

Best Value Performance Plan 2005/06

Introduction – What this document is

All Councils have to produce an annual performance plan. It is seen as a key element of best value. The main audience for the plan is the authority itself. Central Government also has an interest as it allows them to monitor individual local authorities. It is also a public document and will be made available to those that request it.

Here at South Kesteven both Members & Officers are responsible for delivering quality local services. All of us need to be aware therefore of:

- SKDC's improvement priorities
- How we will be addressing any weaknesses
- Any opportunities that will be exploited to provide better outcomes for local people
- Our targets for future performance both on our own priorities, our local indicators and the Government's Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

This plan attempts to provide the above information.

How we do our business

We provide a large range of services to our taxpayers, residents, businesses & visitors alike.

Quality, value for money services can only be provided when the Council's Corporate Planning arrangements are strong and clear. Over the past 18 months much work has been undertaken to improve and strengthen our corporate planning arrangements.

Corporate Planning Structure

Over the last year the Council has developed the following Corporate Planning Structure. It is based on a vision built around the concept of **PRIDE**.

Our Vision is

‘To ensure that the residents of South Kesteven are proud of their district and their Council’

Following a Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) refresh exercise carried out by representatives from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace) this vision has been more clearly articulated to become a clear destination for the District to be reached by 2020. This has been achieved by breaking down our vision into the following work streams:

- a) **Performance and Priorities**
- b) **Respect and recognition for diversity**
- c) **Informing and Involving**
- d) **Developing Communities**
- e) **Empowering and enabling**

Booklets were produced, describing the key components for each of these “steps” on the path to pride. During the winter of 2004/05 each of our Local Area Assemblies were consulted in detail on these booklets. As a result of their considerations, amendments have been made to the booklets and updated versions are now available both on the Council’s intranet and corporate website.

The latest (2005) CPA guidance supports the Council’s approach in seeking to have a well-articulated vision for the community supported by priorities aligned to clear performance measures and resources by being explicit about non-priority services. The guidance indicates that the best authorities will combine this with the adoption of “ambitions” which will link the Council priorities to the vision. In selecting these ambitions, it was suggested that authorities may wish to have regard to the shared priorities that have been agreed at national level between representatives from Local Government and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). These are:

Sustainable Communities and Transport
Safe and Strong Communities
Healthier Communities
Older People
Children and Young Persons

It is clear from the guidance that Council will be assessed under CPA in 2006 on the extent to which it has delivered tangible outcomes in each of these areas.

The shared priorities have been designed to reflect the activities of Unitary Councils. In two-tier areas like South Kesteven, it is necessary to differentiate the responsibilities of the District and the County Councils. In addition it needs to be remembered that although the Council should consider these shared priorities, primary reliance should be placed upon determining ambitions, which reflect the desires and expectations of the residents of the District. These views were clearly captured in the wide spread consultation process that was undertaken by the Council last year regarding our priorities.

Ambitions

In view of this the Council has adopted the following four ambitions, which will link the vision with the priorities:

- 1. Economic Development**
- 2. Community Safety**
- 3. Healthy Environment**
- 4. Community Engagement**

The following tables show each layer of our Corporate Planning Framework and explain its purpose. By this approach we can ensure that individual staff development plans are driven by the Council's vision and ambitions.

South Kesteven Corporate Planning Framework

	What's it for?	Component	What does it say?
1	To describe the purpose of the Council	Vision	It is based on the concept of pride, articulated by five steps (P,R,I,D,E)
2	To identify the key themes needed to achieve the vision	Ambition	4 themes reflecting national, local and Council priorities
3	The service priorities and performance targets	Priorities	Identifies both step-change (A) and incremental (B) priorities
4	To explain what the Council will stop doing in order to invest in priorities	Non-Priorities	Non-priorities (Z) identified and targets set for financial savings

5	Identifies the changes needed within the organisation to secure improvement	Change Management Action Plan	Sets-out requirements by themes with target dates
6	Corporate advice and direction for service managers	Corporate Strategies	Covers matters such as Human Resources, Risk, Finance, IT, Management development etc
7	Identifies the key indicators and targets used to measure progress	Best Value Performance Plan	Incorporates targets for each priority and programmes future Best Value reviews
8	Sets the framework and measures for the management of each service	Service Plans	Translates priorities into service targets and considers options for improvement
9	Identifies the key development needs and targets for each employee	Personal Development Plans	Captures the outcome from the Personal Development Reviews for every employee

The linkage between these new ambitions and our current priorities, which were agreed in 2004, is demonstrated in the following table:

Proposed Ambition:	Priorities that it incorporates		Shared national priorities that it reflects
	Category A	Category B	
Economic Development	Town-centre regeneration	Business Development Planning	Sustainable Communities and Transport
Safer communities	Anti-social behaviour	Diversity. Vulnerable Persons Housing Management Affordable Housing	Safer and Stronger Communities
Healthier Environment	Street Sweeping Recycling		Healthier Communities
Engagement	Access	Communications LSP and Community Strategy	Children and Young People Older People

Cabinet Portfolios

In order to provide clear leadership, focus and accountability the portfolios of the Council's Cabinet Members have been revised to accord with these new ambitions. This also enables the appointment of "Champions" for particular issues such as Procurement or E-Government.

Four of the portfolios reflect the new ambitions:

Economic Development
Community Safety
Healthy Environment
Community Engagement

The remaining three are cross-cutting:

Resources and Assets (Champion for procurement and risk management)
Organisational Development (Champion for leadership development)
Strategic Partnerships (Champion for joined-up public services)

Development and Scrutiny Panels

To ensure a continued close alignment between the Council's Development & Scrutiny Panels (DSPs) and our aims & priorities, changes have been made to the names and responsibilities of the DSPs. This makes it easier for the DSPs to exercise both its scrutiny and policy development roles.

Development and Scrutiny Panel	Cabinet Portfolios
Economic Development	Economic Development
Community	Community
Healthy Environment	Healthy Environment
Engagement	Engagement Strategic Partnerships
Resources	Resources and Assets Organisational Development

As well as having its business and functions linked directly to our aims and priorities the Panels will continue to receive and consider performance management data.

Tying everything together

To ensure a co-ordinated approach within our corporate structure the Council has produced and members agreed a change management action plan for 2005.

Under a number of main themes including:

- Developing Managers and Members
- Community Strategy/Local Strategic Partnership
- Performance Management/Project Management
- Value for Money/Efficiency Savings
- Access & Modernisation
- Promoting Vision and Communication
- Strategic Housing Issues

Some 100 actions are identified for completion during 2005. Council members and managers are collectively responsible for completing these tasks.

A Change Management Monitoring Group set up in 2004 and made up of leading SKDC councillors plus 4 business people from outside SKDC continue to oversee our Change Management process thus enhancing accountability.

Looking Back

In the autumn of 2004 the Council agreed its new priorities (shown earlier under Categories A & B on page 4). It also identified the services that would fall into the Y (operational or statutory minimum) and Z (dis-investment) categories.

The Category Y services are:

• Asset Management	Business Rates
• Financial Services	Licensing
• Business Management	Markets
• Arts	Leisure
• Housing Repairs	Legal and Administration
• Human Resources	Parks
• Emergency Planning	Environmental Health
• Public Transport	Building Control

Operational minimums have been identified and set for all these services

The Category Z services and the anticipated savings are:

Pest Control	£125,000
Travel Vouchers	£ 63,000
Rate Relief	£ 84,000
Business Grants	£ 50,000
Arts Grants	£ 11,000
Historic Building Grants	£ 20,000
Archaeology Services	£ 13,000
Tourism	£ 78,000
Parish Council Elections	£ 6,000

The savings from these non-priority services, plus a further £200,000 from the total efficiency savings we have identified under the Government's Gershon agenda form the £700,000 earmarked for investment in our priority areas.

The Council will continue to review its local priorities on an annual basis, having regard for both the priorities of Local Strategic Partnership and those at a national level. A new Community Strategy for South Kesteven is planned by the end of 2005.

Performance and Performance Indicators

When agreeing our priorities early in 2004 the Council also set performance targets for each of the priorities. Most of these areas already have relevant performance measures within the Government's suite of best value performance indicators (BVPIs). Our performance against the BVPIs for 2004/05 can be seen on *Appendix 1*. Comparisons are also shown, where available, against top quartile performance of all district councils in 2003/04.

The ✓ ✗ ⇧ have been used to show where our overall performance has improved, gone down, or stayed the same. The Council continues to maintain a strong focus on performance management with collection, reporting, monitoring and a monthly process undertaken by the Cabinet and Corporate Management Team. Corrective action is agreed and authorised where performance falls below acceptable standards

The table also contains, as required by best value legislation, targets for the next three years. The Government have set the following top quartile targets for 2005/06. The Council intends to reach these targets, where practically possible, within no more than three years where they are not already doing so.

Top Quartile Targets 2005/06

BVPI 9	Council Tax collected	98.5%
BVPI 10	NDR Collected	99.12%
BVPI 12	Sickness Absence	8.93 days
BVPI 14	Early Retirements	0.14%
BVPI 15	III Health Retirements	0.00%

Some of our achievements over the past year

In 2004/05 we improved our performance in many areas, both in relation to our priorities and against performance indicators. A few examples are:

- Tackling the housing problem by increasing the provision of new affordable homes to 50, compared to just 35 in 03/04 and a mere 4 the year before
- Improving our responsiveness by achieving a dramatic and sustained improvement in the speed with which planning applications are determined
- Reducing the need for landfill sites by achieving our recycling targets and welcoming over 10,000 households to our fortnightly composting scheme
- Leading the economic development of our town centres by delivering on our promise to provide a high quality attended toilet facility in Stamford and securing private sector interest in the redevelopment of Bourne town-centre
- Uniting all tiers of government together in our six Local Area Assemblies attended by over 500 local people
- Improving access to Council services by increasing the provision of services on-line from 10% to 71%
- Operating a crack-down on littering with the naming and shaming of offenders and collecting nearly £1,000 in litter fines
- Through our Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership working with the Police and seeing lower numbers of both domestic burglaries and vehicle crimes in South Kesteven and securing over 10 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders/ Behaviour Contracts
- Providing care services to a further 1,100 clients and ensuring that the service to our 1,400 sheltered tenants meets the quality framework assessment
- Keeping over 98% of appointments for housing repairs and improving over 275 of our properties to meet the decent homes standard
- Reduced staff sickness levels to below an average of 8.9 days per person thus achieving top quartile performance

2005/06 Local Performance Indicators

Whilst the Government's BVPIs provide a suite of performance indicators/measures to enable it to measure and compare local authority performance across the country on an annual basis, not all these indicators are useful measures to help South Kesteven monitor its progress against its own recently agreed priorities. The Council has therefore identified and agreed a mix of local and national performance for use within its performance management framework for 2005/06. These are shown in *Appendix 2* and in keeping with national BVPIs three year targets are also provided for all the local indicators.

Areas for Improvement

Inspections

Whilst our performance is improving in many areas the Council recognises that certain services are not meeting service targets or improving against national BVPIs. Whilst the Council did not carry out any best value reviews in 2004/05 an inspection was undertaken by the Housing Best Value Inspectorate on the Council's Strategic and Private Sector Housing Service. The review was carried out in February 2005 and the final report from the inspectors was due for publication in May 2005. Certain actions have already been taken in advance of the report such as the commissioning of a private sector stock condition survey. (The Inspectors will be returning later in the year to review our Housing Landlord Service)

The Council has recently embarked on a major consultation exercise with its council house tenants and other stakeholders called a 'Stock Option Appraisal'. The results from this, which ultimately need Government acceptance, will be published in the early summer of 2005.

Best Value Reviews

In 2005/06 the Council will be carrying out a best value review of its Revenue Services. It recognises that whilst certain areas are improving, e.g. speed of processing benefit applications and fraud investigations, other areas such as the collection rate for NDR and the accuracy levels for benefits have declined. Hence a best value review will, amongst other things, examine the reasons for this.

Shared Services and Formal Market Testing (FMT)

In seeking to achieve continuous improvement and efficiency savings in line with both best value legislation and our procurement strategy the Council is undertaking two specific initiatives.

One is in partnership with our neighbouring authority at South Holland and is exploring the potential for shared services in Legal, Revenues & Benefits and Building Control.

The other relates to formal market testing wherein alternative service delivery models are being identified for certain services and appropriate market testing will be undertaken. The first services to be evaluated under FMT are Graphics & Printing along with Facilities Management.

Keeping you informed

Through its revised consultation strategy introduced in 2004 the Council has improved its communication and consultation with all its stakeholders. The strategy uses many types of consultation and identifies the many different groups that it needs to be aimed at. Some examples are:

- Six Local Area Assemblies meet twice a year and offer attendees the opportunity to consider the needs and priorities of the district
- The Local Strategic Partnership, made of representatives from the other public sector agencies and the business world, provides input and knowledge to inform the Community Strategy
- As well as annual staff surveys and regular team briefings, monthly staff newsletters will be produced from May 2005. This will improve the understanding and sense of inclusion for all staff and provide the opportunity for ideas, comment and feedback to be made to senior management

Our consultation strategy will ensure that the Council remains in contact with all its stakeholders.

Any questions

This Performance Plan contains a large amount of information. If you have any questions regarding the content, or a query on any performance information please contact Kevin Martin in the Council's Business Management Section.

Similarly if you require a copy of any documents or reports mentioned in this plan please contact Kevin on k.martin@southkesteven.gov.uk or 01476 406211

SKDC employees can also speak directly to their Head of Service or Corporate Management Team member if they require any clarification.

Contracts

By way of compliance with Government requirements on the contents of Performance Plans, South Kesteven District Council states that it has not awarded any individual contracts during 2004/05 that involved the transfer of staff.

Document Enhancement for the visually impaired or translation from English is available on request

Please contact our Customer Services Network Manager on 01476 406080 or e-mail frontdesk@southkesteven.gov.uk