



East Sussex County Council Council Plan

2010-2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Council Plan – Document structure and contents

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1. Introduction by the Leader of East Sussex County Council

I am pleased to introduce the 2010/11 Council Plan for East Sussex County Council. The Plan sets out our priorities and targets for the next three years, how we plan to deliver the improvements and details of how we performed against the priorities and targets set out in last year's Plan. A Financial Budget Summary is also included, providing clear links between the commitments that we have made and the sound financial planning that has become the hallmark of our successful Reconciling Policy and Resources (RP&R) process.

To complement our Council Plan, each year we produce an Annual Report to give a clear, objective and balanced assessment of the Council's performance in the past financial year. We publish our [Annual Reports on our website](#).

Our Promise to the residents of East Sussex is that we will be an efficient, customer focused, accountable authority, working with partners and local communities to:

- *make a positive difference to local people's lives*
- *create a prosperous and safe county*
- *provide affordable, high quality services at lowest possible council tax.*

This promise is supported by policy steers for each portfolio. The policy steers are reviewed annually in the light of local and national intelligence, as part of our Reconciling Policy and Resources process, which is the process we have developed to ensure that our plans and budgets are aligned.

As well as the County Council priorities, we also deliver against joint priorities for the East Sussex area, as set out in 'Pride of Place' – our joint policy statement and vision for East Sussex to 2026. It includes the ambitious plans of our partner agencies, organisations and communities, which come together as the East Sussex Strategic Partnership. The vision is to address the inequalities in our county, and create successful people, successful businesses and a sustainable environment.

Last year an action plan to ensure that the consequences and impact of the economic recession on residents, businesses and services in East Sussex were minimised as far as possible was agreed. A one off recession fund of £1million was set up for the 2009/10 budget and £½m of this has now been committed. A further £250,000 has been allocated to the recession fund to continue to support residents and businesses this year. Throughout 2010/11 we need to remain flexible, responsive and work in strong partnerships, to ensure that the county is well placed to emerge in a strengthened position at the end of the current period of economic uncertainty.

We are committed to continuing our strategy to decrease the level of Council Tax rises, with a proposed 2.7% increase in 2010/11. This is 0.8% less than the 2009/10 increase (3.5%) and 0.3% less than the previously planned 2010/11 increase of 3.0%.

The difficult state of public finances nationally means that the public sector as a whole must find huge cost savings to help bring down public debt to a manageable level. Local government is already the most efficient part of the public sector and we have entered an era where even more innovative solutions are required. Greater sharing of resources, services, people and capital equipment between local authorities, is vital to meet further efficiency savings and we will be working with partner authorities in the South East to ensure that this is achieved.

In 2009/10, the County Council was assessed by the Audit Commission as part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which assesses and reports on public services in

England and how they work with their partners to improve the lives of local people. The Audit Commission said that we are 'Performing Well', and that most Council services are 'good' and are improving things for local people. In particular, the report highlighted the following strengths:

- we are improving outcomes in most areas that are important to local people;
- strong leadership, good partnership working and additional council funding are continuing to make services better for adults;
- services and support for children and young people are generally good; and
- our use of resources is good. We run day-to-day business well and plan how we spend money very well.

For further details, please have a look at our [CAA](#) internet pages.

Whilst the report highlights many improvements we have made in the last 12 months, it has also identified a number of actions that could improve further the services that we provide. These include:

- continuing to reduce the numbers of people who are killed or seriously injured on our roads;
- improving school standards; and
- improving community transport.

Our targets for these improvements are included in this Business Plan, along with actions that will be taken to ensure that they are achieved.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has contributed to the many achievements that we have made in 2009/10 and which has been reflected in our Comprehensive Area Assessment outcome. Many challenges have arisen as a result of the recession, and there will be many more to face in the forthcoming year, but we will maintain our commitment to making a positive difference to local people's lives and delivering services as efficiently as possible.

Peter Jones
Leader of East Sussex County Council



2. A Profile of East Sussex

The Council Plan is based on the needs and aspirations of the people of East Sussex. The Council and its partners have developed a shared understanding of East Sussex, its characteristics and challenges. Details can be found in Pride of Place, the Sustainable Community Strategy for East Sussex. We constantly review these matters, and our performance against relevant targets, and adjust the Council's priorities. The Council makes the information used available in a public data observatory called East Sussex in Figures (ESiF). A brief summary focusing on recent developments and further details are available from the East Sussex Strategic Partnership.

About East Sussex

East Sussex has a population of 515,170 (2009 estimate) and covers 1725 square kilometres (666 square miles). It is a varied county, predominantly rural but with most of the population living in the urban areas particularly the larger coastal towns. Affluence and deprivation are common and often found in close proximity.

Community

The population grew by 22,846 (4.6%) between 2001 and 2009, with Eastbourne and Wealden districts growing fastest. More people move into East Sussex than out of it and life expectancy is above average. Population projections are for growth of 33,134 people (6.5%) between 2006 and 2026. Most of this is expected in post-retirement age groups, with the very elderly aged 85+ projected to increase by 60.7% to 30,158; the proportion in this age group is already above the national average. Those moving out of East Sussex tend to be young adults, including high achievers and university students. Recent years have seen many economic migrants arriving from European Union countries, adding to cultural diversity, although future trends are uncertain. Council services will need to adapt to meet the changing and increasing demand.

The East Sussex Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population was 5.2% of the total in 2007; significantly lower than for England (11.7%). The proportion of BME school children in East Sussex, however, is 8.8% (2008/09) compared to the England average (22.5%), reflecting the younger age profile of the BME population. BME residents are dispersed across the county with the highest proportions in Eastbourne and Hastings. East Sussex has a high proportion of disabled people. 19.8% (2008) of our working age residents are disabled people compared to a regional figure of 16.4% and a national figure of 18.6%.

Children and young people make up 22.7% (2008) of the East Sussex population and nearly one in five live in income deprived households. Child poverty has the greatest concentration in Hastings and Eastbourne but there are also families affected in rural areas of East Sussex. One of the Council's key priorities is to narrow the gap in outcomes for these children and young people through early intervention and prevention strategies. In 2010/11 economic pressures on families may make more of our children and young people vulnerable and we will continue to work with our partners through the Children's Trust arrangements to promote the wellbeing and life chances of all children and young people. The existing priorities for improving the health and wellbeing of the children in East Sussex are to reduce obesity and risky behaviours in relation to smoking, alcohol and substance misuse and to ensure that child protection services remain a high priority.

East Sussex has lower levels of crime than many other areas of the country. Between 2007/08 and 2008/09 crime reduced by 12.4%. While the overall low level of crime makes the area attractive to live in, there are pockets of relatively high crime in Hastings and some wards in Eastbourne. Crime and the fear of crime remain a consistent concern to the county's residents. The impact of the economic recession on crime is being carefully monitored and action, with partners, taken as needed.

Economy

The economy is largely service based with public sector employment, financial services and tourism being the dominant sectors. Much of this employment is poorly paid and reflected in the low overall productivity of the area as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA) per head which is 75% of the UK average. The county's road and rail infrastructure is poor and restrains economic development. The unemployment claimant rate for November 2009 was 3.5% below the national average of 4.1% but considerably higher than the South East figure of 3.0%. The impact of the current economic recession will be complex and varied across the area, industry sectors and different communities. The Council has a long standing commitment to major regeneration projects in Bexhill and Hastings, Newhaven, Eastbourne and Hailsham, and to working with businesses to support them, especially during the recession.

Environment

East Sussex benefits from an outstanding natural environment including: downland, heaths, wetlands, woodlands and coastal areas. 64% of the county is classed as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and, in November 2009, Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced the creation of a National Park for the South Downs. The towns and villages provide a rich heritage and attractive places to live. There is a challenge when change and development are needed to meet the needs of the area, such as for waste disposal, roads, employment and housing. Conflicting interests have to be balanced and alternative views considered by the Council when reaching its decisions and communicating plans. In addition to these well known challenges climate change is expected to make an increasing and visible impact in the area, presenting difficult choices but also some new opportunities.

Key challenges

The long-term priorities that have been identified in the Sustainable Communities Strategy, Pride of Place are:

- Developing our economy, creating jobs and increasing prosperity
- Providing high quality education, learning & skills opportunities
- Improving travel choices and access to services
- Providing high quality affordable housing
- Protecting our natural and built environments and adapting and responding to climate change
- Improving health and well-being
- Ensuring people and communities are safe and secure
- Creating strong communities and community leadership
- Enabling people to enjoy culture, sports and leisure.

The Council's response to these challenges can be found in this Plan where there are details of priorities, projects, service improvements, and targets. The immediate challenge of the economic recession means that our plans will need to be flexible, responsive and based in strong partnerships both within and outside East Sussex.

3. An Overview of East Sussex

Our political profile

We have 49 Councillors who are elected by residents of East Sussex. The people who stand for election as Councillors may belong to one of the national political parties or to a local political party, or they may be completely independent of a political party. If more than half the people on a council belong to one political party, that party is referred to as the majority party. Following the last local elections which took place in June 2009, the political make-up of East Sussex County Council is:

Conservative:	29
Liberal Democrat:	13
Labour:	4
Independent:	3

Councillors are responsible for making sure that the services that the Council provides meet the needs of residents and those who work in the county.

They do this by setting the overall policies and strategies for the Council and by monitoring the way in which these are implemented.

The full Council of 49 Councillors is responsible for agreeing the main policies and priorities for all services, including the [Council's budget](#). They meet six times a year and meetings are open to the public and broadcast live on the Council's website – [View our webcasts](#).

Lead member areas of responsibility (portfolios)

The Cabinet makes its decisions in line with the policies, priorities and budget that are set by the full Council. Individual Cabinet members have lead responsibility for specific portfolios.

Strategic Management and Economic Development

This portfolio is supported by the Chief Executives Office and Governance and Community Services department and covers how we intend to improve the economy of the County, management of the Council, communication, consultation, personnel and training, performance management, consumer protection and emergency planning procedures.

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor Jones (Leader of the County Council)

Councillor Maynard (responsibility for Economic Development Projects)

Corporate Resources

This Portfolio is supported by the Corporate Resources Department and covers how we intend to assist departments to deliver effective and efficient services and to ensure overall co-ordination and effective management of resources across the Council as a whole.

Portfolio holder:

Councillor Reid (Deputy Leader and responsibility for Corporate Resources)

Community Services

This portfolio is supported by the Governance and Community Services department and Corporate Resources Department. It covers how we will work to provide community leadership, ensure safer communities, work in partnerships, improve library services and promote the electronic delivery of services.

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Tidy (Responsibility for Community Services and E Government)

Adult Social Care

This portfolio is supported by the Adult Social Care Department and covers how we will work with partners to provide services which promote choice, independence and the well-being of people and their carers including the elderly, those with learning and physical disabilities and those with mental health issues.

Portfolio Holders:

- Councillor Glazier (responsibility for Children's and Adults' Services)
- Councillor Bentley (responsibility for Adults' Services)

Children's Services

This portfolio is supported by the Children's Services Department and covers our education and schools services and how we will work with partners and local communities to provide effective support to children, young people and families.

Portfolio Holders:

- Councillor Glazier (responsibility for Children's and Adults' Services)
- Councillor Elkin (responsibility for Learning and Schools Effectiveness)
- Councillor Stroud (Responsibility for Children and Families)

Transport and Environment

This portfolio is supported by the Transport and Environment Department and covers how we plan to improve the road safety, travel choices and reduce traffic congestion, the management and reduction of waste, the protection of and access to the countryside and the way in which we promote the interests of East Sussex in the development of new and existing infrastructure.

Portfolio Holder:

- Councillor Lock (responsibility for Transport and Environment)

How we involve our communities

The way we consult and engage with our audiences is a key issue for the Council. Good consultation and engagement practice plays a key part in designing and improving services and how consultees perceive the County Council. Their experience of consultation and engagement and whether they consider their views have been taken into account in decisions about service delivery make a significant contribution to the organisation's reputation and customer satisfaction.

The Consultation and Engagement Strategy builds upon the processes and practices that are already in place and reflects a change in government policy. It outlines how the County Council will continue to strengthen the way in which we involve residents, service users and partners in local issues to ensure that their continued involvement makes a real difference to the discussions and decisions that are made. It will strengthen our approach to 'community empowerment' and how we give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives.

The following are examples of recently completed consultations where the views of our community have influenced Council decisions.

Consultation	Why was it carried out	What has happened as a result?
Improving Life Chances February - November 2009	Carried out to help develop a commissioning strategy for people with disabilities (Sensory or Long-Term Limiting Illness).	Helped to inform the "Improving Life Chances" strategy; which contained service users vision for commissioning in the future. Recently presented to Cabinet and feedback is currently being developed in conjunction with ASC Communications Team.

Consultation	Why was it carried out	What has happened as a result?
Recession Survey Residents Panel Survey 3. February - April 2009	To find out what residents think about the current economic situation, how it is affecting them and the wider community.	Results have been used to inform the State of the County and have been used to inform Ward Profiles for Councillors.
Business Survey March 2009	More than 1,000 local businesses were contacted to find out how businesses have been affected by the recession.	The full report is now available on East Sussex in Figures, and has fed into both the internal and external Recession Task Forces. The report has been used in evidence at the Bexhill - Hastings Link Road compulsory purchase order Inquiry.
Your Local Area Residents Panel Survey 4 July – August 2009	To find out what people think about our Highways service and Local Transport and Community Safety priorities.	The findings from this survey are being used to inform our Highways Service, Local Transport Plan 3, Priorities for the East Sussex Safer Community Partnership and the County Council's Reconciling Policy and Resources process.
Community Safety Surveys July - September 2009	To find out what residents think about crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area and to identify what residents think should be the priorities for the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership.	The data collected from both the online survey and the residents' panel have fed into the Strategic Intelligence Assessment and will help the partnership to identify its priorities for 2010-2011.
Older People's Engagement Day July - October 2009	A one day engagement event, in which service users set their own consultation agenda. The purpose was to get views of older people to develop the "Time of Our Lives Strategy".	A draft "Action Plan" was developed and will be consulted on by delegates from the Engagement Day and key bodies in East Sussex. This will inform the new "Time of Our Lives Strategy".
Reviewing the Compact 2009 August - October 2009	The East Sussex Compact is an agreement between the local public sector and the voluntary and community sector that sets out principles and commitments for how the two sectors can best work together to achieve more for our communities. The review was used to determine whether the annual action plan and 5 year implementation strategy were being achieved. It also allowed the steering group to predict and see any emerging trends in the implementing and embedding of the Compact.	The headline findings of this review were presented at the East Sussex Compact Annual Event on Monday 2 November 2009, with the full report posted on the ESCC website. The report sets out the areas where improvements have taken place against the nine targets listed in the Annual Action Plan and included a full list of achievements and future considerations for 2010 - 2011 that will further improve Compact working.

More information about past consultation and engagement activities can be found in the ['Have your say'](#) section of our website. This section also contains information about recent and forthcoming activities.

Equality and Diversity

The Council has strengthened its corporate approach to equality and diversity issues over the last year and set up procedures to ensure that actions identified from Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) are fully integrated into business plans. Our EqIA methodology and toolkit have been updated to take account of the Human Rights Act. A Self Assessment has been carried out against the new Equalities Framework for Local Government, showing the Council to be at the Achieving level.

Overview and scrutiny

Scrutiny plays a key role in the Council's system of accountability, service improvement and political development. The Scrutiny Committees are structured to reflect the political balance of the Council. They have powers to scrutinise and make recommendations on almost any matter affecting East Sussex and its community.

The committees and review boards gather evidence from a number of sources including service users, members of the public, staff, other councils and voluntary and community organisations to develop a detailed understanding of an issue and then put forward any recommendations.

Scrutiny also plays an important role in the Reconciling Policy and Resources process as it:

- informs Lead Members about Policy Steers and their contribution to the objectives of the whole Council (the County Council Promise);
- acts on behalf of the committee with regard to future input into the RPR process, and in particular to consider the proposed portfolio plan;
- considers whether all possible efficiencies are being identified; and
- assesses the potential impact of savings on services provided to East Sussex County Council customers.

Below are a few examples of recent scrutiny and best value projects and the difference each has made:

Scrutiny and best value projects completed 2009/10	
Title	How we have made a positive difference
School Governing Body Clerks July 2009	Following a successful bid to the Schools Forum for funding, Governor Services will now develop a centrally run clerking service providing all governing bodies with a highly skilled clerk offering both administrative and advisory support. By carrying out such tasks as researching current legislation and providing legal and constitutional advice, the clerks will enable governing bodies to become more effective and allow them to concentrate more on their strategic role and responsibilities. A more effective governing body will have a positive impact on school improvement.
Employment Opportunities for Adults with Learning Disabilities March 2009	The amalgamation of the two learning disability employment services and the creation of an Employment Co-ordinator post mean that the County Council service now has greater capacity to support more clients to access and maintain employment opportunities. Improvements to promotional and informative material and greater publicity at events, such as job fairs and meetings of the local Chambers of Commerce, aim to encourage more local employers to offer employment opportunities to adults with a learning disability.

Scrutiny and best value projects completed 2009/10

Title	How we have made a positive difference
<p>Council Records Management</p> <p>March 2009</p>	<p>By March 2010, a notable improvement in records management will have been made and the Council will be in a stronger position to deal with future demands. This includes having more storage space, increased staff awareness, enhanced security of sensitive material, and increased use of electronic records management.</p>
<p>East Sussex in Figures (ESiF) – the East Sussex data observatory</p> <p>March 2009</p>	<p>By acting as a ‘critical-friend’, the scrutiny review identified opportunities for making ESiF more accessible to its users and highlighted opportunities to attract new users on a commercial basis.</p> <p>The service offer by the ESiF team has shifted to become more responsive to users’ information needs rather than focused primarily on collecting and providing web based access to local data.</p>
<p>Council procurement and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)</p> <p>November 2009</p>	<p>The aim of making it easier for local SMEs to do business with the County Council has been achieved through making procurement processes more transparent with minimum bureaucracy.</p> <p>Property Services has developed a supply chain readiness network to ensure local SMEs are equipped to compete successfully for work as subcontractors to large framework contractors.</p>
<p>Stroke Services and Awareness</p> <p>Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)</p> <p>March 2009</p>	<p>New initiatives arising from this review, such as local awareness raising campaigns, ‘at risk’ registers, vascular health checks and improved rehabilitation services, will not only reduce the risk of people suffering a stroke and improve the lives of those who have suffered a stroke, but could also save lives. In addition, East Sussex is emerging as a leader in stroke care and these developments intend to place East Sussex at the forefront of best practice.</p> <p>For the first time during a HOSC review, a survey of 1,900 members of the public was carried out through the County Council’s Residents’ Panel. Almost 1,200 East Sussex residents responded (a response rate of 61%) showing just how important a topic this is for local people and how useful the Panel is in engaging local people in important debates and service improvements.</p> <p>The survey demonstrated significant gaps in awareness of stroke and the findings have informed local awareness campaigns.</p>

Ongoing scrutiny and best value projects

Title	How we aim to make a positive difference
<p>Adult Social Care Financial Assessments</p> <p>End date: March 2010</p>	<p>When someone approaches Adult Social Care for help they are assessed to establish the type and level of services they need and the level of funding required to support the package of care. The financial assessment also indicates whether the service user needs to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the care.</p> <p>The number of complaints about the delay in carrying out financial assessments has risen recently. The review board will identify any improvements needed to make sure the social care and financial assessment processes work better together and provide an improved, speedier service for service users.</p>

Ongoing scrutiny and best value projects	
Title	How we aim to make a positive difference
<p>Education: Key Stage 2 Attainment</p> <p>End date: June 2010</p>	<p>Tests at the end of Key Stage 2 (when a child is 11 years old) are designed to establish the current progress of a child and to help assess their future development at secondary school.</p> <p>Key Stage 2 exam results in East Sussex were 3% behind the national average in 2009. The aim of the review is to establish what can be done to bring about improvements in these results in the future.</p> <p>The Review Board is speaking to primary school teachers and school advisors to identify what is working well, where there is a need for improvement and how this improvement can be achieved.</p>
<p>Nutrition, hydration and feeding in acute hospitals</p> <p>Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)</p> <p>End date: September 2010</p>	<p>This review seeks to ensure that patients are getting the right nutritional care to support them to eat and drink whilst they are in hospital. The existing policies and procedures of East Sussex Hospitals Trust and Brighton and Sussex University Hospital Trust have been investigated, including screening for malnutrition, assisted eating and protected mealtimes. The review board has also heard from Age Concern/Help the Aged regarding their 'Hungry to be Heard' campaign.</p> <p>The next stage of the review is 'observation visits' commissioned by HOSC from East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) to provide an insight into how these policies work in practice.</p>
<p>Rural Health Services</p> <p>Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)</p> <p>End date: September 2010.</p>	<p>A one day conference in November 2009 built a clearer picture of rural health services provision and accessibility. Through presentations, personal stories and group discussions in the 'scrutiny café', delegates explored some of the key challenges of providing health services in rural areas, including access, availability and quality.</p> <p>HOSC is considering the concerns, comments and ideas generated to see if there is anything that would benefit from more in-depth investigation, along with identifying any key messages from the event that they may wish to promote. The insights from the event will also enable HOSC to consider rural issues across all its work.</p> <p>Attracting over 70 people, this was the largest event the ESCC scrutiny team has coordinated.</p>
<p>Road Safety - Killed & Seriously Injured (KSI)</p> <p>End date: June 2010</p>	<p>The review seeks to ensure that the County Council influences partners and works more effectively to ensure a better, evidence-based approach to reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads of East Sussex in the long term.</p>
<p>Winter Maintenance Policy</p> <p>End date: June 2010</p>	<p>The review will examine the lessons learnt from the winter maintenance programme in 2009/10 and agree whether the policy needs to be amended as a result.</p>

4. About the Council Plan

Our business planning and monitoring processes

The Council's Business Plan sets out the policy steers for the County Council as set for each Lead Cabinet Member's portfolio and states clearly how they will be delivered and how success will be measured. The Reconciling Policy and Resources process ensures that service and financial planning are carried out together so that resources are made available in line with service provision and policy decisions. In addition, further detail about performance and targets are available in the [Portfolio Plans](#).

Reports about our progress against the Plan are debated by the Cabinet and the full Council at six, nine and twelve months. These monitoring reports highlight our achievements, areas of concern and remedial action using a traffic light system.

Budget monitoring and proactive budget management are vital parts of the management of the County Council. The Council's spending against its Revenue and Capital Programmes is monitored throughout each year and regularly reported to Cabinet. This is supported by a comprehensive monitoring system, with Chief Officers responsible for their departments' budget management. Reports are made to the Director of Corporate Resources detailing actual and potential variations on revenue and capital spending, risks and pressures, together with the actions that are being taken or planned to manage these variations/risks.

In year budget monitoring is an important guide to setting the budget for the following year and also enables final accounts to be produced quickly, accurately and in accordance with the legislative requirements.

Data Quality

East Sussex County Council is committed to producing high quality data and acknowledges that they are the essential ingredient for reliable performance, financial and workforce information to support decision making. Sound systems are in place to collate, challenge, evaluate and assess data, both corporately and within departments. Sensible judgements will be made about the balance between the use and importance of the information and the cost of collecting the required data to the necessary level of accuracy.

External monitoring of performance

We are accountable to the residents of East Sussex and they are the principal judges of our performance. We are, however, also subject to external assessments. This provides an additional opportunity to verify our own monitoring and review findings and to identify further how we may improve our services.

Comprehensive Area Assessment

A Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) is a new way of assessing local public services in England. It examines how well councils are working together with other public bodies to meet the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by the Audit Commission, Care Quality Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation and Ofsted. The Comprehensive Area Assessment was published in December 2009 - [Comprehensive Area Assessment \(CAA\)](#). The Audit Commission reported that 'Overall, East Sussex County Council performs well'.

5. Reconciling Policy and Resources Key Decisions

The Council has continued with its plans to reduce Council Tax increases and has set an increase of 2.7% for 2010/11. This is the lowest increase for 14 years and reflects the Council's concern for those of our residents, particularly the elderly and those on fixed and low incomes, who are struggling with rising household bills. Chapter 6 of this Council Plan explains how finances are allocated to service delivery and capital developments, as well as outlining the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Council has agreed the following differential cash increases for 2010/11 which reflect the Council's priorities:

- Adult Social Care – 2.5% increase (£3,890,000);
- Looked After Children and Safeguarding Children and Young People – 8% increase (£1,300,000);
- Remaining Children's Services Department – 1% increase (£555,000);
- Highways – 1.25% increase (£226,000);
- Libraries, Building Maintenance and Waste – All receive a 1% increase (£349,000 in total);
- All other areas – 0% increase.

Careful financial management in 2009/10 also means that there is additional one-off funding worth £3.6m for the following priorities:

- An extra £1m to mend pot-holes caused by the bad winter weather;
- £900,000 to support the increase in referrals in Children's services following the Baby P case;
- £750,000 to support the introduction of free personal care for some elderly residents if that scheme comes into place;
- A further £250,000 for the recession fund to help residents and businesses to fight the effects of the economic situation;
- £250,000 to support different ways of delivering services and working more closely with councils and other partners. This figure includes £50,000 earmarked for web initiatives to make it easier and cheaper for residents to access services online.

In the following three years, the financial outlook for the public sector as a whole is less certain. The Council is currently planning on the basis of the need to save £60m over the period. This is on the assumption that there will be a 10% reduction in grant over the three years 2011/12-2013/14. When inflation and increases in other costs are taken into account, the likely reduction in expenditure is 15% to 20% in real terms. In order to achieve these savings, all areas of expenditure will be subject to a programme of reviews over the next three years. Each review will include consideration of:

- the actual and comparative cost and performance of the service currently received by residents;
- the value residents place on it;
- options for the levels of service (quality and quantity) that could be provided;
- options for how the service could be delivered and managed and by whom (including consideration of outsourcing, shared services and the improved use of technology);
- external best practice; and
- links to services which are provided across departments or in more than one department.

Each review will include critical friend or external challenge and the recommended future approach will be subject to peer review.