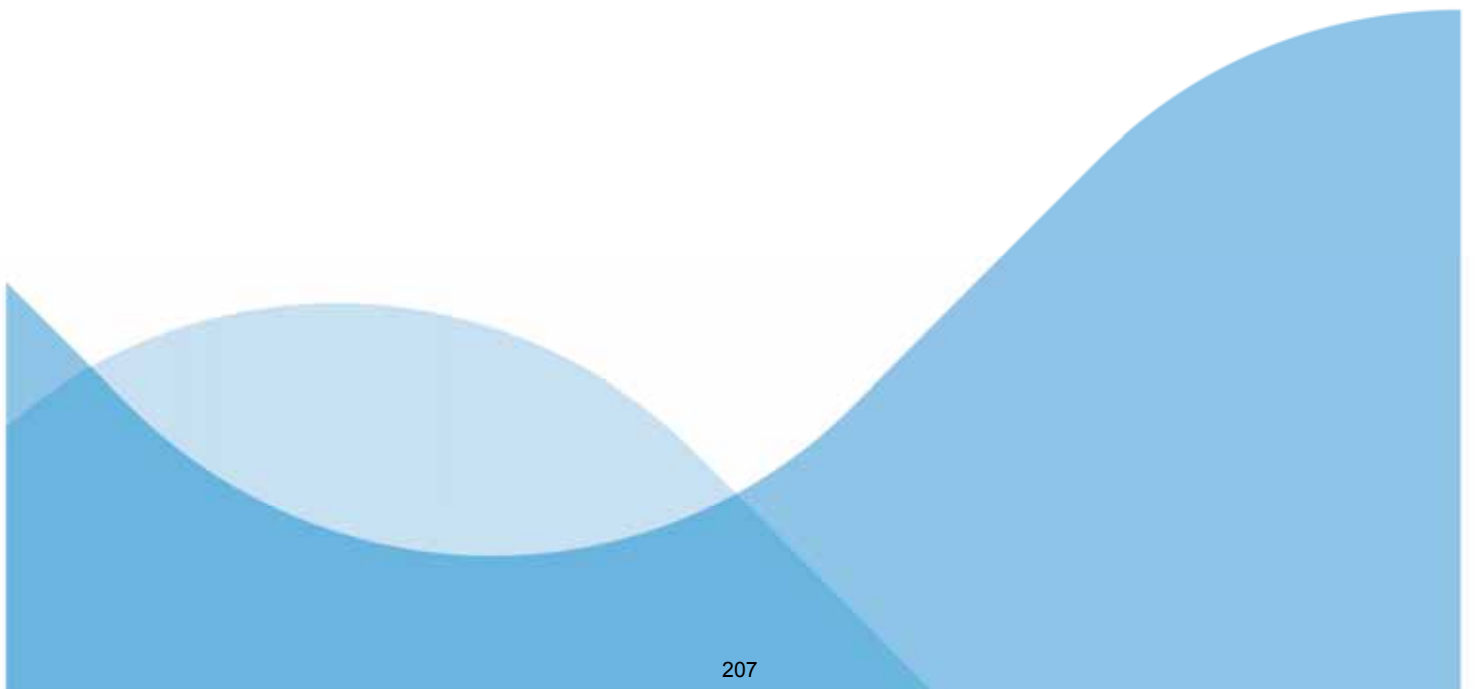




Strategic Management and Economic Development

Portfolio Plan 2012/13 – 2014/15



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Strategic Direction

Introduction by Lead Member

1. We continue to face challenging financial times, both within the County Council and within the community of East Sussex. We need to ensure that every penny we spend gives the best return on investment for the people of the County.
2. We continue to do everything we can to build the economic prosperity of the County, both through our work with the private sector in the Local Enterprise Partnership and through careful investment of the County Council's resources. Our Capital Programme has been reviewed to make sure that we support as many projects as possible which will leave a long term economic legacy. Key to our new Economic Development Strategy will be the improvement of broadband coverage over the whole County and schemes which aim to open up space for business and housing development like the Hastings Link Road.
3. In managing our own services we continue to seek to get the best value for local tax payers by looking at new and innovative ways of working and achieving economies of scale by working with others. The council will continue its partnership with the South East Seven 'SE7' group of Councils (Kent, Medway, East Sussex, West Sussex, Brighton & Hove, Surrey and Hampshire) which has identified savings of nearly £90m in the region by working better together. We have introduced improvements to our business and financial planning processes including a strong commissioning approach. This will be used consistently across all our activities to design appropriate services and rigorously assess the best means of delivery; to procure and deliver the services; and then monitor and evaluate how successful we have been in achieving value for money for local people.

Lead Member: Councillor Jones, Leader of the Council

Services

- Economic development
- Corporate policy and performance
- Improving customer access
- Democratic services including committee support and scrutiny
- Communications

Policy Steers

- ❖ Raise the prosperity of East Sussex through a sharp focus on employment, skills and planned infrastructure.
- ❖ Create sustainable communities by providing strategic leadership, empowering people, delivering locally and recognising different needs to ensure equality of access and helping to ensure that all public services in East Sussex are commissioned and delivered effectively.
- ❖ To enhance customer focus across the Council by improved engagement and dialogue with local people and redesigning our working practices to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- ❖ Support Members to fulfil their role as community leaders, in scrutiny and as the democratic voice of local people.
- ❖ Ensure that residents, staff and key stakeholders are engaged in and informed about the key changes impacting on them.

Policy Steer 1

Raise the prosperity of East Sussex through a sharp focus on employment, skills and planned infrastructure.

Policy Overview

1.1 With the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies and the move to the 'localism' agenda under the Coalition Government, local authority and business leaders were asked to form 'Local Enterprise Partnerships' (LEPs). These new business led public/private bodies will have the strategic lead on areas where working at LEP level will add value.

1.2 The LEP overarching priorities are to unlock the potential of:

- the Thames Gateway
- coastal East Sussex, Greater Essex and Kent and Medway
- rural East Sussex, Greater Essex and Kent and Medway (includes broadband)
- our key towns and cities

1.3 As part of these priorities, attention will be given to skills, housing, tourism and infrastructure across the LEP area. The LEP Board and Executive include Member and business representation from East Sussex. The overarching priorities are now to be developed and specific interventions under these identified for action by the LEP.

1.4 In East Sussex it remains our local aim to support economic regeneration focussing on the worst performing areas of the county, with a particular emphasis on the economic infrastructure of the County and adult skills.

Data Tables

Economic Development (Economy)						
Cost drivers						
Cost Indicators			East Sussex 2009/10	Benchmark 2009/10	East Sussex 2010/11	
Based on CIPFA benchmarking:						
Economic Development – cost per head of population			£1.76	£4.02	£0.88	
Adult & Community Learning – cost per head of population			£4.73	£7.85	£2.46	
Performance Measures	2010/11 Outturn	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Est. RAG	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target
Provide the evidence base to inform the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to ensure the success of the Partnership and to help deliver emerging LEP priorities	New measure	March 2011/12	G	No target after 2011/12	No target after 2011/12	
Support and influence the continued regeneration of Newhaven and the implementation of the economic aspects of the area's Masterplan	Final version of Newhaven Vision completed. PATCH (Ports Adapting to Change) Project progressed.	Finalise design of the Newhaven Transport Interchange	G	Construct the Newhaven Transport Interchange	Evidence improvements in accessibility	

Meet requirements of the Economic Assessment Duty and develop an Economic Development Strategy that meets the needs of East Sussex	Local Economic Assessment (LEA) subject to consultation	Publish Local Economic Assessment (LEA). Conduct consultation and publish the Economic Development Strategy (EDS)	G	Implement Strategy objectives	Roll out strategy and refresh the LEA and EDS	
Establish, with the Adult Learning and Skills Partnership Board, how progress in delivering the Adult Learning and Skills Strategy might be best evidenced	New measure	Establish available data and devise appropriate indicators	A	Establish baselines and set targets for future years	Report progress	
Broadband coverage for East Sussex	New measure	Broadband Strategy developed and agreed	G	Implement Strategy objectives	Evidence improvements in broadband connectivity and speed	
Hastings to Bexhill Link Road	Final decisions will be made by the end of 2011	Secure DfT funding	A	Conduct preparatory ecological and archaeological works	Begin construction	

Revenue	2010/11 Budget	Annual Change	2011/12 Budget	Annual Change	2012/13 Budget	Annual Change	2013/14 Budget	Annual Change	2014/15 Budget
	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000
A Budget Net			409	-10.02%	368	-2.72%	358	+2.23%	366
B Income or specific grant			21	-	21	-	21	-	21
C = A+B Gross budget			430	-9.77%	388	-2.58%	378	+2.12%	386

Capital	Description	Total budget 2010-15	2010/11 Budget	2011/12 Budget	2012/13 Budget	2013/14 Budget	2014/15 Budget
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Broadband	Project to roll out super-fast broadband around the county	14,000		1,000	7,000	4,000	2,000
Bexhill & Hastings Link Road	Development of new road to support the economic regeneration of the Bexhill & Hastings area and open up business land	20,014	680	160	4,949	10,568	3,657
Bexhill & Hastings Link Road Complimentary Measures	Supporting measures to comply with planning conditions	1,800				800	1,000
Sovereign Harbour Eastbourne	Project to create new business premises – contribution to lead partner	1,066			1,066		
Renewable Energy Phase 1a & 1b	Project to explore the feasibility of a wind turbine project in the county	4,000			4,000		
Renewable Energy Phase 2	To implement based on successful outcome of feasibility study	11,400			2,850	8,550	
Priory Quarter Hastings	Project to create new business premises – contribution to lead partner	4,956			2,478	2,478	
Newhaven Port Access Road	To open up development land in Newhaven and support the creation of jobs in the area as well as improving transport links to the port	1,080					1,080
Inward Investment Capital Grant Fund	To provide small grants to businesses relocating into the area	700			350	350	
Incubation Units and Empty Commercial Property	To provide 'move on' business premises for new and growing businesses in East Sussex.	2,000			500	750	750
Baldslow Road Improvements	Scheme to compliment the Bexhill & Hastings Link Road and improve the interchange with the A21	2,000					2,000

Service review implementation	
Service reviews planned	A full review of the Economic Development Service is planned for 2012/13

Analysis

1.5 The cost indicator information shown in the table above shows that compared to the national average we have a low spend on economic development activity. This is perhaps at first sight surprising given our commitment to economic regeneration but is reflective of the strategic approach we take. Unlike some other Councils we have not focused on direct delivery or direct grant funding for businesses but use our influence and leadership to encourage and support others to take the initiative. We also act as a conduit for data and information and routinely undertake for example an Annual Business Survey. It's vital for us to understand the economy of East Sussex to use our influence in the best and most cost effective way.

1.6 We are the largest employer in the County and exercise our purchasing power to ensure the best for the local economy. Major Construction Projects, for example, are procured using the ESCC led Sussex Cluster Contractor's Framework in which the Contractors are required to spend as much of the contract value with locally based businesses as is practical. Monitoring of this reveals that currently some 63% of the value is spent with local businesses within 30 miles of the project with a further 25% spent within a 60mile radius. Other initiatives are focused on providing the smaller SMEs with access to business support organisations, online tendering opportunities and apprentice sharing and work experience placements.

1.7 Locally we have continued to support development across the county and specifically in the regeneration areas of:

- Hastings & Bexhill: Implementation of the 5-point plan. Key activities for the County Council will include the promotion of the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road; transport planning; improving skill and employment qualification levels; and enterprise creation;
- South Wealden/Eastbourne: Taking forward relevant aspects of the Local Development Frameworks to influence growth in economic performance;
- Newhaven: Supporting the economic development and transport elements of the Masterplan and relevant aspects on the new Newhaven 'Vision'. Working with Newhaven Port and Properties on supporting key economic development and sustainability of the port including relevant elements under the new Port Masterplan. Supporting the development of the offshore wind farm 'Rampion' to ensure potential benefits to the port are not lost; and
- Skills: Learning and skills are key economic drivers in delivering the vision for a prosperous county and have a fundamental importance for the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Working with the East Sussex Adult Learning and Skills Partnership Board to deliver its strategy and action plan we aim to increase skills levels in the county.

1.8 Hastings & Bexhill: In 2009 the Hastings' average gross weekly earnings (residence based – median) were 88.8% of that of East Sussex - by 2010 Hastings was at 94.8% of the East Sussex figure. Hastings College, renamed Sussex Coast College Hastings, has opened the two new sites at Station Plaza and the Ore Valley campus, the second stage of the University Centre Hastings is now being built. Hastings College recently received a very poor Ofsted report and we will want to work with the College to support them in raising academic standards.. In December 2010, Saga Group purchased One Priory Square, an office site developed by SeaSpace which will see the creation of up to 800 new jobs.

1.9 The Regional Growth Fund bids submitted by SeaSpace in January 2011 and July 2011 to support Phase III of Priory Quarter in Hastings (town centre offices), Phase II of the Enviro 21 corridor (Hastings industrial space) and Sovereign Harbour were all unsuccessful; no bids were successful in London or the south east in round 1. We are now considering supporting one or more of the projects through our own capital programme.

1.10 The transport interchange design at Newhaven port is progressing and the new Port Master Plan is about to be released. Through our membership of the Interreg 4a 'Ports Adapting to Change' (PATCH) project we supported a large marine industry Business to Business event in January 2011 and Newhaven Port & Properties at the London Boat Show. Research is to be undertaken to better understand the supply chain potential in respect of off and on shore wind farms in support of, for example, realising the potential benefits to Newhaven if E.ON progresses to off shore wind farm development.

1.11 As well as more obvious road and building infrastructure, we also aim to improve broadband coverage across the whole county and with our allocation from BDUK for funding our aims are set to become a reality. There is still a considerable amount of work

to be done to establish our Local Broadband Plan, which will see Superfast Broadband in 90% of the county with improved speeds in the remaining 10% and resources are now in place to make progress.

1.12 East Sussex County Council maintains strategic oversight of the provision by partners of adult learning and skills in East Sussex through the Adult (19+) Learning and Skills Partnership Board. The Adult Learning and Skills Partnership Board will remain at the heart of skills-led partnership working both in terms of strategic planning and operational delivery through members' constituent organisations. The Adult Learning and Skills Strategy has been reviewed to ensure that the Board works to a vision, strategic priorities and action plan which remain relevant to identified need. In addition the Board is to receive £587,867 for achieving the stretch and reward target on Local Area Agreement 1. The target 'number of adults achieving a nationally accredited qualification (including English as a Second Language) as part of the Skills for Life strategy' was exceeded by 2,869, reflecting the effort of partners to raise qualification levels in the county. The reward money will be used to support delivery of the action plan to the recently refreshed Adult Learning and Skills Strategy.

1.13 Each year, we conduct the East Sussex Business Survey as mentioned above; over 1,000 businesses took part in early spring this year. The results provide an assessment of business issues and concerns in the County and are an important evidence base for input, amongst others, to the LEP and the East Sussex Local Economic Assessment (LEA) – the tool we use to guide investment and priorities for economic intervention, the developing East Sussex Economic Development Strategy and the Adult Learning and Skills Strategy. The draft LEA went out to consultation last year and is now being finalised before being posted on the ESCC web site. The new East Sussex Economic Development Strategy is now also being finalised following the review of comments on the LEA and the updating of some data.

1.14 The Economic Development Strategy is out for a full three month consultation from December 2011. As the consultation will be internet-based it will ensure as wide an audience as possible; those partners who have already been involved in its development will be notified of the consultation, as with the LEA consultees can chose to reply in non internet based format.

1.15 A new, informal Business Board has met a number of times and has been renamed as the Economic Advisory Board. Along with public sector partners it includes the large and small Chambers of Commerce, Enterprise Agencies and the Federation of Small Business. The development of the Board will be partly influenced by the priorities of the LEP, the 2011 East Sussex Business Survey and work with private sector representatives on the LEP to engage with businesses.

Forward Plan

1.16 Our future targets are related to the provision of support to the LEP and its work programme, supporting bids, the regeneration of Hastings and Newhaven and south Wealden/ Eastbourne. This will involve supporting the new economic delivery company for the Hastings, Bexhill and wider East Sussex and ensuring the right strategic framework is in place through the new Hastings & Rother Task Force.

1.17 The continued economic downturn means that the future work programme will also involve a refocused emphasis on adult skills in particular on the transition between under

and over 19 year olds. This will also involve ensuring that the Adult Skills Strategy informs provision decisions by providers to support the economic needs of the county and the priorities of the draft economic development strategy. In addition, we will work with the East Sussex representatives on the LEP skills work stream.

1.18 As well as our own county aspirations for improved broadband coverage, we are also leading on behalf of the LEP on broadband. This includes each upper tier authority undertaking the specific work required in their area to obtain improved broadband connectivity, coverage and speed. In East Sussex all but one telephone exchange is broadband enabled. However slow broadband speeds remain an issue and there are a significant number of locations in the county with either slow speeds or no broadband at all. It is estimated that around 70% of the county suffers from poor broadband speeds and this will be a high profile area in the coming year. As mentioned above we were allocated £10.6m from BDUK in 2011 and the Local Broadband Plan now in development will enable the release of that funding. We're currently working with the market providers to look at sustainable technological and financial solutions and this will continue in 2012/13. A bid to the Capital Programme for £15m will more than match the BDUK offer and allow some flexibility to progress quickly in some areas of particular need.

1.19 An essential component of our forward plan is to ensure that there is continued focus on skills and the economic infrastructure needs of the county and we will be investing substantial resources through the capital programme to do so. The changing financial landscape is set to influence this heavily and we will need to respond to a number of influences including the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the Local Government Resource Review and the New Homes Bonus: in short the changes will make the financing of new infrastructure more complex and new and innovative models will need to be explored.

1.20 Finally, the SME sector is significant for the financial and economic well-being of the county as a whole and is even more important now with the proposals contained within the Local Government Resources Review. The levels of worklessness in some parts of the county are significant and without the growth of our economic base we will not be able to address this and grow the job opportunities in the county. Local small firms are at the core of the East Sussex economy and working with partners in both the public and private sector, we will support the newly established SME Commission to help identify recommendations for action to ensure that SME growth is encouraged and supported across East Sussex.

Policy Steer 2

Create sustainable communities by providing strategic leadership, empowering people, delivering locally and recognising different needs to ensure equality of access and helping to ensure that all public services in East Sussex are commissioned and delivered effectively.

Policy overview

2.1 This policy steer drives all of the Council's strategic activities. The Council is determined to achieve the best value in its services for local people, working with partners locally and regionally where appropriate to achieve that end. Key to that is our approach to commissioning, ensuring that we get the right service at the right price. The Council, as one of the democratic voices of local people, is accountable to them and has a vital role in representing their interests locally, regionally and nationally.

Data Tables

Chief Executive's Office						
Cost drivers	Costs in the main relate to staffing costs and demands relating to changes in local and national policy					
Cost Indicators			East Sussex 2009/10	Benchmark 2009/10	East Sussex 2010/11	
Cost/head pa				Na		
Cost as % of Council budget						
Performance Measures	2010/11 Outturn	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Est. RAG	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target
Work with South East Seven (SE7) partners to deliver efficiency savings and improve services. (Targets are for ESCC savings only)	New measure	n/a	n/a £tba	£tba	£tba	£tba
Council Plan targets met that are available for reporting at year end (includes previous year's Council Plan academic year target outturns)	77.8%	80%-90%	G	80% – 90%	80% – 90%	80% – 90%
Provide leadership to ensure a smooth transition to the changes to health provision required in East Sussex by the Health and Social Care Bill	New measure	Shadow arrangements established and evaluated for full implementation in 2012/13	G	Establish a Health and Wellbeing Board in April 2012; Board to oversee refresh of JSNA and produce a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy by March 2013	No target after 2012/13	n/a
Apply the Equality Framework for Local Government and safeguard the most vulnerable people in East Sussex from adverse inequality impacts. (Amended for 2012/13)	Externally assessed as an 'Achieving' Authority on 14July	Continue to be an 'Achieving' Authority	G	Conduct a self-assessment against 'Excellent Authority' criteria	To be an 'Excellent Authority' by external or self-assessment	Continue to be an 'Excellent Authority'

Revenue	2010/11 Budget	Annual Change	2011/12 Budget	Annual Change	2012/13 Budget	Annual Change	2013/14 Budget	Annual Change	2014/15 Budget
	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000
A Budget Net	1158	(1.1)	1145	(2.5)	1116	1.2	1129	(0.4)	1124
B Income or specific grant									
C = A+B Gross budget	1158	(1.1)	1145	(2.5)	1116	1.2	1129	(0.4)	1124

Analysis

2.2 The Council's key policy driver is to make the best use of available resources to meet our residents' needs. Each year we review and improve our Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process, which ensures that resources are focused on delivering the Council's priorities. This year changes have been made to reflect the desire by Members to bring financial, performance and policy information closer together and at a sub-departmental level. Information about what is being spent on services, benchmarking and unit cost information and outcomes are now all presented together. This will help Members to assess the impact of their spending decisions and bring a focus on what the Council is planning to spend rather than what it is planning to save. There is a greater focus on business intelligence such as unit costs, cost drivers, customer feedback, and trend data to inform our plans and processes at all stages of the RPPR cycle.

2.3 The changes to the RPPR architecture are part of a wider change programme consisting of four strands of connected activity that will position the Council to respond to current challenges and exploit opportunities:

- Developing a commissioning approach to service delivery through the service review programme;
- Transforming the experience residents have when they contact the Council and use our services through a redefined Customer Access Strategy;
- Challenging ourselves to be a more efficient organisation (using Lean principles) that delivers greater value for money for the residents and taxpayers of East Sussex; and
- Exploring opportunities to work collaboratively with partners to deliver service improvements and efficiency savings.

2.4 There is a need to ensure a strong and consistent approach to equalities issues across the Council, particularly at a time of service reductions. This will ensure that decision makers are fully aware of the potential impact of savings on people within the groups with characteristics protected by the Equalities Act. This year the equality impact assessment documentation and guidance has been updated to include newly protected groups: civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment. Having regard to local needs the Council has also included the following groups or factors: carers, literacy/numeracy skills, part-time workers, rurality, and socio-economic factors.

2.5 The County Council continues to work with others to ensure that the best use is being made of public sector resources for the benefit of the people of East Sussex. This approach is being pursued at all levels. At the sub-regional level the Council is working with South East Seven (SE7) councils to innovate, achieve efficiencies, deliver service improvements and engage with, and influence central Government. The partnership is focusing on key priorities for the councils and their residents including waste, highways maintenance, Special Educational Needs (SEN), procurement and Information and

Communications Technology (ICT). Potential savings of £83.85m have been identified through the SE7 across the region to date and targets have been set for East Sussex against each of the work streams in the relevant portfolio plan.

2.6 The Council will have significant new responsibilities for public health under the Health and Social Care Bill 2011. This year it has begun the process of integration for its new responsibilities; this includes the formation of joint commissioning teams in relation to public health within Children's Services and Adult Social Care, and other public health staff being co-located at County Hall. A shadow Health and Wellbeing Board has been established.

Forward Plan

2.7 Work will continue to ensure the Council is making the best use of resources to meet customer needs, including continuing the focus on commissioning, partnership, internal and external transparency, process and systems improvements, equalities, and providing the leadership necessary to deliver the Council's priorities.

2.8 Our performance management processes and accompanying new approaches to service review, lean and commissioning will continue to focus on providing greater challenge and more innovation in what services are provided and by whom.

2.9 In addition to the continuing work to ensure that the Council's public health responsibilities are successfully integrated into our services, a key external change will be the new governance arrangements for the police. We will need to ensure that the Council builds a successful relationship with the Commissioner when elected.

Policy Steer 3

To enhance customer focus across the Council by improved engagement and dialogue with local people and redesigning our working practices to improve efficiency and effectiveness

Policy overview

3.1 As an organisation we aspire to deliver excellent services that provide maximum value for money and we have a responsibility to make the best use of our limited resources.

3.2 The 'channels' through which public services are delivered and by which customers have contact with the Council, be that via telephone, online, in person or via other means are a critical part of public service provision and there are significant implications for both cost savings and customer satisfaction.

3.3 We aim to use the information we gain from contact and engagement activities to influence the services we provide and how and where they are delivered.

Data Tables

Customer Contact and Information						
Cost drivers	Volume of enquiries					
Cost Indicators				East Sussex 2009/10	Benchmark 2009/10	East Sussex 2010/11
Costs of contact in three main channels						
Face-to-face per visit				£7.40		
Phone per call				£2.90		
Web per visitor				£0.32		
Source: Socitm <i>Insight</i> (August 2009)						
Performance Measures	2010/11 Outturn	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Est. RAG	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target
To be developed						

Revenue	2010/11 Budget	Annual Change	2011/12 Budget	Annual Change	2012/13 Budget	Annual Change	2013/14 Budget	Annual Change	2014/15 Budget
	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000
A Budget Net	1044	(1.1)	1032	1	1043	1.5	1059	(0.5)	1053
B Income or specific grant									
C = A+B Gross budget	1044	(1.1)	1032	1	1043	1.5	1.59	(0.5)	1053

Service review implementation	
Service reviews planned	

Analysis

3.4 Customer focus has been a longstanding commitment of the Council. Our Contact Centres already provide customers with a central point of contact with staff equipped to answer the majority of enquiries. We know that our Contact centres have helped to reduce the frustration experienced by customers being passed from department to department when trying to contact the Council. We also know that we don't answer all calls within our customer care standard response times. Rather than simply increasing the number of call centre staff (at a cost) we need to think about how else we might achieve the same end of answering a customer query.

3.5 Improving the customer experience is about more than the way that we deal with customers. We need to think about how we can exploit developments in technology and social media - on line transactions, text alerts, blogs, twitter, Facebook, GIS navigation systems, google maps, mobile apps etc. and how to bring those functions together to create an efficient service at a lower cost. Excellent customer access is vital to deliver services to a high standard, manage communications efficiently and ultimately save money. The real prize is developing our ability to be flexible and able to continuously adapt and improve based on the feedback we get from customers.

3.6 The views of our customers are an integral part of service planning. Only through engagement and dialogue can we truly understand what is important to our customers and, as importantly, what is not. The feedback we get through a variety of routes (real-time contact information, surveys, formal engagement sessions, complaints, regular day to day enquiries, exhibitions, seminars, stakeholder events etc) all influence our service plans and we believe there is room to make better and more coordinated use of this valuable source of information.

Forward Plan

3.7 Our first task is to carry out an audit across the Council of current activity and to determine the data we already possess. This includes reviewing the wealth of customer information we already have from our Contact Centres, Mystery Shopper exercises, Residents' Panel and other service specific activities mentioned above. We will seek the experience and advice from other Local Authorities who are perhaps further ahead in this area to guide the improvements we aim to make to customer focus across the Council.

3.8 We are at the early stages of exploring customer access specifically, although there is much to be done there is the potential to be bold and innovative.

Policy Steer 4

Support Members to fulfil their role as community leaders, in scrutiny and as the democratic voice of local people

Policy overview

4.1 We support Councillors to fulfil their duties as community leaders. This includes continuous development through effective training and ensuring that Councillors are aware of their obligations, expected standards and codes of conduct.

4.2 The work of Scrutiny mainly involves looking in depth at specific areas of policy and making recommendations for improvement. It provides a unique perspective on how well public services are being delivered and how they could be improved, often from the point of view of those using those services. Scrutiny ensures that the Cabinet is held responsible for its decisions and that their decision-making processes are clear and accessible to the public. It is an essential part of ensuring that the County Council remains effective and accountable for the use of public resources.

Data Tables

Service Name – Democratic Services and Scrutiny						
Cost drivers						
Cost Indicators				East Sussex 2009/10	Benchmark 2009/10	East Sussex 2010/11
Cost of committee support at of per 1000 population					£0.48	£0.45
The CIPFA Democratic Services Benchmarking Club						
Performance Measures	2010/11 Outturn	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Est. RAG	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target
Councillor satisfaction with services and support provided	94%	95%	G	95%	95%	
Re-accreditation to the South East Employers Charter for Member Development	Re-accreditation gained on 17 May 2010	Mid-term re-assessment against the criteria	G	Prepare for re-assessment scheduled for May 2013	Re-accreditation achieved	

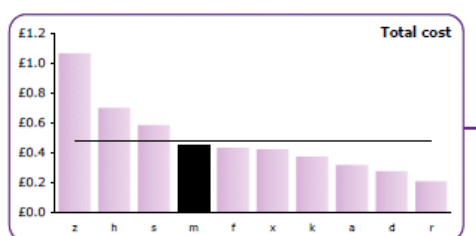
Revenue	2010/11 Budget	Annual Change	2011/12 Budget	Annual Change	2012/13 Budget	Annual Change	2013/14 Budget	Annual Change	2014/15 Budget
	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000
A Budget Net	2050	(3.3)	1982	(0.3)	1976	1.2	2000	(0.4)	1991
B Income or specific grant									
C = A+B Gross budget	2050	(3.3)	1982	(0.3)	1976	1.2	2000	(0.4)	1991

Service review implementation	
Service reviews planned	A service review is planned for 2012/13

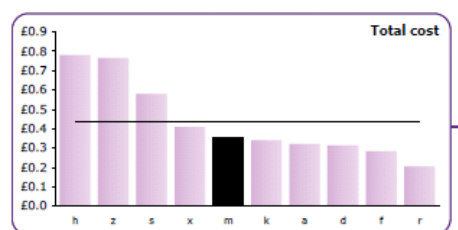
Analysis

4.3 We achieved renewed accreditation against the South East Employers' Charter for Member Development. This demonstrates that we have equipped Councillors with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions in accordance with the Council's policies and priorities. The Council is due to have its mid term assessment in January 2012 to ensure that it continues to meet the Charter Standards and that the assessors' proposed improvement areas highlighted in the 2010 report are being considered and implemented. The development programme for all Councillors is continuing with the completion of personal development plans and a further programme of events. We use feedback from councillor training sessions to establish satisfaction levels and areas for improvement.

4.4 The CIPFA Democratic Services Benchmarking Club, established 2010, showed an average cost of committee support at of £0.48 per 1000 population. Our costs compare favourably at £0.45. Based on 2011/12 budgets, the County Council average is predicted at £0.44 and East Sussex at £0.36.



**Cost per 1000 population
(2010/11 outturn)**



**Cost per 1000 population
(2011/12 budget)**

4.5 Most of the Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet are involved in the council's five overview and scrutiny committees. These committees' work programmes are councillor-led and are aligned with the Council's commitment to affordable, quality core services, prosperity and security. Some of the committees include co-opted members from external organisations and the voluntary and community sector.

4.6 Overview and Scrutiny has engaged with the public through a range of consultations as part of its work. In particular, a public consultation for the scrutiny review of winter highways maintenance produced evidence leading to changes in council policy. This scrutiny review received a commendation at the Centre for Public Scrutiny annual conference in June 2011.

4.7 Support for Councillors in their Scrutiny role has been improved by promoting a wide understanding of the political environment in which the Council operates. A continuing priority this year will be raising staff awareness of the decision-making processes through induction sessions and the popular *Working in a Political Environment* training programme. This training programme now attracts representatives from external organisations for whom the model of scrutiny is becoming increasingly relevant.

Forward Plan

4.8 Councillors are actively involved in a number of projects looking at improving services that we provide for them, for example, the Members' Training and Development Group and a focus group looking at the requirements of Councillors in relation to mobile working. We will continue to maintain the efficiency of the decision-making processes with appropriate training and development to support all Councillors.

4.9 Better use will be made of available and developing technology. We have noted the success of webcasted Council meetings including the significant peaks when controversial issues are being discussed. We will look at the potential for active public involvement through social media, such as Twitter, and other means such as live webcasts of Scrutiny meeting that have significant public interest. Our website and webcast facility will continue to be acknowledged as an important resource to improve public engagement in decision making.

4.10 Scrutiny will continue with its positive influence in making efficiency savings, developing and improving Council policies and improving services. We will raising awareness of and increase opportunities for active involvement of the public in scrutiny projects whether by suggesting topics for scrutiny or as witnesses providing Scrutiny with evidence, views and experiences.

Policy Steer 5

Ensure that residents, staff and key stakeholders are engaged in and informed about the key changes impacting on them.

Policy overview

5.1 We aim to raise public awareness and understanding of the Council's role, its services, policies and priorities, through improved information and access to services. In particular, improve information for residents and staff about the Council's financial situation and how this affects services.

5.2 We will also increase understanding within the Council of customers' needs and preferences by engaging and listening to the views of residents and ensuring feedback is considered in the policy making process. There are strong links with our ambitions for improved customer focus expressed in Policy Steer 3.

Data Tables

Communications						
Cost drivers						
Cost Indicators			East Sussex 2009/10	Benchmark 2009/10	East Sussex 2010/11	
<p>Within a benchmarking group of 30 larger authorities, the results for communications compared to the average are as follows:</p> <p>Communications spend per head of the population</p> <p>Communications spend as a % of revenue budget</p> <p>2011/12 result for Council Plan target - Ratings for 'useful content' in 'Your County' magazine 78% (exceeds target)</p>			<p>£1.58</p> <p>0.15%</p>	<p>£3.44</p> <p>0.28%</p>		
Performance Measures	2010/11 Outturn	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Est. RAG	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target
The proportion of people surveyed through the residents panel who agree that the County Council publishes information that shows how local residents' views have been used in decision making	60%	60% - 64%	G	61% - 65%	62% - 66%	
The proportion of people surveyed through the residents panel who agree that the County Council takes local people's views into account before making decisions	35%	35% - 39%	G	36% - 40%	39% - 43%	
Ratings for 'useful content' in 'Your County' magazine	77%	70% - 75% (Result from 2010/11 Survey)	G	78% - 83% (Result from 2011/12 Survey)	(78% - 83% (Result from 2012/13 Survey)	
Support to our website visitors (measure is the combined total of forms downloaded + forms submitted or posted to our site + online payments + subscriptions to newsletters)	Baseline: 34,739	37,000 - 40,000	G	40,000 - 45,000	45,000 - 48,000	
New measure to be developed to reflect new ambition						

Revenue	2010/11 Budget	Annual Change	2011/12 Budget	Annual Change	2012/13 Budget	Annual Change	2013/14 Budget	Annual Change	2014/15 Budget
	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000
A Budget Net	1233	(17.4)	1018	0.9	1027	1.2	1041	(1.3)	1027
B Income or specific grant	99	(43.4)	56	26.7	71	1.4	72	1.4	73
C = A+B Gross budget	1332	(19.4)	1074	0.7	1081	2.9	1113	(1.2)	1100

Service review implementation	Communications Service Review underway, due to complete March 2012
Service reviews planned	

Analysis

5.3 The Council's website continues to retain its status as one of the top local authority websites in the country over a number of years (assessed by the Society of IT Managers (SOCITM), one of the few council websites to do so. The Council's website will have a new look and feel from December 2011, along with other improvements, part of a plan to position the website for increased transactions online and greater engagement with web visitors. The number of visits to our website is growing, from 753,000 between April and June to 800,000 between July and September. Our residents' magazine, 'Your County' also continues to maintain good recognition and satisfaction ratings with residents. In surveys carried out in summer 2011 with 1,650 residents¹, 78% find the articles useful, 84% recall receiving the magazine at least once and 86% say it represents value for money. Advertising for Your County has been brought in house, ensuring that the Council benefits increasingly from revenue, rather than an external agency. Strategic communications plans for major events, such as cold weather, are helping to provide more accessible information through a range of channels, both traditional and digital, working with departments and our contact centres.

5.4 On staff communications, improvements to the intranet, a key business tool for staff and Members, have been made including an improved search and 'find staff' function. A more integrated approach to our corporate and departmental internal communications is being developed, including generic performance measures for internal staff publications and COMT Brief.

5.5 Consistent branding for Council publications, in line with our 'one council' approach to communications, has been achieved across the Council. This helps residents to recognise and understand that information comes from a trusted source. In recent months, guidelines have been developed for web branding which should allow some flexibility for council related websites where a business case has been made, but still ensure that websites are linked to the Council branding.

5.6 More accessible Council information has been a focus through the Plain English Campaign and RNIB accreditation across a range of communications channels including 'Your County', other publications and the Council's website. It is likely that standards will be monitored in house in future in order to keep costs down.

¹ a sample size of just over 1,060 gives a 95% confidence interval

5.7 The Council is increasingly its use of social media to communicate information and increasingly to engage residents. We currently have over 1800 Twitter followers and the numbers are rising all the time as we begin to have more online conversations. . An audit of social media use across East Sussex (the County) has been carried out to find out about communities of interest and inform how we make the best use of this channel in the future. Internally, Yammer is now being used to engage staff.

5.8 On consultation, there are a multitude of consultation and engagement activities being carried out across the whole council. These are targeted at specific audiences and include the work that Adult Social Care do with the Older People's Forums, Children's Services Department with the Youth Cabinet and Economy Transport & Environment with the Local Access Forum. Other examples include both routine and specific projects and initiatives which continue to inform the services that we provide and how we provide them.

5.9 The Residents Panel (which has 1900 members and is representative of the population of East Sussex) continues to give the Council valuable feedback on how the public view our services and the Council as a whole, so that we can use this to make improvements. Surveys are carried out on a wide range of topics, including highways, telecare services, satisfaction with the Council and information that informs our RPPR process, as well as use of digital services. The Panel has also been used to encourage Panel members to get involved in other consultation/engagement, e.g. on the blue car badge scheme and the family information service.

Forward Plan

5.10 The communications service is currently under review with a plan, structure and resources identified by March 2012. The customer (internal and external) will be at the heart of the new vision for communications and the service will be increasingly evidence based, to ensure the Council is receiving best value for money. There will be an increasing emphasis on targeted communications and understanding what people want to know and engage with.

5.11 While further recommendations will come from the review, already identified as priorities for the future are:

- better targeted information to specific audiences, but ensuring that the Council continues to have ways of communicating key messages to all audiences as and when required. This will be achieved through effective use of all communications methods, including a mix of web technology, phone/apps, video/audio streaming, social media (blogs/sites) as well as traditional methods such as print/broadcast media and 'Your County', but with rationalised use of printed materials.
- Using communications staff to support departments in how they engage with local people on important community issues to ensure better outcomes for the public and the Council. A good example of this is the recent engagement work on Uckfield street lighting.
- making the Council's website much more 'transactional' so that residents are able to use a range of electronic forms and payment arrangements online. This will be cheaper and quicker for our customers (compared to phone, email or personal visits) and better value for money for the Council. Promoting the Council's website to increase awareness of online services will be key to achieving this.
- building on the 'one council' approach (presenting the Council as one organisation) with strengthened external communications that offer 'access to all'.

- continuing to provide improved information about the public sector spending squeeze, the Council's savings target and the impact on services for residents, both in terms of cuts and new ways of delivering services. Consultation and engagement activities have an increasing focus on new ways of delivering services more economically in the current financial climate. Greater use of the web and social media for consultation and engagement.
- evidence based information that demonstrates to residents that the Council is listening to their views and taking them on board when decisions are made about services and how the Council spends its budget.
- a more joined up approach to our internal communications for staff, through a staff engagement plan. This will include improving the intranet as a business tool, using social media to engage staff, sharing good practice on internal communications across departments and ensuring managers' have improved communications skills. Internal communications for Members also needs to be kept under review, including support on social media.
- Increasing use of social media to support greater listening/engagement/conversations with residents as well as changing the 'tone' of our conversations.

Appendix 1: Medium Term Financial Plan

Strategic Management and Economic Development Portfolio	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Executive Office	1,145	1,116	1,129	1,124
Customer focus	1,032	1,043	1,059	1,053
Members and Democratic support	1,982	1,976	2,000	1,991
Economic Development	409	368	358	366
Communications	1,018	1,027	1,041	1,027
Total	5,586	5,530	5,587	5,561

