



East Sussex County Council Business Plan

2009-2010

Council Business Plan – document structure and contents

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1. Introduction by the Leader of East Sussex County Council

I am very pleased to introduce the East Sussex County Council Business Plan for 2009/10. This year we have combined our Council Plan with our Financial Budget Summary making more explicit the link between policy commitments and sound financial planning that has become the hallmark of our successful Reconciling Policy and Resources process. The Plan contains details of our services and performance: how we did against last year's priorities and targets, what we aim to deliver for the next three years, and how we plan to deliver these improvements.

In future and beginning in 2009 we will publish an East Sussex County Council Annual Report. This will be a complementary document to the Business Plan summarising the Council's finances, performance and achievements for the previous year, 2008/9. It will draw on the State of the County report that sets the scene for the Reconciling Policy and Resources process each year.

Our promise to all our residents is that East Sussex County Council will be an efficient, customer focused and accountable authority working with partners and local communities to:

- make a positive difference to people's lives;
- create a prosperous and safe County;
- provide affordable, high quality services at the lowest possible Council Tax.

Our priorities, as indicated in this promise, build on previous work and this plan sets out how they will be achieved. We also recognise the need to give urgent attention to the consequences and impact of the current economic recession. We have already agreed an action plan to deliver our new policy steer to:

"Take account of the effect of the economic downturn on residents, businesses and services in the County Council's business and financial plans to ensure that the effects for local people are minimised as far as possible in the short term and that, in the longer term, the area is well placed to emerge in a strengthened position at the end of the current period of economic uncertainty."

These are extraordinary times and we will need to be flexible and adjust our plans accordingly, however, we will also keep sight of the priorities we have developed with our partners through the East Sussex Strategic Partnership and continue to deliver the Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy, 'Pride of Place', which sets out a shared vision for East Sussex to 2026. The Strategy contains our joint countywide strategic objectives and priorities to help us achieve the vision and improve the quality of life for people in all parts of the County. Delivery of this strategy will be fundamental to our response to the economic recession.

Pride of Place is supported by a three year Local Area Agreement with central Government. It sets targets against agreed priorities and contains mandatory targets relating to educational attainment. Together with partners we are reviewing how the economic circumstances are having an impact on these targets.

The Reconciling Policy and Resources process continues to be the main tool by which the Council identifies and delivers key policy priorities and allocates available resources. Local people influence these decisions through many consultative and involvement opportunities throughout the year. We are committed to listening and responding to these views and being openly accountable to the people of East Sussex. Following this process

we set policy, priorities, associated service developments and the Council Budget, before the financial year starts on 1 April.

For 2009/10 the Council Tax increase of 3.5% was set in line with the medium term financial strategy. This strategy has meant a decrease in the annual council tax rise with each year's increase being 0.4% less than the previous year.

External assessment also helps us to plan services and provides an additional perspective on our decisions and performance. For the year 2008/9 I am pleased to report the Audit Commission assessed the Council as four stars (the highest mark that can be achieved) in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and as "improving well". The full results for the Council can be found on the [Audit Commission website](#). The Audit Commission recognises that outcomes for local people are improving in our priority areas. The Commission also acknowledges the progress that has been made in adult social care and in economic development in particular, together with the positive contribution the Council is making to improving outcomes for children and young people. While welcoming this positive report we are also keen to address those areas and services where we can improve even further. The Audit Commission has identified the following key actions for the Council:

- Build on waste management arrangements and further develop partnership working to ensure buy-in to a joint approach to maximise efficiency and increase recycling;
- Remain focused on the partnership road safety agenda;
- Build on the strengthened corporate approach to the equalities and diversity agenda to embed processes, harness good practice and further improve outcomes;
- Focus on improving educational attainment at key stage 4;
- Build on the steps being taken to further integrate Value for Money (VfM) considerations into the Council's Reconciling Policy and Resources (RPR) process.

Actions to address these points have been included in this plan (referenced as AC) and its supporting plans.

Considering all the above factors we have set our Council Business Plan for 2009/10. The Plan is comprehensive and all our service developments are important. Key decisions made by the Council for 2009/10 are summarised in chapter 5; there are investments to meet our major challenges including an immediate response to help protect the community from the effects of the economic recession.

We can look back on a successful year in 2008/9 and I thank everyone who has helped with that success. We will take this momentum forward and strive for further improvement. We realise, however, that we will all be facing some major challenges in the coming year. The Council has already taken, and will be taking more, steps to help those in difficulty as a result of the economic recession. For 2009/10 and onwards we will maintain our commitment to making a positive difference, especially to the prosperity of East Sussex, and to delivering high quality services that people really need and do this as efficiently as we can.

Peter Jones, Leader of East Sussex County Council

2. A Profile of East Sussex

The Council's Business 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 adjust the Council's contribution to strategic outcomes and 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 508,274 (2007 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 15,100 (3.1%) between 2001 and 2007, 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 13,100 people (2.6%) between 2006 and 2026. Most of this is expected in post-retirement age groups, with the very elderly aged 85+ projected to increase by 61%; 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 4.9% of the total in 2006; significantly lower than for England (11.3%). The proportion of BME children and young people in East Sussex, however, is around 6.9% compared to the England average (15.3%), reflecting the younger age profile of the BME population. BME residents are dispersed across the County with the highest proportions in Hastings and Eastbourne. East Sussex has a high proportion of disabled people. 19.8% of our working age residents are disabled people compared to a regional figure of 16.4% and a national figure of 18.6%. We recognise that we need to have more information about disabled people in the community and are addressing this in 2009/10.

Children and young people make up 22% 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 2009/10 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 April 08 and December 08 crime reduced by 11% compared to the same period in the previous

year. While the overall low level of crime makes the area attractive, 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 will be carefully monitored and action, with partners, taken as needed. Reports of domestic violence are already increasing and analysis suggests that acquisitive crime may rise (e.g. burglary and shoplifting).

Economy

The economy is largely service based with public sector employment, financial services and tourism 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 69% of the UK average. The County's road and rail infrastructure is poor and restrains economic development. The unemployment claimant rate for January 2009 was 3.0% below the national average of 3.4% but considerably higher than the South East figure of 2.4%. 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. 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 challenges identified in Pride of Place are:

- Poor transport and communication infrastructure
- A lack of affordable housing in urban and rural areas
- Poor access to services in some rural areas
- Coastal towns and economies in need of regeneration
- Low wages, skills and aspirations and high part-time employment
- Few high earners in East Sussex, most working outside the county
- An ageing population with an increasing demand for services
- Poor health, high rates of long term limiting illness in some areas
- Significant areas of poverty and of deprivation
- A weak local economy, dominated by small businesses employing fewer than 10 people, with lack of space in which to grow
- Flood risk in some rural and coastal areas
- Social issues, including crime and social change.

The Council's response to these challenges can be found in this Business 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 County Council

Our political profile

We have 49 Councillors (also known as Members) 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 (May 2005) the political make-up of East Sussex County Council is: Conservative – 29, Liberal Democrats – 13, Labour – 5, Independent – 1, Independent Democrat - 1.

The next election for the County Council takes place on Thursday 4th June 2009. This has been moved from the original May date to coincide with the European Parliamentary Elections. County Councillors will be elected to stand for four years to 2013. Results will be published on [our website](#).

Councillors are responsible for the services the Council provides and the choices it makes in delivering those services. They do this by setting the overall policies and strategies for the Council and by monitoring the way in which these are implemented. All Councillors are responsible for agreeing the main policies and priorities for all services, including the Council's budget. They meet six times a year in full Council. Meetings are open to the public and broadcast live on the Council's website - [view our webcasts](#).

The County Council's promise to the community is supported by policy steers for each portfolio. Lead members are held accountable for the delivery of these policy steers under our performance management processes. The policy steers are reviewed annually in the light of local and national intelligence, as part of the Reconciling Policy and Resources process, which begins with the State of the County report in July.

Lead Member areas of responsibility (portfolios)

The Cabinet makes its decisions in line with the overall policies, priorities and budget set by the full Council and individual Cabinet members have special responsibility for set portfolios.

Strategic Management and Economic Development

This portfolio 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. It is supported by the Chief Executive's Department. Portfolio holder: Councillor Jones, Leader of the County Council (and Chairman of the Cabinet). Councillor Simon Kirby holds the portfolio responsibility for Economic Development Projects.

Corporate Resources

This portfolio is supported by the Corporate Resources Directorate and covers how we intend to improve the management of our financial and property resources. Portfolio holder: Councillor Reid, Deputy Leader of the County Council (and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet).

Community Services

This portfolio covers how we will work to ensure safer communities, provide community leadership, support strategic partnerships, improve library services and promote the

electronic delivery of services. It is supported by the Chief Executive's Department and Corporate Resources Directorate. Portfolio holder: Councillor Tidy.

Adult Social Care

This portfolio 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. It is supported by the Department for Adult Social Care. Portfolio holders: Councillor Glazier and Councillor Bentley.

Children's Services

This portfolio 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 and is supported by the Department for Children's Services. Portfolio holders: Councillor Glazier, Councillor Elkin (Learning and School Effectiveness), and Councillor Stroude (Children and Families).

Transport and Environment

This portfolio covers how we plan to improve 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. This portfolio is supported by the Department for Transport and Environment. Portfolio holder: Councillor Lock.

How we involve our communities

It is important for the Council to keep the public informed about its priorities and services and to listen to residents' views when making changes. We communicate in many ways and plan to improve opportunities for residents to be involved in Council decision making by following our Policy Steer:

"Involve local communities by ensuring residents have well informed expectations and their views about services, policies and priorities are taken into account."

There are many opportunities to hear the views of our community which includes a wide variety of consultation and engagement methods such as surveys, focus groups, workshops and exhibitions. We find out views by letter; through our comments, compliments and complaints process; by telephone and through contact with councillors.

We also work with a number of community and service user forums and panels to help shape and improve our services. For example the County Council's Residents' Panel tells us about residents' needs, experiences, ideas and opinions on our policies and services. The Panel was refreshed in Spring 2008 when membership was increased from 1,600 to 1,900 to give a more robust and representative sample of resident opinion.

Our Consultation Strategy plays a major part in the way we approach consultation. This includes how it links to the organisation's objectives and priorities, and evidence of how and where the results of consultation have been used. It focuses on:

- increase the effectiveness of community engagement;
- identifying increased opportunities for departments to work in partnership on consultation;
- how, where and when information, knowledge and expertise is shared across the organisation; and

- how feedback from those involved has influenced our decision making process and what has happened as a result.

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? |
|--|---|---|
| Your Community Residents Panel Survey 1 July – August 2008 | To find out how we can use the money we have more effectively and efficiently to provide the services that people need in their local area. | The feedback is being used to inform our reconciling policy and resources process and the service changes in this Council Business Plan 2009/10. |
| Safer Schools Survey November 2007 – July 2008 | To find out Children and Young Peoples perceptions and experiences of bullying behaviour both in and out of school. | Feedback is being used to inform our county-wide policies to combat bullying. |
| Hastings Traffic Calming July 2008 | To find out local residents comments on proposals to introduce a traffic calming scheme along Parkstone Road. | Results showed considerable local support for the scheme and works are planned to start in early 2009. |
| Wealden and Lewes Accessibility Survey - December 2007 – September 2008 | To find out about any difficulties that are faced when travelling to and from local facilities such as shops, schools and hospitals. | Feedback from the consultation exercise in December has informed the draft accessibility strategy and comments on the draft strategy will be used to inform the final strategy. |
| Supporting People August 2008 | To find out views on the introduction of services to help vulnerable people to live independently in the community. | The feedback is being used to help develop the specifications for the new service |

More information about our 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.

Overview and scrutiny

Scrutiny plays a key role in the Council’s system of accountability, service improvement and policy development. 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 their review boards invite external organisations and representative groups to give their views on service, performance or policy. They analyse the evidence, draw out findings and put the case for change directly to the Cabinet and beyond wherever necessary.

Scrutiny plays an active and important role in the Reconciling Policy and Resources process, it:

- makes recommendations to Lead Members on initial policy steers and their contribution to the Council’s objectives before they are put to the County Council;
- considers if amended policy steers are properly reflected in proposed budgets
- considers if all possible efficiencies have been identified and assesses the potential impact of proposed efficiency savings; and
- reviews the extent to which their views and recommendations have been adopted and seeks to improve the process for future years.

Work programmes and successes for scrutiny

Our approach to scrutiny is to aim for ‘gold medal’ recommendations in all scrutiny activities, i.e. where they make tangible improvements for the people of East Sussex. Below are a few key examples of recent scrutiny and best value projects and the difference each has made.

| Scrutiny and best value projects completed 2008/09 | |
|--|--|
| Title | How we have made a positive difference |
| Effects of alcohol misuse on the health of children and young people. March 2008 | We will ensure alcohol education and early intervention work remains relevant and effective for young people using regular consultation and feedback. Specific initiatives will be developed to support parents and carers to tackle alcohol misuse by young people in their care. |
| Services for School Governors November 2008 | The quality of training for governors will be enhanced and their level of understanding around key aspects of their role improved. We will enhance the scrutiny of governing bodies by the School Improvement Partners to help better identify those governing bodies in need of additional support. |
| The Council’s relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) March 2008 | Departments without dedicated bidding officers will now consider appointing one on ‘invest to save’ principles – Adult Social Care has done so and savings are expected to accrue. The Council has ceased nominations to boards of Voluntary and Community Organisations based on funding arrangements and Members now focus on developing local engagement with the VCS in their community leadership role. Procurement processes have been clarified and improved. |

Scrutiny and best value projects completed 2008/09

| Title | How we have made a positive difference |
|---|--|
| <p>Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) review of NHS 'Fit for the Future' proposals to make significant changes to maternity and special baby care services.</p> <p>March 2007 to September 2008. Ongoing involvement in taking forward the outcome of the project.</p> | <p>HOSC undertook an extensive formal scrutiny process, evaluating the evidence for change and the adequacy of public consultation. A first response was made to the Primary Care Trusts PCTs in October 2007.</p> <p>The PCTs decided to reconfigure services to one site. In March 2008 HOSC requested an independent review by the Secretary of State for Health due to concerns about safe access to services for local people. The review was carried out the summer and in September 2008 the Secretary of State accepted HOSC's concerns and directed the PCTs to reverse their decision.</p> |
| <p>Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee review of Directly Provided Services</p> <p>Two year project completed in January 2009</p> | <p>The Council's directly provided care services have emerged as 'centres of excellence' so that they will be in the best possible position to be marketed when 'personalised budgets' are introduced.</p> |
| <p>Dropped kerbs in East Sussex</p> <p>June 2008</p> | <p>A policy on dropped kerbs is being developed to ensure that in future dropped kerbs are installed at the most beneficial locations.</p> <p>An additional £100,000 will be spent on pavements and installing dropped kerbs to help meet the gap in demand identified by scrutiny.</p> |

Ongoing scrutiny and best value projects

| Title | How we aim to make a positive difference |
|---|--|
| <p>Employment Opportunities for Adults with Learning Disabilities</p> <p>This review will conclude in March 2009</p> | <p>Recommendations will focus on how East Sussex County Council can best engage with local employers (including voluntary & community organisations) to promote and develop employment opportunities (both paid and voluntary) for adults with a learning disability.</p> |
| <p>Governing Body Clerks</p> <p>This review will conclude in July 2009</p> | <p>Recommendations will focus on the roles and responsibilities of governing body clerks and assess how a centralised clerking for East Sussex would improve services and value for money.</p> |
| <p>Dentistry</p> <p>HOSC review of the new National Health Service dental contract introduced April 2006 and its impact, particularly on the availability of NHS dentistry to East Sussex residents.</p> <p>Started June 2006</p> | <p>In November 2007, the East Sussex Primary Care Trusts reported that a higher number of dentists were accepting NHS patients and that contract disputes had been reduced or resolved. However, there are some outstanding concerns regarding access.</p> <p>HOSC continues to monitor contract implementation to ensure minimal negative impact and to press for action to improve access.</p> |

| Ongoing scrutiny and best value projects | |
|--|--|
| Title | How we aim to make a positive difference |
| Scrutiny review of council procurement and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) | Recommendations will focus on streamlining systems to make it as easy as possible for SMEs to do business with the County Council. |

More information on the Council's scrutiny committees and their work programme for 2009/10 can be found on [our website](#).

How we work in partnership

In order to deliver our commitments to our residents the Council needs to work in partnership, contributing resources, support and community leadership where they are needed. We understand that people do not always distinguish between service providers and an individual's experience of living in East Sussex depends on the work of many different public, private, voluntary and community organisations.

Our partnerships come in many forms from the strategic, planning for long-term improvement, to the very specific, involving particular services and localities. We deliver many services through contracted suppliers and providers. We understand the economic and business impact we have on our commercial partners and we are working to support them during the economic recession and so that they may in turn help us to deliver for the community.

We appreciate that we and our partners have a collective responsibility for the well-being of people in East Sussex. The new Comprehensive Area Assessment, to be reported by the Audit Commission later this year, will provide a new insight into how well we and partners are delivering for local people.

The East Sussex Strategic Partnership

The East Sussex Strategic Partnership (ESSP) is a multi-agency partnership involving public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations. It oversees the development and implementation of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement for East Sussex. The ESSP supports partners, including the County, District and Borough Councils, to deliver against local priorities through better quality, joined up services, providing better value for money for local people. (www.essp.org.uk) In 2009/10 partners in the ESSP and the five district Local Strategic Partnerships are confirming and developing action plans to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Local Area Agreement 2008/11 ([LAA](#)) sets out targets for East Sussex agreed between central government and the local area (East Sussex County Council on behalf of ESSP). The LAA targets follow the priorities identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy plus mandatory education and early years' targets. All the targets are set against the new National Indicators introduced in 2008. The ESSP reviews the evidence used for the Sustainable Community Strategy and will consider changing needs when negotiating the annual refresh of the LAA with government.

Children and Young People's Trust

The Children and Young People's Trust ([CYPT](#)) brings together organisations working to improve support available to children, young people and their families in East Sussex. It ensures that key priorities for improving outcomes for children and young people are

clearly identified in the Children and Young People's Plan ([CYPP](#)) and that performance is effectively managed.

The East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership

The County Council works as part of the [East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership](#) to reduce crime, drug and alcohol misuse and anti-social behaviour at a county-wide level. The partnership brings together representatives of all the local agencies involved in community safety and substance misuse. This includes local councils, primary care trusts and care services, the fire service, the police, probation, prosecution and courts services, and the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs).

Voluntary and Community Sector Partnerships

The voluntary and community sector plays a crucial and recognised role in delivering services to the public and building strong communities. The Council is seeking to improve these partnerships and encourage volunteering in the County. We are party to the East Sussex Compact agreement between the public sector and the voluntary and community sector in East Sussex. The aim of the [Compact](#) is to improve the relationship between the sectors so that they can work together more effectively.

4. About the Council's Business Plan

Our business planning and monitoring processes

The Council's Business Plan sets out the policy steers 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.

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 and financial 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 Performance Assessment

A Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) gives an overall evaluation of services provided by local authorities in England. It brings together the results of assessments by OFSTED, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the Audit Commission. Once assessments have been completed, councils are rated between zero and four stars, with four being the highest score. The most recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment for the Council was published in March 2009 and the report can be found on the [Audit Commission website](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/). The Audit Commission reported that 'East Sussex County Council is improving well and is a four star council.' For further information see <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/>.

Comprehensive Area Assessment

From April 2009 the national performance framework for local government changes and Comprehensive Performance Assessment will be replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). The key features of CAA are:

- an independent assessment of how well people are served by their local public services;
- how well councils and their partners deliver key national and local priorities;
- a new area assessment looking at the prospects for better results for local people;
- organisation assessments of the performance and value for money provided by councils and other public bodies; and
- a focus on people, including children and young people, who may experience disadvantage and whose personal circumstances make them most vulnerable.

CAA will start by looking at the Sustainable Community Strategy and the results against the new National Indicator Set that will be reported in 2009. CAA will highlight overall successes and challenges in reports intended to engage and empower local people and to encourage innovation and sharing of learning.

5. Reconciling Policy and Resources Key Decisions

Overview

The County Council has continued with its plans to reduce Council Tax increases and has set an increase of 3.5% for 2009/10. Chapter six of this Council Business Plan explains how finances are allocated to service delivery and capital developments, as well as outlining the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and our plans to meet the annual 3% efficiency gains required by the Government.

Key Decisions

The Council's spending plans within, and between, departments reflect the Council's priorities. The Council has agreed the following differential cash increases for 2009/10 before allowing for inflation:

- Adult Social Care 5.0%
- Waste Disposal 2.5%
- Children's Services 1.7%
- Highways 1.0%
- Libraries 1.0%
- Building Maintenance 0.5%
- All other areas 0.0%

We have also made the following one-off investments for 2009/10:

| | |
|---|------------|
| • Responding to the economic recession | £1,015,000 |
| • Child protection | £800,000 |
| • Highways: transport, safety, and environmental improvements | £800,000 |
| • Libraries | £150,000 |
| • Activities and opportunities for young people | £218,000 |
| • Climate Change Fund | £50,000 |
| • Investment in efficiency | £900,000 |
| Total | £3,933,000 |

The County Council has agreed its largest ever Capital Programme of £922 million. New building and other capital projects have been selected on the basis of the best use of available funding to meet the County Council's priorities. New projects featuring heavily in 2009/10 Include:

- New adult social services day care facility and library in Seaford
- New Newhaven library
- New Hastings library
- Continuing preliminary work for the new Archive and Record office
- New Bexhill high school under the (Building Schools for the Future) BSF programme
- The Hastings Academy programme
- Phase 1 of the Primary capital programme
- ICT network resilience and data in transit security improvements
- Major maintenance programmes for both road and building maintenance
- The Bexhill Hastings link road
- Integrated transport measures