highest rating in the whole of Hertfordshire, an excellent result.

The following paragraphs show how the views expressed in this survey have helped to shape the Council's ambitions and priorities:

60% of respondents felt that we keep you informed placing us top in Hertfordshire. It is important that we continue to provide you with quality information about how to access our services, our performance and how to get involved in decision making.

**Ambition – Shape our Community:
Priorities:**

Encourage community involvement
Bring communities together
Improve the image of Stevenage

The Council welcomes your involvement in local decision-making – Your views help us to understand and meet your needs. Only 32% of you were satisfied with opportunities to participate in local decision making, so we aim to encourage your involvement and make sure that everyone in our communities feels valued.

Stevenage is located in the London – Stansted – Cambridge – Peterborough Growth Area and the town has been designated a “Key Centre for Development and Change” in the draft East of England Plan and, as such, is designated to deliver 16,000 new dwellings in the period 2001 – 2021.

**Ambition: Regenerate Stevenage
Priorities:**

Have a growing town and economy
Develop a modern, vibrant town centre
Revitalise Neighbourhood Centres

The East of England Plan also sets a new jobs growth target for Stevenage and the surrounding area of 18,000.

Regenerating the town centre will help put Stevenage back on the map as a modern centre for shopping and leisure. Over 6,500 people visited the public exhibition for the regeneration of the town centre held by Stanhope plc in March 2007. As a result of comments received, new plans have been developed. More information is available at: stevenageregeneration.org

The majority of Stevenage residents (70%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. The top priorities for improvement 'in your area' included activities for teenagers, and crime levels, but you also told us that the levels of affordable decent housing and cleanliness of streets needs improving.

We want to create sustainable communities with priorities that reflect what you have told us needs improving and signal our continued commitment to resolving local issues.

Ambition: Create Sustainable Communities

Priorities:

Provide quality affordable housing

Keep the town safe

Maintain a clean and green environment

Focus on neighbourhoods

Help provide leisure and health services

Stevenage Borough Council aims for excellence across the entire organisation. We want the Council to be accessible, accountable, effective and efficient in order to provide value for money services.

Ambition: Move towards Excellence

Priorities:

Support and develop our people

Promote Equality

Maintain customer focus

Use resources effectively

Ambition	Priorities
Shape our Community	Encourage Community Involvement
	Bring Communities Together
	Improve the image of Stevenage
Regenerate Stevenage	Have a growing town and economy
	Develop a modern, vibrant town centre
	Revitalise Neighbourhood Centres
Create Sustainable Communities	Provide quality, affordable housing
	Keep the town safe
	Focus on neighbourhoods
	Maintain a clean and green environment
	Help provide leisure and health services
Move towards Excellence	Use resources effectively
	Maintain customer focus
	Promote equality
	Support and develop our people

Ambition – Shape our Community:

The government places great importance on consultation and participation. We are committed to seeking the views of local people and to giving local people a real say in the decisions that affect their lives. We want all members of the community to have a voice and contribute to shaping and developing local services. Together we can make sure that everyone in our communities feels valued and is proud of the contribution they make to the town.

We want to make sure that the community is kept informed about council services, performance, events, and ways to become involved. Stevenage is a great place to be and the community's involvement will continue to bring about change, improve our town, and improve quality of life for everyone who lives in or visits our town.

We will continue to promote the town and the positive community contribution being made by our citizens.

Priorities:

Encourage community involvement

Bring communities together

Improve the image of Stevenage

(Use appropriate Case Study demonstration)

Priority: Encourage Community Involvement

The Council needs communities to be involved in local decision-making and the delivery of services in order to understand and meet local needs. We want to make sure that people can have a say, know how to get involved and understand the difference they can make.

By getting involved people can:

- Make sure that decisions reflect the opinions of the community
- Build skills and confidence and take a leading role on community groups
- Ensure robust public accountability by bringing together representatives from community groups
- Help us to improve and increase opportunities to become involved.

The Council has a participation strategy that sets out to improve engagement, increase involvement opportunities and encourage debate. The strategy follows four principles:

1. Inform
2. Consult
3. Involve
4. Devolve

We aim to develop a more systematic and effective approach to participation and community engagement and plan to use innovative approaches, recognising that a 'one size fits all approach' does not always work.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Investigate new technologies to improve opportunities to participate (such as online forums and blogs)
- Use our readers' panel to get feedback from local people about how we can improve our publications
- Use the results from our neighbourhood conference to inform priorities and shape local service delivery, and improve quality of life
- Use the LAA Toolkit – 'Engage' to introduce new approaches to community participation

What is 'Engage'?

Engage is a toolkit of ideas designed to help council officers, elected members, and communities in Hertfordshire make sure that community engagement informs meaningful and useful outcomes

Our future plans

- Run an annual neighbourhood conference to inform local priorities
- Develop residents' groups enabling them to be community led and able to champion local issues
- Pilot a 'local area panel' scheme with responsibility for monitoring services delivered at neighbourhood level
- Develop on-line forums and surgeries

Measuring our success:

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
NI3	Percentage of residents surveyed who have taken part in one of a range of civic activities in the last 12 months.	15%	15%	16%
NI4	Percentage of residents surveyed who believe that they can influence decisions affecting their local area	35%	36%	37%

Priority: Bring Communities Together:

As a community leader, the Council should represent all of the town's communities and encourage people to get on well together. This can only be achieved by working with the communities themselves and [SOstevenage](#).

In our 2006 / 2007 town-wide survey 78% of residents felt that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their area. This is a good start, but we can improve on this through effective communications.

What is community cohesion?

- There is a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities;
- The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued;
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

Source: Home Office, Building a Picture of Community Cohesion (2003)

We want Stevenage to have a reputation for community cohesion. We need to use our publications and the media to promote the many positive contributions that people from different communities make to Stevenage. It is important that our communications encourage everyone to access our services. Poor communications can exclude certain groups and individuals.

In recognising differences, it is important that everyone is given the same opportunities and treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, disability, age, religion or sexuality. We will use customer profiling to understand our customers, their preferences and shape services accordingly.

What is customer profiling?

Customer profiling provides us with an insight into who our customers are and what their preferences are.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Recognise achievements of local people and their commitment to Stevenage:
 - Through an annual awards scheme
 - By using positive publicity

- Promote understanding of different cultures through events such as the Black History Month, Holocaust Memorial Day, International Women's Day, Celebrate and Stevenage Day
- Expand the Upfront project which encourages Children to stay active and brings together young people from different communities

Our future plans

- Use technology such as online debates to bring people together
- Follow the principles in the participation strategy to try out new approaches to consultation so that we positively and actively engage with different community groups
- Inform and assist people from different communities to improve their access to services.
- Work with Community Groups to encourage them to play a more active role in the town.
- Use customer profiling to understand our customers, their preferences and target our communications

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2009/10	3 year target	5 year target
NI1	Percentage of residents surveyed who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	78%	78%	80%

Priority: Improve the image of Stevenage

It is a very exciting time for Stevenage. For example, we are negotiating for a multi-million pound town centre project, new homes, investment in neighbourhoods and lots more. Increasingly the spotlight is on Stevenage for all the right reasons.

We have a responsibility to promote Stevenage, and enhance and maintain its reputation. The town has a lot to be proud of and we need to communicate this to the people of Stevenage and beyond.

Positive perceptions about the town help attract investment and create opportunities for Stevenage. If local people have positive perceptions about Stevenage this can improve their own aspirations. If they have a sense of pride in their town they become advocates for Stevenage.

We support **SOstevenage** in telling local people about their vision 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.'

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Increase positive media coverage about the town
- Create new promotional material about the town
- Publish local people's achievements using case studies in 'Chronicle'

Our future plans

- Use local role models and celebrities as advocates of Stevenage
- Encourage businesses and schools to promote their achievements
- Tell people how they can get involved in looking after their neighbourhoods.

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
IIS1	Advocacy rate (Residents' Survey) 45% (QOL Survey 2007)	30%	31%	32%

Local Government Association Reputation Project:

We signed up to the Local Government Association's Reputation Project in 2006.

It's our commitment to

- Telling you about what we do, the decisions we make and how we respond to your needs
- Improving your local environment.

Ambition: Regenerate Stevenage

Stevenage is proud of its history of providing families with homes and jobs. To make sure this continues we need a stronger economy and more homes, and to put Stevenage at the forefront of the Government's economic and housing growth plans for the East of England.

By 2021 we want Stevenage to be a city of regional importance with over 16,000 new homes and 18,000 new jobs in the area.

Employment and housing growth will go hand in hand with physical, social and economic regeneration to improve quality of life.

We are developing ambitious plans for regenerating Stevenage, including the comprehensive regeneration of the town centre and proposals to develop the neighbourhood centres as the focus of local commercial and community life. To achieve this, we are working in partnership with a number of stakeholders and other organisations. These include Stanhope plc and ING Real Estate, our development partners in the town centre as well as English Partnerships, Hertfordshire County Council, the voluntary sector, the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses

Priorities:

Have a growing town and economy
Develop a modern, vibrant town centre
Revitalise Neighbourhood Centres

(Use appropriate Case Study demonstration)

Priority: Have a growing town and economy

The demand for housing in Stevenage is far greater than the number of houses currently available. The town also has a limited number of sites for development.

Stevenage is located in the London – Stansted – Cambridge – Peterborough Growth Area and the town has been designated a “Key Centre for Development and Change” in the draft East of England Plan and, as such, is designated to deliver 16,000 new dwellings in the period 2001 – 2021.

The vast majority of this growth is expected to come forward through the development of sustainable urban extensions to the west and north of the existing town. Sustainable communities provide decent homes, protect the environment, are safe and have access to community facilities. ‘Create sustainable communities’ is one of our ambitions.

The East of England Plan also sets a new jobs growth target for Stevenage and the surrounding area of 18,000. The Council works in partnership with other agencies to increase skill levels and employment opportunities and with developers and landowners to attract new businesses to Stevenage.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Consult upon the Council’s preferred options for the future growth of Stevenage to the north and west of the town
- Open Phase II of the Business and Technology Centre which will provide around 30,000 square feet of much needed and high quality accommodation for the town’s growing small businesses
- Agree a strategy to achieve the job growth targets in the East of England Plan through the development of a strong and diverse economy which supports the growth of key economic sectors, such as aerospace and pharmaceuticals, and also promotes and encourages inward investment and enterprise
- Continue to support activities to develop the links between education, research and business, support activities to promote environmentally friendly practices, and support the activities of the emerging business forum, the Pin Green Business Partnership and the Gunnels Wood Initiative
- Prepare the “Core Strategy”, an important planning document that reflects the vision for Stevenage to 2021 and includes policies to determine planning applications

Our future plans

- To further develop the business support services available to small and growing businesses
- Develop a strategy to promote the town's image and identity, as we develop the town centre, the neighbourhoods and build a new residential neighbourhood to the west of Stevenage
- Adopt the "Core Strategy" and other documents in the Local Development Framework to formally agree the growth for Stevenage to 2021 as well as policies to determine planning applications
- Ensure the provision of at least 16,000 new homes by 2021 in accordance with the approved trajectory

What is the Local Development Framework?

The Local Development Framework (or LDF) is a series of town planning documents produced by the council that together set out the development 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 xx)

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 development 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

Measuring our success:

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
GTE1	Percentage of residents who think that for their local area, over the past three years, job prospects have got better (QOL Survey 2007 – 10%)	10%	15%	20%
NI154	Net additional homes provided each year	263	405	690

Priority: Develop a modern, vibrant town centre

To improve the quality of the town centre the Council is driving forward a major redevelopment programme in partnership with ING Real Estate, Stanhope plc and English Partnerships. We need to have the right blend of quality shops, leisure facilities, transport infrastructure, homes and public spaces to encourage a thriving town centre economy. An important part of the plans include the major investment we are making in the town centre gardens to improve this important asset for the residents of Bedwell and users of the town centre.

Regenerating the town centre will help put Stevenage back on the map as a modern, major centre for shopping and leisure within the region.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Determine the outline planning application for the regeneration of Stevenage town centre (including new shops, a department store, a new museum and library, new bus station, new homes, and high quality streets and spaces)
- Continue to work with our preferred developers and English Partnerships to progress the town centre regeneration scheme and work up the detailed plans
- Sign the Development Agreement with the preferred developers, "Stevenage Regeneration Ltd"
- With our partners and the local community, continue the work to improve the Town Centre Gardens and submit our detailed plans to the Heritage Lottery Fund for approval to complete the scheme

Our future plans

- Agree the final plans for the town centre regeneration scheme and commence construction before the end of the decade
- Commence work on the second phase of the improvements to the Town Centre Gardens and achieve a Green Flag, the national standard for parks and green spaces

Measuring our success:

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
TC1	Percentage of shoppers who think the town centre has improved (Annual shopper survey: Town centre management company)	60%	50%*	90%

* - the 3 year target is lower in anticipation of lower levels of satisfaction during the construction of the new town centre

Priority: Revitalise Neighbourhood Centres

Stevenage New Town was originally planned around six residential neighbourhoods. Each neighbourhood was designed to become self sufficient, providing their own schools, health facilities, place of worship, shops and community facilities. There are 22 designated neighbourhood centres in Stevenage. With the planned regeneration of the town centre and the potential to develop new neighbourhoods on the edges of the town, the Council believes that it is essential to concentrate on the long term future viability and vitality of these neighbourhood centres to maintain the intrinsic sustainable nature of the original new town. The Council's ambition to create sustainable communities is explained on page xx). Throughout 2007 the Council has undertaken a Neighbourhood Centres "Investment and Renewal Strategy" that will establish our vision and plans for each of the centres.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Agree the strategy for the renewal of the Neighbourhood Centres, including proposals for the shops, local community services and homes
- Prepare the plans for the implementation of the first phase of the investment and renewal strategy
- Continue a programme of environmental improvements to the Neighbourhood Centres, including work to improve shop fronts.

Our future plans

- Commence work on the first construction phase of the investment and renewal strategy.

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
NC1	Percentage of residents surveyed who feel their neighbourhood has got better over the past two years	11%	11%	15%

Ambition – Create Sustainable Communities:

The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) describe a sustainable community as a place where people want to live and work, now and in the future.

Sustainable communities provide decent homes, protect the environment, are safe and have access to community facilities.

The Department for Communities and Local Government state that Sustainable Communities should be:

- Active, inclusive and safe – fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture
- Well run – with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership
- Environmentally sensitive – providing places to live that are considerate of the environment
- Well designed and built – featuring a quality built and natural environment
- Well connected – with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services
- Thriving – with a flourishing and diverse local economy
- Well served – with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all
- Fair for everyone – including those in other communities, now and in the future.

Priorities:

Provide quality affordable housing

Keep the town safe

Maintain a clean and green environment

Focus on neighbourhoods

Help provide leisure and health facilities

Priority: Provide quality, affordable housing

The Government's Green Paper – 'Homes for the Future: more affordable, more sustainable' published on 23 July 2007 sets out the role of Local Authorities as strategic housing enablers for affordable housing; key influencers in decisions and as having a direct role in the building of new homes where it provides value for money.

The Council's Affordable Housing Strategy sets out our vision for affordable housing and demonstrates our commitment for more affordable homes in Stevenage. It outlines three key areas for our work:

- Meeting housing needs and dealing with homelessness
- Understanding local housing markets and maximising resources to meet housing need
- Encouraging a fair and inclusive community.

Affordable Housing:

Housing provided with financial support, both for rent and low cost market housing. Affordable housing is for people who are unable to get a home in the local private sector housing market because of housing costs and income.

Social Rented Housing:

(Also known as Affordable Rented)

Affordable social housing for rent is the most needed form of housing in the town. Rented accommodation requires the greatest amount of public money to make the rents charged by housing associations and councils cheaper than private rents.

Shared Ownership Housing:

Housing that is part owned by the purchaser and part owned by a housing association. The occupier purchases a proportion of a property's value and pays a rent to cover the share in the property owned by the housing association. This type of affordable housing requires some public money to make the rent costs cheaper.

The town is set to grow through a number of major developments. By making sure we provide a mix of different housing types we will help to create balanced, sustainable communities where people want to be.

Since the introduction of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, central government has increasingly encouraged local authorities to become more proactive in tackling homelessness.

Relatively modest investment in homeless prevention initiatives has saved the Council substantial long term savings. An example is avoiding the need to use bed and breakfast accommodation.

The spend to save principle is an important component of the homelessness prevention ethos.

Preventing Homelessness:

Intervention is carried out through in-depth casework to support the Homelessness Service in preventing homelessness. The need for temporary accommodation is reduced through direct intervention including:

- An advocacy service
- Provision of comprehensive advice on welfare benefits, Housing Law, immigration law, homelessness law and debt management, and
- Defending possession proceedings.

The Service explores housing options and alternatives to making a homeless application and works closely with the private rented sector.

Decent Homes Standard

The Government has set a standard for all social housing – the Decent Homes Standard. The Council has until 2010 to comply.

As the Council does not have the necessary financial resources to meet the Decent Homes Standard, the Council, following the extensive consultation with its tenants and leaseholders decided to set up Stevenage Homes Ltd (SHL) an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) in October 2006.

The Council is committed to working in partnership with Stevenage Homes Ltd to ensure it achieves a 2 star rating from the Audit Commission in order to release money from the Government to assist in delivering the Decent Homes programme

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Begin development of energy efficient affordable housing on two small Council sites
- Analyse and report on house prices, affordability, private sector rents and local area demand through the use of IT housing analysis systems such as 'Hometrack'
- Finalise and agree affordable housing strategy with the Town Centre developers
- Ensure that Stevenage has its own Homelessness Strategy that adopts a multi-agency approach to homeless prevention and support
- Explore and develop a full strategic approach that removes future use of shared facility temporary accommodation

- Continue to work with The Haven to provide further move-on accommodation to free up much needed emergency bed spaces for single homeless households.
- Establish and implement the Council's Decent Homes Programme in line with Department for Communities and Local Government timescales.

Our future plans

- Reduce the use of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010.
- Ensure that of the 150 affordable homes delivered each year, 80% are social rented and 20% are other affordable tenures.

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
NI160	Percentage of tenants who are satisfied with the overall housing service provided by the Council	85%	91%	To be set
New NI 155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	150	150	150
New NI 158	Percentage decent council homes	54%	To be set	To be set

Priority: Keep the town safe:

We are committed to making Stevenage a safer town. We want to improve feelings of safety by reassuring citizens and building respect in communities.

We will work with the Stevenage Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime and anti social behaviour, and the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol.

What is the Stevenage Community Safety Partnership ?



Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, it is a requirement that each local authority area in England and Wales has a crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP). The CDRP for Stevenage is referred to as the Stevenage Community Safety Partnership and consists of a number of statutory agencies who have a collective duty to reduce crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, drug, alcohol and substance abuse and to tackle behaviour which has an adverse impact on the environment.

National Standards

The Government introduced a framework of regulations known as National Standards in August 2007, which set out clearly understood minimum standards for the way that CDRPs operate in supporting the creation of safer communities.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Ensure that the Stevenage Community Safety Partnership complies with identified national standards

- Publish a community safety strategy on behalf of the Stevenage Community Safety Partnership.

- Work in partnership with the National Probation Service to implement a community pay back scheme to allow offenders who have been given community orders by the courts the chance to repay those communities that they have offended

Community Safety Strategy Priorities:

- Reduce violent and serious violent crime
- Reduce robbery, burglary, motor vehicle crime and theft
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Reduce criminal damage
- Reduce re-offending
- Improve feelings of safety particularly at night
- Tackle drug and alcohol related crime and its impact on communities.

Our future plans

- Develop our approach to consulting and communicating with Stevenage residents to reinforce the message that Stevenage continues to be a safe place to live
- Improve the effectiveness of our approach to tackling anti-social behaviour through joint working with the Police and Stevenage Homes and other housing providers
- Coordinate approaches to tackling violent crime; particularly hate crime and domestic violence.

Measuring our success:

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
KTS1	Percentage of residents surveyed who feel safe in the day	92%	92%	92%
KTS2	Percentage of residents surveyed who feel safe after dark	51%	53%	55%

Priority: Maintain a clean and green environment:

We want to create and maintain clean, green and biodiverse neighbourhoods and encourage communities to take an active part in managing their own environment. We will encourage residents to reduce, re-use and recycle domestic waste, and we will regenerate our green spaces and playing fields.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Develop environmental enforcement activity to tackle enviro-crime including, flytipping, fly posting, littering, graffiti and abandoned vehicles
- Work in partnership with the police and other enforcement agencies to organise targeted campaigns and environmental action days
- Develop and promote household waste recycling services in line with the revised County and National Waste Strategies and the targets contained within the Hertfordshire LAA
- Develop a Green Space Strategy for the future supply, management and maintenance of parks, playing fields and open spaces and prepare management plans for the parks of the town
- Work in partnership with Groundwork Hertfordshire to develop and implement local landscape improvement projects in partnership with local communities
- Build a new replacement sports pavilion in Shephalbury Park
- Carry out essential repair and improvement works at the Fairlands Valley sailing lake
- Implement a phased programme of improvements to the 15 allotment sites across the town.
- Continue supporting Employers for the Environment, a business led group helping businesses in Stevenage to lower their environmental impact

Our future plans

- Consider the options available for renewing the sports pavilion at Hampson Park
- Secure a £1.77 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to regenerate the Town Centre gardens
- Continue to develop new and improved

Employers for the Environment

Employers for the Environment is a business led group that shares information and develops solutions to allow businesses to lower their ecological footprint. Solutions have included paper and cardboard recycling and a workspace materials exchange service for the East of England known as Eastex. (eastex.org.uk)

The group has a mixture of public and private organisations which establish policy for the group.

Current Group establishing policy:
GSK, Fujitsu, Herts Chamber of Commerce and Industry
AVC, Stevenage Borough Council,
Hertfordshire County Council

recycling and waste collection services in line with the National and County waste strategies and encourage greater participation in recycling and waste reduction initiatives.

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
MCG1	Percentage of residents surveyed satisfied with parks and open spaces in the town	85%	86%	87%
MCG 2	Percentage of residents surveyed satisfied with the cleanliness of streets	75%	77%	80%
MCG 3	Percentage of residents surveyed satisfied with the household waste collection service	85%	85%	85%
MCG 4	Percentage of residents surveyed satisfied with the recycling service	77%	80%	80%

Priority: Focus on Neighbourhoods

The Local Government White Paper “Strong and Prosperous Communities” published in October 2006 includes a range of proposals on the role of local authorities. One of the key themes running through the White Paper is the role that communities have in the design, running and monitoring of council services. This continues the recent drive by Government for public agencies to be more visible and responsive at the neighbourhood level. In line with the Local Government White Paper, we want our neighbourhoods to be fit for purpose and reflect local dynamics, recognising that a successful, sustainable neighbourhood will:

- be clean and well cared for by the community and the Council;
- feel safe to live in and move around;
- contain community facilities and activities that cater for the needs of its community; whether young, old or with special or particular needs and interests;
- have local people who take responsibility for their own lives and those of their families; and
- have lively and challenging community organisations who work independently on behalf of local people.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Use area based profiles to inform local priorities for neighbourhood action plans

What is an area based profile?

The Council uses information captured on local area population, health, education and access to services to demonstrate quality of life in each area of Stevenage.

What is a Neighbourhood Action Plan?

Neighbourhood Action Plans will consist of actions to address key local issues and will be informed by:

- Issues identified at area committees
- Local priorities established at the neighbourhood conference
- Local area profiles

- Develop neighbourhood action teams who will work in partnership to resolve local issues and deliver the neighbourhood action plans
- Pilot a ‘local area panel’ scheme with responsibility for monitoring services delivered at neighbourhood level
- Provide a rapid response service that responds swiftly to cases of environmental anti-social behaviour. This will help to keep the town safe and maintain a clean and green environment.

Our future plans

- Review effectiveness of neighbourhood action plans, and adjust and improve as necessary
- Assess how well the pilot local area panels are working and consider roll out to other areas but recognise that 'one size does not fit all'
- Use national guidance to further develop the role of Ward Councillors and build on their relationship with local communities

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
NI 2	Percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	65%	70%	75%

Priority: Help provide leisure and health services:

Stevenage has a varied range of sporting and leisure facilities, which include three leisure centres, a state-of-the-art fitness studio, swimming pool and an 18-hole premier golf course all managed by Stevenage Leisure Limited. Other facilities include Stevenage Borough Football Academy, Marriotts Gymnastics Centre and Ridlins Athletics Track.

Sport Stevenage has established itself as the Community Sports Network for the area served by Stevenage Borough Council. Sport Stevenage was established in 2006 as a body bringing together a number of organisations in the borough of Stevenage who represent or have an interest in sport.

Stevenage Borough Council has established strong links with the Primary Care Trust, voluntary groups and other authorities to introduce and develop initiatives to improve the health of our communities. We have a proactive team within the Council that targets projects at the aspects of health that particularly affect Stevenage.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Use Chronicle and the website to promote Sport and active recreation in Stevenage
- Work with partners to develop Community Sport Coaches in sports that are in demand and/or need greater development
- Continue to work in partnership to deliver the Crucial Crew initiative.

What is Crucial Crew Initiative?

This is an interactive education and training scheme involving 32 schools and over 1,600 Year 6 children. It aims to raise awareness on various topics including health and road safety, personal safety and drug awareness

- Following the successful implementation of “Smokefree England” we will continue our involvement in smoking cessation programmes including No Smoking Day promotions across the town
- Hold a further free Health Action Day promoting awareness of health and lifestyle issues. These events include active demonstrations plus sports taster sessions, stalls with advice and leaflets, and onsite testing for health issues from blood pressure to hearing
- Continue to develop the “Keep Well Stay Active” events for older residents. These will feature gentle exercise programmes, chiropody sessions, falls prevention advice such as the “sloppy slipper” campaign, and electric blanket testing

- Develop and implement an 'Eat Clever' programme to help young families make healthier food choices and help reduce obesity.

Our future plans

- Work with the Primary Care Trust to bring health services closer to patients
- Improve the Fairlands Valley Paddling Pool facility
- Submit a bid to host a training camp as part of Hertfordshire's 2012 consortium for National Olympic Committees
- Expand our "Mission: Possible" food hygiene project with junior schools. This is an imaginative interactive programme designed to raise awareness about food safety
- Work with junior and senior schools promoting non-involvement with drugs, tobacco, alcohol and substance abuse through an initiative called Global Rock.

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
LCCS3	Number of people participating in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport and physical activity at least three times per week	37841	38425	39001
LCCS7	Percentage of child customers satisfied with play services offered	90%	90%	90%

Ambition: Move towards Excellence:

Stevenage Borough Council aims for excellence across all of the organisation. The Council is committed to delivering excellent services that respond to the needs of the community with the resources that are available.

We want the Council to be accessible, accountable, effective and efficient in order to provide value for money services.

The priorities that follow set out our programme for organisational improvement to strengthen our internal processes and ensure that we are able to respond to the views of our stakeholders.

Priorities:

- **Support and develop our people**
Our staff are the key to organisational improvement.

- **Promote Equality**
We are committed to making sure that our services and employment practices reflect the highest possible standards of equality.

- **Maintain customer focus**
It is important for the Council to maintain up to date information about our customers and performance in order to use resources effectively.

- **Use resources effectively**
We are committed to managing resources effectively to achieve our ambitions and priorities.

Priority - Support and develop our people:

We can only achieve our vision for Stevenage with the support of a multi-skilled and flexible workforce. Our staff are the key to organisational improvement. We can achieve 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

We want our employees to feel valued and be proud to work for the Council.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- Develop a people strategy that sets out how we will achieve a flexible, capable and committed workforce whose performance is managed and rewarded and who know how what they do makes a difference to the people and the town of Stevenage.
- Develop a workforce plan that maps out the current skills, and capability of our employees and identifies what skills and capability we will need in the future and how we intend to close any gaps.
- Continue to be recognised as an Investor in People.
- Implement a new pay and grading system that is equal pay proof and affordable.
- Implement a competency framework across the Council that will integrate selection, development and the performance management of our staff.

Member Development Charter:

On the 13th February 2008 the Leaders of the Political Groups and the Chief Executive formally signed up to the IDeA Member Development Charter. In so doing, Stevenage Borough Council has given a firm commitment to investing in the development of its Members. The Charter provides a framework for the effective delivery of Member learning and development.

Our future plans

- Develop our staff and improve our ways of working to deliver better services for our customers
- Continue to develop creative and ambitious leadership that uses political and managerial roles effectively
- Develop our employees' skills and knowledge to improve performance
- Take action to keep excellent staff by developing talent and recognising achievement
- Recruit outstanding new employees by promoting career opportunities effectively so that we become an employer of choice
- Pay and Rewards: Continue to modernise our pay system to reflect new structures, priorities and new ways of working, to reinforce high performance.

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
	Percentage of staff who feel valued	68%	70%	73%
	Percentage of staff who feel trained to do their job	70%	75%	80%

Priority – Promote Equality

Every person is different and therefore should be treated as an individual. We can do more to meet the needs of everyone in our community to provide the best possible services. We want to make sure we continue to be a fair organisation, which values difference and gives people equal opportunities. We also aim to be fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory as an employer and are committed to making sure that our services and employment practices reflect the highest possible equality standards.

A new Generic Equality Scheme ‘Making a Difference’ sets out our plans in six equality areas:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender
- Religion and belief
- Age
- Sexual orientation

We are committed to achieving level 5 (the highest level) of the Local Government Equality Standard. We recognise its value as a performance managed approach to equality improvement that gives us a framework to mainstream equality and deliver improvements. At level 5 of the standard the emphasis is on real outcomes in service delivery that make a real difference to the community.

We have a plan for achieving the various levels and clear leadership and commitment to make it happen.

Some important steps have already been taken to make it happen. We have:

- Published the generic equality scheme ‘*Making a difference*’
- Developed a participation strategy that will help bring communities together
- Completed more than 30 Equality Impact Assessments of services and policies

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

- A new programme of training and awareness for staff and members
- Positive engagement with different community groups using tools in the participation strategy
- A new contract for the provision of translation services in partnership with Stevenage Homes Limited
- Implementation of the Generic Equality Scheme action plan
- A peer assessment to determine progress against the Equality Standard

- A positive external assessment to confirm achievement of Level 3: Equality Standard

Our future plans

- To mainstream equalities throughout organisation and clearly demonstrate this in service plans
- To continue a rolling programme of equality impact assessments – over the next 3 years
- To achieve Level 4 of the Equality Standard by March 2011
- To achieve Level 5 of the Equality Standard by March 2012

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
NI 140	The percentage of respondents who report that they are unfairly treated either at work, at school or college, when using public transport, or when using health services	25%	25%	25%
	Level of Equalities standard	3	4	5

Priority – Maintain customer focus:

We are committed to putting our customers first and providing quality services for all our customers. This means services that are tailored to the needs of the many different groups of people that make up our communities. It also means services with published standards so customers know what to expect and can judge whether they have received good service or not

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009**Customer service centre (CSC)**

- Implement the recommendations of the review of the Customer Service Centre aimed at improving service levels

Customer Service Standards

- Re-publish current service standards and check that processes are in place to deliver service standards and monitor performance from 1st April 2008
- Publish performance against service standards in October 2008 (to include the number of complaints)

Customer Complaints

- Review the customer complaints process and implement new arrangements in 2008/09.
- Analyse complaints by October 2008 and use the information to improve service delivery

Customer profiling

- Use and develop existing databases containing socio-economic information about Stevenage to provide the information to support better targeting and tailoring of services for specific community groups

First Contact resolution

- Record and analyse information about the number of contacts there are with a customer prior to the service being delivered or the problem solved

Our future plans

Customer Service Standards

- Revise service standards for 2009 and 2010 based on consultation with customers
- Revise processes in consultation with customers

Customer profiling

- Develop and implement a programme that enables us to target specific community groups with services tailored to their needs

First Contact resolution

- Set targets for first contact resolution by service area

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
NI 14	First contact resolution – resolution of customer requests at the first interaction in a range of key services	60%	30%	20%

Priority – Use resources effectively:

We can assist in the achievement of our ambitions for Stevenage by managing our resources well. To do this we need to ensure that:

- A balanced budget is achieved and maintained in a way that is sustainable
- We actively encourage a performance management culture
- Best Value is obtained through planned and skilful procurement in respect of all goods, works and services
- Risk is effectively managed to enhance our ability to safeguard the Council's assets and reputation
- Environmental sustainability principles inform policy and service delivery at all levels
- Service processes are effectively re-designed to maximise benefits from applying new technologies and drive efficiencies across the organisation
- The Council's property assets are best used to support the delivery of services
- The Council exploits opportunities through the Pathfinder project

High quality data is required to produce reliable performance and financial information that can support decision making. The Council is committed to continual improvement of data quality management in the organisation and in partnership with others.

What we want to achieve in 2008 and 2009

The following projects have been identified to support the delivery of this priority.

- **Financial Strategy** – The Council must adopt an updated financial strategy, which with a robust medium term financial planning process, will help the Council break out of the current annual cycle of savings exercises and help produce a clear, robust, sustainable and affordable budget.
- **Capital Strategy** – The Council must adopt a balanced Capital Strategy that ensures our assets are appropriately maintained and can support the achievement of our wider ambitions
- **Business Improvement** - A number of cross cutting business improvement projects will be carried out to deliver efficiencies and savings. The projects are medium term and will deliver savings in the 2008 to 2009 and 2009 to 2010 budgets.
- **ICT Strategy** - The ICT strategy will focus upon delivering different types of technology across the organisation to enable improved council

performance and improved efficiency. The strategy focuses, in particular, upon mobile technology, electronic document and records management, improved web services, improved and automated performance information and integration between systems.

- **Performance Measurement** - Enhance the system of corporate performance monitoring.
- **Data Quality** – Develop a data quality training programme for relevant staff.
- **Value for Money** – The Council will further develop the understanding of unit and transactional costs across key services as they relate to customer satisfaction levels.

Our future plans

- **Environmental sustainability** – Develop a methodology for producing an annual carbon footprint statement for the Council. Begin addressing the key actions identified in our Climate Change Strategy.
- **Asset Management** – Rationalise our operational and non-operational assets in order to release funding for re-investment.
- **Shared Services** – Through the Pathfinder and the Council’s Competitiveness and Competition Strategy, identify opportunities for shared service provision.
- **ICT Strategy** - Complete the implementation of a five year Information and Communication Technology Strategy.
- **Data Quality** – Strengthen performance information systems to prevent data error.

Measuring our success

Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
Local	Use of Resources overall level achieved	3	3	4
Local	Financial reporting (UoR theme 1 score)	2	3	3
Local	Financial management (UoR theme 2 score)	3	3	4
Local	Financial standing (UoR theme 3 score)	3	4	4
Local	Internal control (UoR theme 3 score)	4	4	4
Local	Value for money (UoR theme 4 score)	3	3	3

Our Progress Measures:

Our progress measures will be monitored throughout the life of this strategy to make sure that we are on track to deliver against our ambitions and priorities.

Ambition – Shape our Community:

Priority: Encourage Community Involvement:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
ECl a	Number of people participating in corporate consultation exercises	1,350	1,370	1,400
ECl c	Percentage of particular minority groups participating in consultation:			
	Black and Minority Ethnic Communities	8%	8%	8%
	People with a disability	17%	17%	17%
	Young people aged 11-16 years	10%	10%	10%
	Young adults aged 16-24 years	10%	10%	10%
Priority: Bring Communities Together:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
BCT1	Number of events held that enable various communities to come together	12	15	18
Priority: Improve the image of Stevenage:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
IISa	Percentage of residents who feel well informed about the services and benefits the Council provides	60%	60%	60%
IISb	Number of opportunities to promote Stevenage	50%	51%	55%
IISc	Percentage of opportunities to promote Stevenage published	60%	65%	65%

Ambition: Regenerate Stevenage

Priority: Have a growing town and economy:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
GTEa	Percentage of new small businesses (1-10 employees) successfully trading after 12 months	70%	70%	75%
NI 159	Supply of ready to develop housing sites	100%	100%	100%
Priority: Develop a modern vibrant town centre:				
Ref	Description	Target	3 year	5 year

		2008/09	target	target
	Achieve Green Flag for Town Centre gardens	Yes		
	Determine outline planning application for town centre	Yes		
	Commence on-site construction of town centre		Yes	
	Open 'new town centre' retail scheme			Yes
Priority: Revitalise Neighbourhood Centres:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
	The Council is reviewing its strategy for all the Neighbourhood Centres. This work will be prepared by Spring 2008 and targets will be identified at that time.			

Ambition – Create Sustainable Communities:

Priority: Provide quality, affordable housing:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
New NI 156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation – reduction per year	10%	10%	10%
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	7	7	7
Priority: Keep the town safe:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
NI16	Number of serious acquisitive crimes per 1,000 population	14.46	13.61	12.8
NI20	Assault with injury crimes per 1,000 population	8.87	8.34	7.85
	Criminal damage per 1,000 population	23.84	22.43	21.11
Priority: Maintain a clean and green environment:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
NI191	Residual household waste per	315kg	285kg	240kg

	head			
NI 192	Household waste recycled and composted	28%	50%	50%
NI 195	The percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as falling below an acceptable level for:			
a)	Litter	7%	7%	7%
b)	Detritus	7%	7%	7%
c)	Graffiti	1%	1%	1%
d)	Flyposting	0%	0%	0%
NI 196	The year on year reduction in total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with fly-tipping.	Grade 2 'Effective'	Grade 2 'Effective'	Grade 2 'Effective'
New NI 197	Improved local bio-diversity – proportion of local sites where active conservation management is being achieved	70%	70%	70%
Priority: Focus on Neighbourhoods				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
TW	Annual percentage increase of local residents who attend Area Committees	10%	10%	10%
Priority: Help provide leisure and health services:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
LCCS1	Number of 16-24 year olds participating in at least 30 minutes of activity at least three times per week	2724	3192	3628
LCCS2	Number of adults aged 45 plus participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation.	3918	4907	5855
LCCS5	Number of play sessions for 5 to 13 year olds offered by the play service.	800	800	800

Ambition: Move towards Excellence:

Priority: Support and Develop our People:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
BV12	The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	9.31 days	8.29 days	7.28 days
BV14	The percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce	0.38%	0.38%	0.38%
BV15	The percentage of employees retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total workforce	0.38%	0.38%	0.38%
Priority: Promote Equality:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
BV11a	The percentage of the top-paid 5% of local authority earners that are women	30%	36.67%	40%
BV11b	The percentage of the top-paid 5% of local authority earners from an ethnic minority community	13.33%	16.67%	16.67%
BV11c	The percentage of the top-paid 5% of local authority earners who have a disability	6.67%	6.67%	6.67%
BV16a	The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition.	3.35%	4.87%	6.56%
BV17a	The percentage of the local authority employees from minority ethnic communities	8.52%	10.05%	11.56%
Priority: Maintain Customer Focus:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
	Telephone calls to the CSC within answered within 30 seconds	80%	85%	85%
	Percentage of Walk-in customers to the CSC to be served:	90% (within 20 mins)	90% (within 15 mins)	90% (within 15 mins)
	Stage 1 complaints resolved within target	90%	95%	97%

	Stage 2 complaints resolved within target	95%	96%	97%
	Stage 3 complaints resolved within target	90%	92%	95%
Priority: Use Resources effectively:				
Ref	Description	Target 2008/09	3 year target	5 year target
NI 179	Value for money – total net value of ongoing cash releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the year	£543,000	£543,000	£543,000
Local	Achievement of savings targets agreed as part of the 2008/09 Budget Review	£1.6m	£3.2m	£4.2m
Local	Percentage revenue savings and efficiencies delivered through capital investment in ICT systems *	25%	75%	125%

* Relates to ICT investment focused upon delivering financial benefits rather than performance or service improvements