REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: Chief Executive

REPORT NO.   CEX 298

DATE: 10th October 2005

TITLE:	**Value for Money Trend Analysis**
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	**No**
COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	**Councillor Terl Bryant: Assets & Resources Portfolio**
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	**Corporate Governance : CPA Key Line of Enquiry**
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	**None**
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	**This report is publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk**

1.   Introduction

1.1   The Audit Commission have recently made available to Councils a Value For Money Profiling Tool that enables Councils to assess and compare the relative value for money (vfm) they provide to their residents.

1.2   Value for Money is one of the Key Lines of Enquiry in the test of resources element of CPA 2005. Enclosed, as Appendix A is an extract from this document, which explains the detailed evidence-based performance necessary to achieve a good score for this element.

1.3   For obvious reasons, the data used in the audit commission's profile is historical and the assessment is therefore a snapshot at a fixed point in time. Estimated data has been provided for the periods 2001/02 to 2004/05.

1.4   In order to provide data that is as contemporary as it can be, the financial aspects are based on budget estimates for 2004/5 rather than expenditure out-turns. This means that authorities like South Kesteven which reported a considerable underspend in that year will have the costs of their services over-estimated. In fact the underspends from previous years will have a similar impact on any trend analysis.

1.5   Data on performance is drawn from Best Value Performance Indicators for 2003/4, the last year that audited data is available nationally.

1.6   To gain a detailed, comprehensive and shared understanding of the value for money we provide for each, and every, aspect of the many services we are responsible for will take some time. The authority started this approach last year with the inclusion of a balanced scorecard assessment in each of the services plans. The Audit Commission profiling tool gives the authority the opportunity to test the assumptions that underpin these scorecards. This will then lead to revised more evidenced-based assessments and prioritised actions to improve value for money being included within the service plans for 2006/7.

1.7   The profile also enables the authority to undertake an initial corporate assessment of its value for money in comparison with other authorities

2.   Use of the Audit Commission Profile

2.1   The profile is available on the following link: http://vfm.audit-commission.gov.uk/HomePage.aspx

2.2   To use the profile the Council has to determine which is the most appropriate comparator group: all 230 district councils, or the sixteen Councils in our family group? In accordance with the comparison most commonly drawn by inspectors, it is proposed that all authority comparisons are used in the first instance and then comparison with the other members of our family group are used to investigate specific concerns.

2.3   Considerable care is needed in interpreting the data, for instance accountancy practices differ and this impacts on the allocation of costs. Service needs also fluctuate between authorities and this is further compounded by differences in how the data is presented. Demand is often expressed as an absolute (for example the number of planning applications for food premises) whereas cost are given per head.

3.   Assessing Value for Money at a service level.

3.1   Determining value for money is a process of assessing the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which inputs (measured in terms of resources used) are turned into outputs (measured wherever possible as the community benefit). The profile enables us to compare our achievements with those of other authorities. It is important to recognise that the level of service provision can vary because of the local context in which services have been provided.

3.2   Given the number and range of services we provide it seems helpful to adopt some value for money categories into which each of our services can be

assigned based on the information contained in the profile. Based on the use of quartile comparisons I propose the following categorisation:

Resources used quartile	Performance achieved quartile	VFM judgement	Category
Low (best quartile)	High (best quartile)	Excellent	1
Low (best quartile)	Medium (second or third quartile) quartile	Good	2
Low (best quartile)	Low (worst quartile)	Average	3
Medium (second or third quartile)	High (best quartile)	Good	2
Medium (second or third quartile)	Medium (second or third quartile) quartile	Average	3
Medium (second or third quartile)	Low (worst quartile)	Poor	4
High (worst quartile)	High (best quartile)	Average	3
High (worst quartile)	Medium (second or third quartile) quartile	Poor	4
High (worst quartile)	Low (worst quartile)	Very poor	5

3.3   Allocating a service to a particular category would then determine the components of the subsequent action plan in accordance with the following:

Category of VFM	Subsequent actions
1	Excellent value for money being delivered, no further action required
2	Good value for money being delivered – service plan will detail how this achievement is to be maintained
3	Average value – incremental improvement required through Action plan.
4	Poor value for money - step change improvement required
5	Very poor value for money being delivered - thorough review using best value methodology required.

3.4   The intention is that these actions will be taken into account in the formulation of service plans for 2006/7.

4.   Expenditure Overview

4.1   The most notable feature of a global assessment of our expenditure, compared to other authorities nationally, is how extremely low this expenditure is. Of the 238 District Councils in England, South Kesteven has the 11th lowest expenditure per head of population putting us in the lowest 5 percent. Full

details are given in Appendix B.

4.2   Locally, it might have been predicted that urban areas would be spending more, and indeed they are. However it is sobering to see precisely how much more, Lincoln for instance is spending over 85% more per resident than South Kesteven.

4.3   What is more perturbing is that some local Districts, which much better reflect our demography, also have expenditure levels considerably above our own. Boston for example are spending over 60% more per head of population than us, South Holland 33%, Newark and Sherwood 22%. The second table in Appendix B shows how we compare with the similar authorities in our family group across the country. The average of this group is 22% higher than that of the South Kesteven. If South Kesteven was able to spend at just the average for its family group it would mean that the Council would have over £2.75 million per year to invest in service provision, with a resultant council tax of £164 at Band D.

4.4   In order to assess performance at a corporate level it is illuminating to cross-tabulate this data with another spreadsheet on the Audit Commission's web-site that assesses the CPA performance of all District Councils. As explained earlier South Kesteven has the eleventh lowest expenditure per head of population. So it is interesting to compare the performance of South Kesteven along with other low-spending authorities with the average for the country as a whole and indeed those authorities who are high spending. This can be done using the scored judgements that under-pinned the CPA inspection process. The results are given in the following table:

Authorities by net expenditure per head	Average total CPA score	Average score for service quality	Average score for capacity
All Authorities	40.49	2.68	2.61
20 highest spenders	38.95	2.4	2.25
20 lowest spenders	40.6	2.6	2.6
South Kesteven	39	3	2

4.5   Surprisingly this shows that the CPA result for South Kesteven is not only better that both the average of the top twenty highest spending authorities and four of the top six highest spenders. Furthermore when we examine service quality as the component most closely related to the perceptions of residents, the score of South Kesteven is considerably above all the other comparators.

4.6   Remarkably the average score for capacity for those authorities with the least expenditure per head of population is higher than for the top 20 authorities.

4.7   Taken together this provides support to the perceptions that South Kesteven is delivering a fair quality of service for a low rate of expenditure.

4.8   Inevitably our much lower rate of service expenditure poses significant limitations on our service provision. It also affects how we assess value for

money in our services. As we are spending a long way below the lowest quartile any expenditure on any given service that is at, or above, the lower quartile when compared to other authorities, may represent a disproportionate application of the Council's limited resources or are we achieving a higher level of user income from services?

4.9 Interestingly and worryingly, the District Council's low level of expenditure does not correlate with its score on the deprivation index. Although below the average, the Council is shown as the 147th most deprived District from the 238 included. All of the ten Councils with lower levels of expenditure than SKDC have lower levels of deprivation.

4.10 This low level of expenditure contributes to the situation where residents of South Kesteven pay the second lowest level of Council tax in the country as is shown in Appendix C. Not surprisingly this level of Council tax is the lowest in our family group.

4.11 A high level overview comparing our expenditure categories with other authorities reveals the following picture:
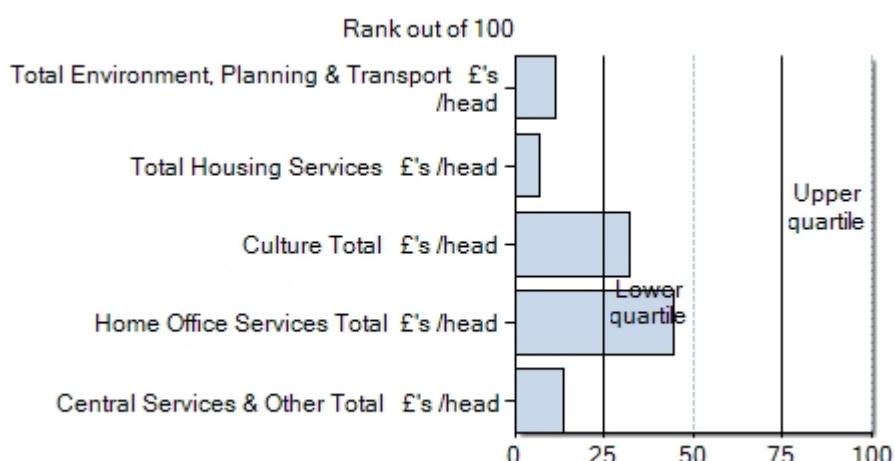

4.12 At a high level the areas that would appear to receive a disproportionate amount of Council finance are Cultural Services and Home Office Services. However, as can be seen the actual expenditure on Home Office Services is very low and can be discounted:

Indicator	2004
Central Services & Other Total £'s /head	35.18
Home Office Services Total £'s /head	0.14
Culture Total £'s /head	22.78
Total Housing Services £'s /head	2.58
Total Environment, Planning & Transport £'s /head	43.14
Social Services Total £'s /head	0

4.13 In order to assess value for money, one has to focus as much on outcomes as on the use of resources, so the following sections looks at each of these categories.

5. Environment, Planning and Transport

5.1 This accounts for over 40% of the authority's expenditure, making it the largest element of expenditure. It consists of the following service blocks:

Environment, Planning and Transport
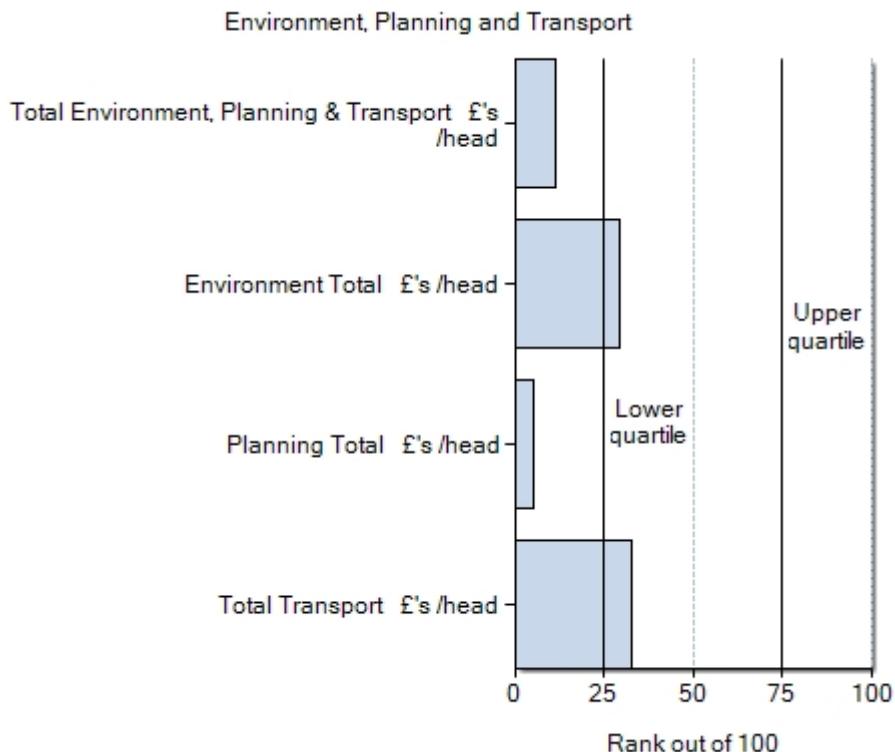
5.2 The largest block is Environment, which includes the following services:

Environmental services: Street cleaning

Environment
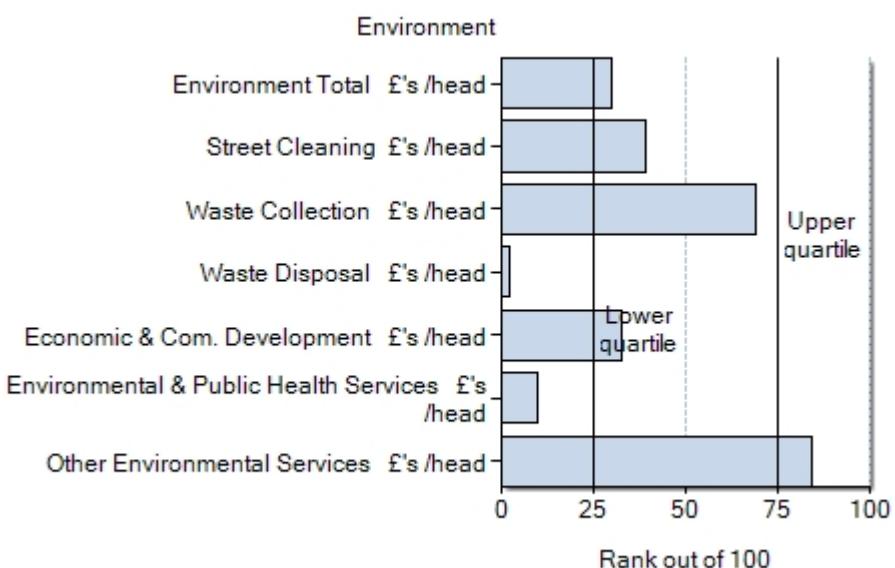
5.3 Waste collection and recycling

5.3.1 The largest element of this service is waste collection, where the authority's costs are well above the mid-point.

5.3.2 This impression is confirmed by an analysis comparing our costs with other members of our family group where we are in the highest (worst) quartile:

Authority name	2004
Braintree District Council	26.15
Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council	22.52
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	19.18
South Kesteven District Council	**18.69**
Vale Royal Borough Council	18.57
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	17.67
Newark and Sherwood District Council	17.54
High Peak Borough Council	17.19
Kettering Borough Council	16.69
East Northamptonshire Council	16.52
Borough of Crewe and Nantwich	16.33
North Warwickshire Borough Council	15.91
Wyre Forest District Council	15.54
Stafford Borough Council	15.48
East Staffordshire Borough Council	14.30
West Wiltshire District Council	11.65

5.3.3 Our performance, as measured by both our recycling rate and residents' satisfaction, is in the worst quartile when compared to all authorities and just outside the worst quartile when compared to the similar authorities in our family group.

5.3.4 Taken together these factors would suggest that the Council has not been delivering value for money in this service and justifies the need for improvements in the recycling rate to be a priority of the authority. Using our vfm table this service is in category 4 indicating that the data shows poor value for money.

5.3.5 A much better picture of performance emerges if the budgeted figure for 2004/5 is prepared with the actual out-turn. However until our-turn figures are available for all authorities this data cannot be used.

5.3.6 An analysis over time shows how the Council has moved from being a low spending to a high spending authority during the time when the service was brought in house. Clearly this process was accompanied by a perceived increase in quality of service, but the lack of investment in recycling meant that this key performance indicator has lagged behind other authorities. This has now been addressed by making recycling a category A priority, however there will clearly be a lag before we achieve a step-change in our performance.

Waste Collection

Legend:
- South Kesteven District Council
- Lower Quartile
- Median
- Upper Quartile
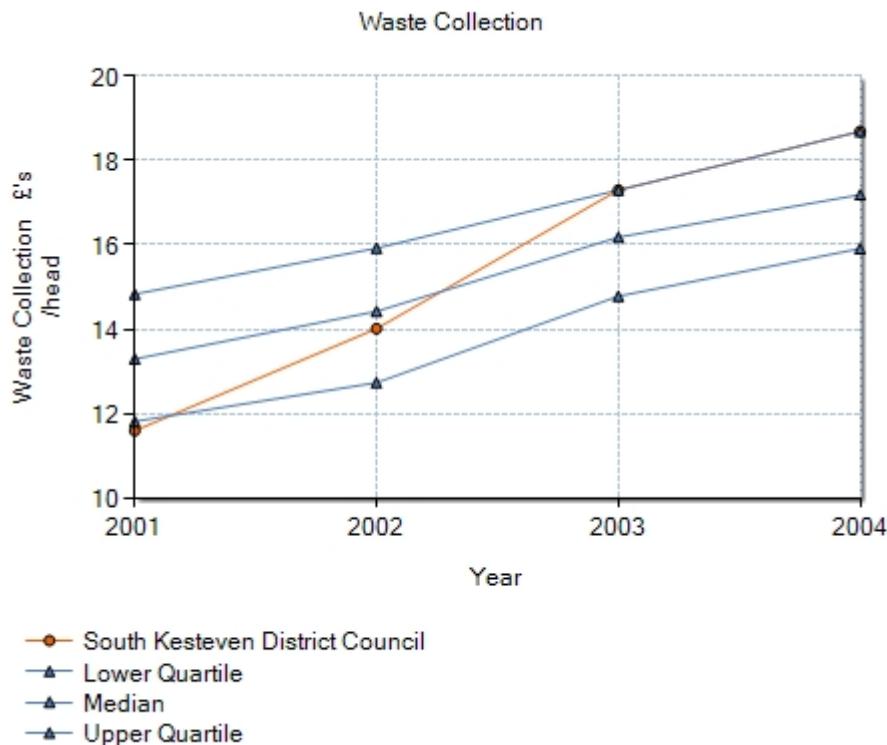
5.4 Street Cleaning

5.4.1 At £6.90 per head our expenditure on street cleaning is just above the best (i.e. lowest) quartile nationally and is in the best quartile when compared to authorities in our family group. Data on customer satisfaction is disappointing; we are in the bottom quartile by comparison with all authorities and have the lowest resident satisfaction of the authority in our family group. It will be interesting to see whether this perception has been improved by the measures taken since street scene became a priority of the Council.

5.4.2 This is therefore a category 3 service, indicating that the data shows average value for money.

5.5 Planning

5.5.1 At £5.28 per head our expenditure on planning services was the 13th lowest in the country and the lowest in our family group. In the year for which comparisons are being made, our performance was below the median (but above the bottom quartile) nationally. This resulted in the authority receiving no planning delivery grant for 2004. Performance has since improved dramatically, and it is reasonable to anticipate that this will be reflected in an improved comparative performance.

5.5.2 The data on the number of applications decided indicates that this is well above the median nationally.

5.5.3 With very low expenditure and median performance the data indicates that this is a category 2 service providing good value for money.

5.6 Transport

5.6.1 With an income of £1.97 South Kesteven expenditure was below the median but above lowest quartile both nationally and by comparison with authorities in our family group. As this heading includes both parking and subsidised public transport there are no readily available indicators to assess performance.

5.7 Environmental Health and Public Services

5.7.1 At £7.76 per head, by national comparison our costs are well into the lowest (best) quartile. This budget head comprises food inspections and public toilets. Nationally the number of high-risk food premises is the highest in the family group and the best practice score is median, implying that this is a category 2 service offering good value for money.

5.8 Economic and Community Development

5.8.1 At a cost of £2.12 the Council is close to the lowest (best) quartile for expenditure. This is an area where reliable and robust performance indicators are not available to support a reliable assessment of value for money.

5.9 Community Safety

5.9.1 At over £4.37 the Council has one of the highest levels of expenditure within its family group and nationally and is well within the highest (worst) quartile on both comparisons.

5.9.2 The bulk (58%) of this expenditure is on CCTV. Unfortunately the outcome in terms of reduced criminal activity is not included in these data sets, although it is known that the Council is the best quartile nationally for this. A considerable element of this expenditure (31%) is on footpath lighting. This cost of £171,000 is a considerable amount of expenditure by a District Council and further comparative data is being sought.

5.9.3 A comparison over time shows that whilst the Council's investment is relative static, the investment by other authorities is increasing quickly meaning that the gap between the Council and other authorities is narrowing:

Community Safety
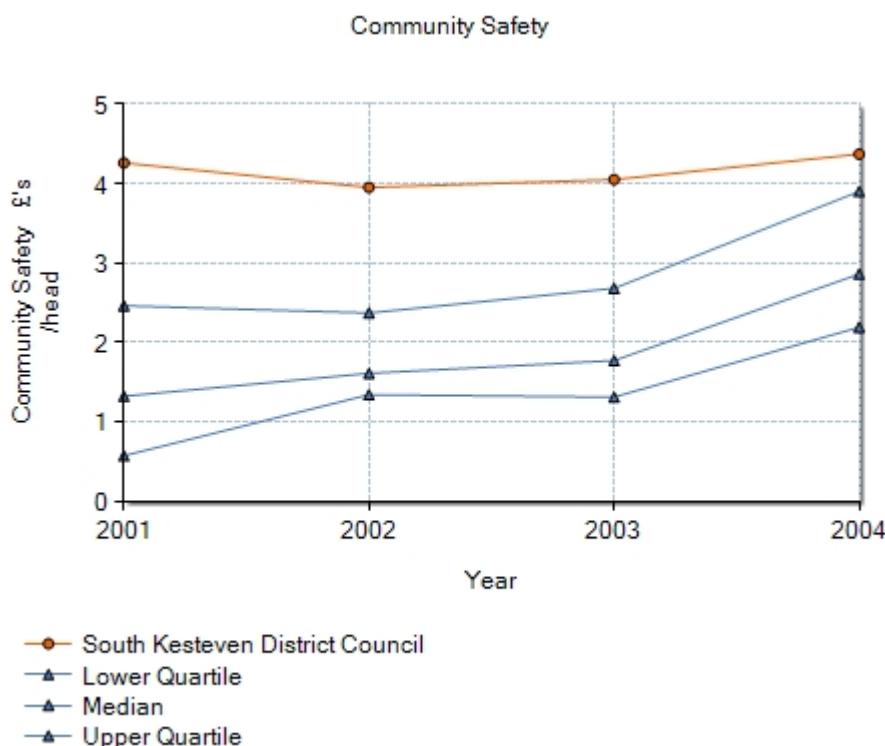
5.9.4 This leads to an assessment at level 3 providing average value for money.

6. Housing Services

6.1 Community (Strategic) Housing Services

6.1.1 With expenditure in the year of just £2.58 the costs of this service are one of the very lowest in the country and the family group. At £1.33 costs of homelessness are slightly higher on a comparative basis but still below the median.

6.1.2 Households accepted as homelessness are, however, amongst the highest in the country and well into the highest (i.e. worst) quartile, although as this is an absolute figure, it is influenced by the population of the Council. Conversely the households in temporary accommodation are amongst the lowest in the country, with the number in bed and breakfast during the year the very lowest (0).

6.1.3 However the number of private properties made fit is the lowest in the country and the number of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants approved is on about the median.

6.1.4 The disparity of these indicators makes the assessment of performance difficult. On balance this service would appear to be in category 2 offering good value for money.

6.2 Repairs and Maintenance

6.2.1 Because of changes to HRA finances, principally through Social Rent reform and the creation of the Major Repairs Allowance, it is not easy to obtain

accurate data relating to the resources used by each authority for the repair of its housing stock. The situation is particularly complex because the form, nature and condition of the housing stock vary significantly across the country. In order to provide some form of vfm assessment an assumption has been made that the government programme of directing resources to those authorities in accordance with their needs has been accurate and therefore the assessment focuses solely on the extant to which performance has been achieved.

6.2.2   The data shows that performance in terms of the number of non-decent homes is in the best quartile both nationally and within the family group. Re-let times and non-urgent repairs are about median but urgent repairs completion is in the bottom quartile. On the other hand appointments is in the top quartile. This shows that locally agreed policies on appointments are different to the national targets for repairs completion.

6.2.3   Overall, on the assumptions given a level of 3, average service is appropriate.

6.3   Management of Council Homes

6.3.1   The changes to housing finance have had the same affect on assessing the resources available for management. The data from the Audit Commission aggregates management and maintenance expenditure together so no clear picture of resources used on management can be obtained. This problem is further compounded by the lack of clear performance criteria meaning that it is difficult to draw a robust view of value for money can be obtained from this data.

6.3.2   The only indicator of tenants' satisfaction can be affected as much by repairs as by management. This indicator places the Council at the median nationally leading to a tentative conclusion that the value for money may also be at level 3, average.

7. Culture

7.1 Cultural Services Generally

7.1.1 Cultural services comprises the following services:
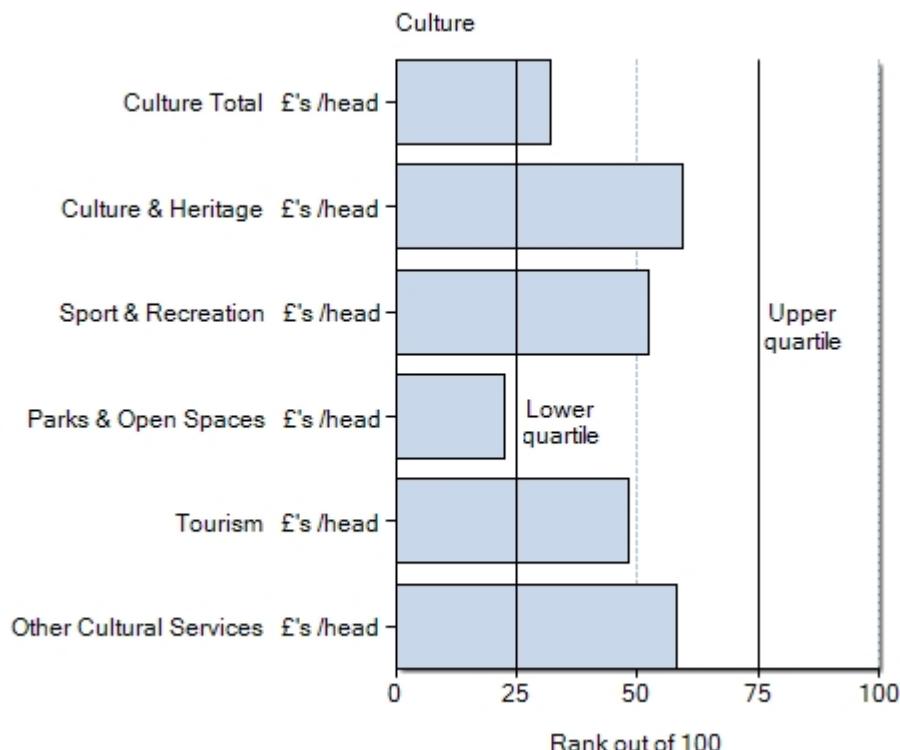
7.1.2 Total spend on culture is £22.79 per resident, making it the second largest block of expenditure after Environment, Planning and Transport.

7.2 Sports and Recreation

7.2.1 This is the largest element and accounts for just under half (£10.81) of our total expenditure on culture.

7.2.2 This level of expenditure is comparatively very high for the District Council. Although it is still below the median nationally. National comparisons on both user satisfaction and usage are close to the median.

7.2.3 Comparison with our family group paints a slightly different picture showing a comparatively low level of expenditure and satisfaction above the median.

7.2.4 Taking these factors together it is considered that a level 3 average value for money assessment is appropriate.

7.3 Culture and Heritage

7.3.1 This is the next largest element accounting for £5.06 per resident. It covers the costs of arts centres and theatres.

7.3.2 Nationally this level of expenditure is higher than the median. The same data shows that satisfaction with, and usage of, arts and cultural facilities are at or just below the median. This is confirmed by comparisons with our family group, indicating a level 3, average value for money assessment.

7.4 Parks and Open Spaces

7.4.1 The costs of maintaining parks and open spaces are £3.77 per residents, which is in the best (i.e. lowest) quartile nationally. Unfortunately usage and satisfaction figures are in the worst quartile both nationally and in our family group.

7.4.2 It would therefore seem that this is also a level 3, average value for money service.

7.5 Tourism and Other Cultural Services

7.5.1 These represent fairly modest levels of expenditure, (£1.77 and £1.33) both of which are median nationally. There are no suitable indicators of performance with these data sets making it impossible to assess the value for money

8.0 Financial and Central Services

8.1 General

8.1.1 This block accounts for £35.18 per resident and contains several separate services:

Central services and other

Central services and other

Rank out of 100
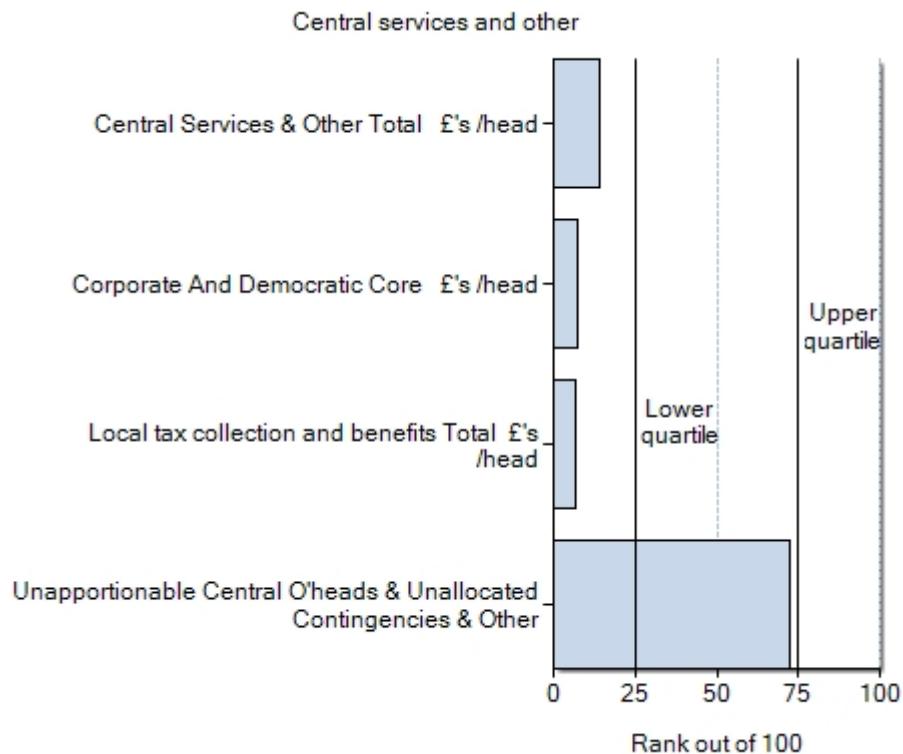
8.2 Tax Collection

8.2.1 At a cost of £4.87 per household, costs of tax collection are in the lowest (best) quartile nationally.

8.2.2 Performance in the collection of Council tax and NNDR collected are in the third quartile.

8.2.3 Based on this it would appear that this service should be assessed at level 2 offering good value for money.

8.3 Benefit Administration

8.3.1 At £3.81 the costs of administering Council tax benefit is about the median for the England, and at £3.59 the costs of administering housing benefits are well within the lowest (best) quartile.

8.3.2 There is a large amount of data on performance, speed of processing new and repeat claims is between the lowest quartile and the median as is customer satisfaction. Accuracy is at the median.

8.3.3 The overall conclusion is that this is a service assessed at level 2 offering good value for money.

8.4 Overheads and Contingencies

8.4.1 These account for £10.32 per resident, an investment that is well within the highest (worst) quartile. The biggest element in this category is the levy charged by the Internal Drainage Boards, which comprises nearly 40% of the costs. The council has no control over this charge. The next highest element is the unapportioned pension costs, which comprise 23%. The major remaining charges are the contingency established to fund our priorities, expenditure on watercourses, grants and the registration of electors. The diverse nature of these services means that there are no effective performance indicators.

8.5 Corporate and Democratic Core

8.5.1 At £12.52 our costs for these services are well into the lowest (best) quartile. Unfortunately there is no data in the profile that can be used to assess performance.

8.6 Public Transport Concessionary Fares

8.6.1 At £3.76 expenditure on this budget head is significantly above the median nationally and in the top quartile for comparable authorities.

8.6.2 The performance data relating to the use and satisfaction with bus services is only available at the County level and cannot be used to assess value for money of this service within South Kesteven

8.7 Car Parking

8.7.1 At £6.12 the income derived from parking is about the median for the family group and nationally.

8.7.2 Although it is not a measure of performance it is suggested in the Audit Commission report that higher levels of parking charges are related to a higher ratio of day-time visitors to residents. South Kesteven has a ratio of 0.88, which is below the median.

9.0 Summary of Value for Money Assessment using this data.

9.1 The following table summarises the vfm assessment derived from the Audit Commission profile and presents it according to the proportion of Council expenditure that they incur.

9.2 Further trend analysis needs to be carried out to see whether the VFM indicated in 2004/05 is replicated for earlier periods.

9.3 Further analysis of the local context of service provision needs developing for the VFM submission to the Audit Commission.

Service/Area	% of total exp	Cost	Performance	VFM Judgement
Waste Collection	18.5%	High	Low	4 = Poor
Overheads and contingencies	12%	High	ND	
Corporate Services	12%	Low	ND	
Sorts and Leisure	10.5%	Medium	Medium	3 = Average
Env Health	7.5%	Low	Medium	2 = Good
Benefit Administration	7%	Low	Medium	2 = Good
Street cleaning	6.6%	Low	Low	3 = Average
Planning	5%	Low	Medium	2 = Good
Culture	5%	Medium	Medium	3 = Average
Tax collection	4.5%	Low	Medium	2 = Good
Com Safety	4%	High	ND	
Parks	3.5%	Low	Low	3 = Average
Tourism and other cultural services	3%	Medium	ND	
Concessionary transport	3%	High	ND	
Strategic Housing	2.5%	Low	Medium	2 = Good
Economic Dev	2%	Low	ND	
Transport	-2%	Medium	ND	
Car Parking	-3.5%	Medium	ND	
Housing repairs	NA	NR	Medium	3 = Average
Housing Management	NA	NR	Medium	3 = Average

Key:
ND = No data
NA = Not applicable (not funded from the General Fund)
NR = Not relevant (national framework allocates resources according to need)

9.2   The overall assessment of services funded from the General Fund is as follows:

VFM Assessment	Number of Services in this category	% of net spend in this category
1 = Excellent	0	0
2 = Good	5	26.5%
3 = Average	4	25.6%
4 = Poor	1	18%
5 = Very Poor	0	

10 Building a detailed picture of service costs and quality and taking action to improve value

10.1 The information and perspective derived from this data gives the authority the foundation stones for the development of a detailed picture of service costs and quality.

10.2 The service categorisation that results now needs to be tested and moderated by service managers to ensure that it properly reflects the situation of the Council. For example, on some services performance data was not provided in the Audit\Commission's data set and this will need to be obtained from other sources. In other services there may be underlying differences that have a significant impact on the costs or perceived quality delivered by the Council when compared to other authorities.

10.3 This process of moderation may uncover evidence that results in a particular service being re-categorised. Where this occurs there will be a clear audit trail identifying the reasons for this re-categorisation and the supporting evidence that substantiates this decision.

10.4 Following completion of this moderation process actions and improvement plans will be prepared as appropriate and included in the service plans which will be reviewed by the relevant DSPs.

Recommendation

That this study of value for money based on the audit commission web-site is noted and incorporated into the Council's self-assessment.

Duncan Kerr
Chief Executive

5. VALUE FOR MONEY		

Key line of enquiry

5.1 The council currently achieves good value for money

Audit Focus

Evidence that:

- Costs compare well with others allowing for external factors
- Costs are commensurate with service delivery, performance and outcomes achieved
- Costs reflect policy decisions

Criteria for judgement/descriptors

Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
There is some information on costs and how these compare to others and to the quality of services but this is not fully understood. Managers use information to review value for money and report to members. Overall costs and unit costs for key services are not significantly higher than other councils providing similar levels and standards of services, allowing for the local context. There is a positive relationship between costs and the range, level and quality of services provided, including overheads and capital costs. Significant unintended high spending is identified and addressed. The council has a well managed capital programme, with projects usually completed on time and on budget. Capital spending decisions are always taken with full information on the revenue implications and financial forecasts of their longer term impact.	There is clear information on costs and how these compare to others and to the quality of services achieved currently and over time. Members and managers routinely use this information to review and challenge value for money throughout services and corporately. Overall costs and unit costs for key services are low compared to other councils providing similar levels and standards of services and allowing for the local context. Unintended high spending is identified and addressed effectively. The council has a well managed capital programme, with most projects completed on time and within budget. Areas of higher spending are in line with stated priorities and the investment results in improved services. The council understands the full short and long-term costs of its actions and takes account of these when making decisions.	The council regularly benchmarks its costs and quality of services achieved currently and over time. Members and managers actively use this information to review and challenge value for money throughout services and corporately. Achieving value for money is an integral part of senior officer's performance appraisal. High performance is achieved across a range of priority services whilst costs remain generally low compared to others. Any high spending is identified and addressed effectively. The council has a well managed capital programme, with projects completed on time and within budget. Areas of higher spending are in line with stated priorities and the investment results in improved services. The council has detailed information on the full short and long-term costs of its actions and takes account of these when making decisions. All policy proposals have in built cost analyses.

5 VALUE FOR MONEY		

Key line of enquiry

5.2 The council manages and improves value for money

Audit Focus

Evidence that:

- The council monitors and reviews value for money

- The council has improved value for money and achieved efficiency gains (limited to the last three years)

- Procurement and other spending decisions take account of full long term costs

Criteria for judgement/descriptors

Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Members and senior managers identify and pursue opportunities to reduce costs or improve quality within existing costs. Consideration is given to the likely impact on users of changes in spending levels. Areas of high spending are identified, are subject to review and scrutiny, and action to address them results. Sound processes for reviewing and improving value for money are in place and have led to some significant improvements in value for money. Information on costs and the quality of services is collected, regularly reported to members and taken into account when reviewing performance. This includes information on equity across the whole community. Targets are set and applied to improve efficiency and value for money. The council has produced and [from 2006] is delivering on a robust efficiency plan to achieve	There is evidence that members, senior managers and service managers seek to manage costs alongside quality of services and responding to local needs. The impact on users is assessed to ensure that costs are not simply cuts without regard to outcomes. The scope for improving cost-effectiveness is kept under review and scrutiny. There are clear policies and effective processes for reviewing and improving value for money. Internal reviews are targeted at high cost services and lead to improved value for money. Members and managers routinely and actively use clear information on costs and the quality of services to challenge how these compare to others currently and over time, corporately and for services. Information on equity is actively used to promote access and value for money across the whole community. There is clear evidence that the council sets and achieves ambitious targets to improve efficiency and value for money corporately and in services.	There is strong commitment among members, senior managers and service managers to managing costs alongside quality of services and responding to local needs. The impact on users is assessed and then tracked to ensure that costs are not simply cuts without regard to outcomes. The scope for improving cost-effectiveness is kept under review and scrutiny. Innovative approaches are used where appropriate and have achieved clear improvements in value for money.

the Efficiency Review targets of 2.5 per cent gains per year over a three year period.	Targets are used 'intelligently' to reflect potential for improvement.	
The council has effective procurement practices and can demonstrate improvements in value for money from significant procurement exercises. It has explored options for joint procurement and works with the LSP and other partners to improve value.	The council has produced and [from 2006] is delivering on a robust efficiency plan to achieve more than the Efficiency Review targets of 2.5 per cent gains per year over a three year period.	
Procurement decisions are not based solely on lowest cost options but reflect the best combination of cost and quality.	The council follows good procurement practice, knows where the greatest benefits can be gained and acts on these effectively. It has used joint procurement and works with the LSP and other partners to improve value.	
Internal reviews are carried out (in line with Best Value legislation) and achieve significant improvements in value.	Procurement decisions are not based solely on lowest cost options but on achieving greatest benefit to the public purse, for example securing additional health or environmental benefits and opportunities for joint procurement with partners are actively pursued. Significant and identifiable savings have been achieved through procurement and internal reviews without unintended loss of quality (or quality increased at no extra cost).	
Investment is made in poorer services to secure future improvements in value for money. External funding is sought where appropriate to support local priorities.	Investment is targeted at improving value for money in the longer term. Past investment has resulted in demonstrable improvements in value for money.	
	External funding is sought strategically to support local priorities and the council has a successful track record of securing external funding and using it to deliver required outcomes and increased value for local people.	

Appendix B – Table of all District Councils in England showing expenditure per head of population

Authority name	2004
Hastings Borough Council	256.87
Watford Borough Council	251.26
Crawley Borough Council	243.01
Preston City Council	222.66
Redditch Borough Council	211.84
Harlow District Council	204.50
Stevenage Borough Council	202.02
Ipswich Borough Council	196.42
City of Lincoln Council	192.31
Eastbourne Borough Council	191.97
Sedgefield Borough Council	190.78
Burnley Borough Council	188.78
Oxford City Council	186.06
Wear Valley District Council	185.69
Norwich City Council	183.89
Bedford Borough Council	182.97
Carlisle City Council	181.94
Test Valley Borough Council	180.81
Shepway District Council	179.06
Forest Heath District Council	178.51
Corby Borough Council	176.57
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	173.33
Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council	172.62
Boston Borough Council	170.44
Fenland District Council	170.20
Allerdale Borough Council	168.14
Pendle Borough Council	166.79
Gloucester City Council	164.52
Berwick Upon Tweed Borough Council	164.12
Derwentside District Council	162.50
Dacorum Borough Council	162.16
Chester City Council	162.02
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	161.85
Scarborough Borough Council	160.75
Basildon District Council	160.45
Canterbury City Council	159.01
Runnymede Borough Council	158.32
North Hertfordshire District Council	158.25
Thanet District Council	157.85
District of Easington	157.62
Welwyn Hatfield District Council	156.64
South Shropshire District Council	156.23
Worthing Borough Council	156.20
Rother District Council	154.37
Chester-Le-Street District Council	154.20
Mansfield District Council	154.15
Dartford Borough Council	153.58
Christchurch Borough Council	153.35
Eden District Council	152.37
Elmbridge Borough Council	151.33
Bolsover District Council	151.30
Copeland Borough Council	150.99
Three Rivers District Council	150.56

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council	150.38
Rugby Borough Council	150.34
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council	149.78
West Lancashire District Council	149.71
North Cornwall District Council	149.63
Tynedale District Council	148.92
Wellingborough Borough Council	148.90
Borough of Spelthorne	148.60
Cannock Chase District Council	148.43
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council	148.06
Wansbeck District Council	147.99
Rushmoor Borough Council	147.92
Surrey Heath Borough Council	146.93
Penwith District Council	146.68
Wyre Forest District Council	146.43
Maidstone Borough Council	146.37
Northampton Borough Council	146.04
Lancaster City Council	145.73
Cambridge City Council	145.39
Teesdale District Council	145.34
Brentwood Borough Council	144.65
Exeter City Council	144.52
Sevenoaks District Council	144.45
Winchester City Council	144.32
Huntingdonshire District Council	144.32
Swale Borough Council	144.29
North Shropshire District Council	144.14
Gosport Borough Council	143.05
Havant Borough Council	142.89
Cherwell District Council	142.88
Epping Forest District Council	142.71
Alnwick District Council	142.38
Blyth Valley Borough Council	142.09
Tamworth Borough Council	142.02
West Dorset District Council	142
East Staffordshire Borough Council	141.80
West Devon Borough Council	141.55
West Oxfordshire District Council	141.30
Adur District Council	141.13
Woking Borough Council	140.57
Eastleigh Borough Council	140.47
Ryedale District Council	140.37
Dover District Council	139.66
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council	139.49
Ashfield District Council	139.39
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	139.14
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk	138.79
Rossendale Borough Council	138.71
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council	138.02
Kennet District Council	137.75
South Holland District Council	137.66
Oswestry Borough Council	137.41
Worcester City Council	137.38
North Warwickshire Borough Council	137.02
Selby District Council	136.43
Hertsmere Borough Council	136.11
West Lindsey District Council	136.06
Vale Royal Borough Council	135.79

Hyndburn Borough Council	135.78
Chesterfield Borough Council	135.75
Colchester Borough Council	134.53
Kerrier District Council	134.40
Durham City Council	134.08
East Lindsey District Council	133.95
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	133.90
Waveney District Council	133.82
Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council	133.80
Guildford Borough Council	133.51
West Somerset District Council	133.27
Vale of White Horse District Council	133.22
South Somerset District Council	132.85
Chichester District Council	132.76
St Albans City and District Council	132.74
Derbyshire Dales District Council	132.73
Chorley Borough Council	132.66
Kettering Borough Council	132.57
Forest of Dean District Council	132.38
Amber Valley Borough Council	132.14
Erewash Borough Council	131.60
Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council	131.46
Maldon District Council	131.30
Cotswold District Council	130.40
Richmondshire District Council	130.18
Lewes District Council	130.14
North Devon District Council	130.04
Arun District Council	130.03
Borough of Broxbourne	129.33
Bassetlaw District Council	129.20
Restormel Borough Council	129.18
South Ribble Borough Council	128.94
Gravesham Borough Council	128.77
Craven District Council	128.51
Castle Morpeth Borough Council	128.12
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	128.05
Fareham Borough Council	127.86
South Hams District Council	127.82
East Hertfordshire District Council	127.72
Torridge District Council	127.52
Mid Bedfordshire District Council	127.45
Tewkesbury Borough Council	127.44
Wycombe District Council	127.31
Cheltenham Borough Council	127.22
South Bedfordshire District Council	127.15
Suffolk Coastal District Council	127.03
Mid Devon District Council	126.67
South Buckinghamshire District Council	126.37
Newark and Sherwood District Council	126.35
South Oxfordshire District Council	126.31
Stratford on Avon District Council	126.23
Chelmsford Borough Council	126.03
Carrick District Council	125.90
Caradon District Council	125.85
Fylde Borough Council	125.63
North Norfolk District Council	125.49
Aylesbury Vale District Council	125.49
Ashford Borough Council	125.37

Borough of Crewe and Nantwich	125.32
Teignbridge District Council	125.24
Wyre Borough Council	125.21
Braintree District Council	124.51
Harrogate Borough Council	124.50
Breckland Council	124.29
Hambleton District Council	123.43
South Lakeland District Council	122.66
Mole Valley District Council	122.41
Wealden District Council	121.88
New Forest District Council	121.61
East Northamptonshire Council	121.48
Sedgemoor District Council	121.30
North Dorset District Council	120.52
Wychavon District Council	120.42
Mendip District Council	120.24
Lichfield District Council	119.95
Castle Point Borough Council	119.30
Tendring District Council	118.88
Bridgnorth District Council	118.74
Bromsgrove District Council	118.06
Melton Borough Council	117.76
East Hampshire District Council	117.69
Warwick District Council	117.60
Tandridge District Council	117.57
Oadby and Wigston Borough Council	117.56
North East Derbyshire District Council	117.25
Rochford District Council	116.79
Uttlesford District Council	116.69
Rushcliffe Borough Council	116.62
South Cambridgeshire District Council	116.27
Stafford Borough Council	116.07
Babergh District Council	115.97
Chiltern District Council	115.71
Purbeck District Council	115.54
Horsham District Council	115.27
Daventry District Council	114.57
East Cambridgeshire District Council	114.55
North West Leicestershire District Council	114.51
Mid Sussex District Council	114
East Devon District Council	113.60
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	113.47
Waverley Borough Council	113.32
Borough of Macclesfield	113.10
North Wiltshire District Council	112.99
Salisbury District Council	112.55
Broxtowe Borough Council	112.54
Stroud District Council	112.03
Congleton Borough Council	111.53
East Dorset District Council	111.20
Taunton Deane Borough Council	110.15
Malvern Hills District Council	110.07
South Northamptonshire Council	109.33
Hart District Council	109.11
Gedling Borough Council	109.11
South Derbyshire District Council	107.79
High Peak Borough Council	106.91
South Norfolk District Council	104.56

South Kesteven District Council	**103.82**
Ribble Valley Borough Council	103.81
Harborough District Council	103.06
Charnwood Borough Council	100.36
West Wiltshire District Council	98.86
South Staffordshire Council	96.70
Mid Suffolk District Council	95.84
North Kesteven District Council	95.16
Broadland District Council	89.85
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	88.42
Blaby District Council	84.85

Comparison with Similar Authorities in our Family Group

Authority name	2004
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	173.33
Wyre Forest District Council	146.43
East Staffordshire Borough Council	141.80
North Warwickshire Borough Council	137.02
Vale Royal Borough Council	135.79
Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council	133.80
Kettering Borough Council	132.57
Newark and Sherwood District Council	126.35
Borough of Crewe and Nantwich	125.32
Braintree District Council	124.51
East Northamptonshire Council	121.48
Stafford Borough Council	116.07
High Peak Borough Council	106.91
South Kesteven District Council	**103.82**
West Wiltshire District Council	98.86
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	88.42

Appendix C – Council tax payable on a Band D property in all of the District council areas in England

Authority name	2004
Sedgefield Borough Council	1376
Newark and Sherwood District Council	1367
District of Easington	1349
Mansfield District Council	1337
South Bedfordshire District Council	1332
Broxtowe Borough Council	1321
Ashfield District Council	1320
Bassetlaw District Council	1319
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council	1315
Ipswich Borough Council	1313
Rushcliffe Borough Council	1300
Gedling Borough Council	1300
Rossendale Borough Council	1296
Derwentside District Council	1294
Lewes District Council	1292
Castle Morpeth Borough Council	1292
Pendle Borough Council	1291

Burnley Borough Council	1290
Wealden District Council	1286
Preston City Council	1286
Hastings Borough Council	1285
Eastbourne Borough Council	1279
North East Derbyshire District Council	1273
Bolsover District Council	1272
East Dorset District Council	1272
Mid Bedfordshire District Council	1271
Tynedale District Council	1268
Oswestry Borough Council	1266
South Shropshire District Council	1264
North Warwickshire Borough Council	1263
Bedford Borough Council	1263
Harlow District Council	1263
Oxford City Council	1261
Purbeck District Council	1260
Hyndburn Borough Council	1259
Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council	1259
Alnwick District Council	1259
Basildon District Council	1256
West Devon Borough Council	1255
West Dorset District Council	1254
Berwick Upon Tweed Borough Council	1253
South Ribble Borough Council	1252
Norwich City Council	1251
Derbyshire Dales District Council	1251
Wansbeck District Council	1249
Rother District Council	1248
Carlisle City Council	1248
Stroud District Council	1247
West Lancashire District Council	1246
Chorley Borough Council	1244
Teesdale District Council	1242
Copeland Borough Council	1241
Adur District Council	1241
Mid Devon District Council	1240
Watford Borough Council	1239
Wear Valley District Council	1238
South Lakeland District Council	1237
Castle Point Borough Council	1237
Christchurch Borough Council	1236
Durham City Council	1235
North Devon District Council	1234
Blyth Valley Borough Council	1234
High Peak Borough Council	1233
Lancaster City Council	1232
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council	1232
Shepway District Council	1230
Rochford District Council	1229
North Shropshire District Council	1228
Eden District Council	1227
Forest of Dean District Council	1227
Amber Valley Borough Council	1226
Wyre Borough Council	1224
Harrogate Borough Council	1224
North Dorset District Council	1223
Scarborough Borough Council	1222

Allerdale Borough Council	1222
Teignbridge District Council	1222
South Norfolk District Council	1221
Richmondshire District Council	1219
Fylde Borough Council	1219
Epping Forest District Council	1217
Maldon District Council	1215
Chester-Le-Street District Council	1215
Cherwell District Council	1215
Ryedale District Council	1215
Erewash Borough Council	1215
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	1214
South Oxfordshire District Council	1213
Elmbridge Borough Council	1213
Forest Heath District Council	1212
North West Leicestershire District Council	1210
Fenland District Council	1210
Rugby Borough Council	1210
South Derbyshire District Council	1208
Selby District Council	1207
South Hams District Council	1207
Uttlesford District Council	1206
North Norfolk District Council	1206
Broadland District Council	1206
Cotswold District Council	1206
Babergh District Council	1206
Ribble Valley Borough Council	1206
Mid Suffolk District Council	1205
North Wiltshire District Council	1204
Colchester Borough Council	1204
Torridge District Council	1203
Woking Borough Council	1203
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk	1203
Waverley Borough Council	1202
Braintree District Council	1202
Welwyn Hatfield District Council	1201
Cheltenham Borough Council	1201
Chelmsford Borough Council	1201
Wyre Forest District Council	1200
Congleton Borough Council	1200
Bridgnorth District Council	1200
South Somerset District Council	1200
Craven District Council	1199
Surrey Heath Borough Council	1198
Brentwood Borough Council	1198
Tandridge District Council	1198
Maidstone Borough Council	1198
Chester City Council	1198
Gloucester City Council	1198
Vale Royal Borough Council	1197
Oadby and Wigston Borough Council	1197
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council	1197
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council	1196
Harborough District Council	1196
Sevenoaks District Council	1195
West Wiltshire District Council	1194
Chiltern District Council	1194
Suffolk Coastal District Council	1193

Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council	1192
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	1192
East Staffordshire Borough Council	1192
Chesterfield Borough Council	1192
Blaby District Council	1192
Redditch Borough Council	1192
Mendip District Council	1192
Arun District Council	1191
Stratford on Avon District Council	1190
Tendring District Council	1189
Borough of Macclesfield	1189
East Devon District Council	1189
Cannock Chase District Council	1186
Worthing Borough Council	1185
Melton Borough Council	1185
St Albans City and District Council	1184
Malvern Hills District Council	1183
Bromsgrove District Council	1183
Thanet District Council	1182
Borough of Crewe and Nantwich	1182
Three Rivers District Council	1181
Guildford Borough Council	1180
New Forest District Council	1179
Warwick District Council	1178
Crawley Borough Council	1178
West Somerset District Council	1177
Mid Sussex District Council	1177
North Hertfordshire District Council	1175
Charnwood Borough Council	1175
East Hertfordshire District Council	1174
Gosport Borough Council	1174
Vale of White Horse District Council	1173
Waveney District Council	1173
Aylesbury Vale District Council	1172
Exeter City Council	1172
Borough of Spelthorne	1171
Kennet District Council	1171
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	1171
Hart District Council	1168
South Buckinghamshire District Council	1168
Stevenage Borough Council	1167
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	1167
Mole Valley District Council	1165
Breckland Council	1165
Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council	1164
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council	1164
Wycombe District Council	1163
Eastleigh Borough Council	1163
East Hampshire District Council	1161
Sedgemoor District Council	1160
Worcester City Council	1159
Chichester District Council	1159
Dover District Council	1159
Taunton Deane Borough Council	1158
Canterbury City Council	1158
Northampton Borough Council	1158
Horsham District Council	1158
Salisbury District Council	1155

Lichfield District Council	1155
West Oxfordshire District Council	1154
South Northamptonshire Council	1154
City of Lincoln Council	1154
Stafford Borough Council	1153
Hertsmere Borough Council	1153
West Lindsey District Council	1152
Rushmoor Borough Council	1152
Havant Borough Council	1152
Tewkesbury Borough Council	1150
Dartford Borough Council	1150
Dacorum Borough Council	1149
Winchester City Council	1147
Wychavon District Council	1146
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	1146
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1144
Kerrier District Council	1144
North Cornwall District Council	1144
Swale Borough Council	1143
Kettering Borough Council	1140
East Cambridgeshire District Council	1138
Gravesham Borough Council	1138
Runnymede Borough Council	1137
Carrick District Council	1136
Caradon District Council	1135
South Staffordshire Council	1134
Huntingdonshire District Council	1133
East Northamptonshire Council	1132
Daventry District Council	1130
Tamworth Borough Council	1129
Corby Borough Council	1129
North Kesteven District Council	1128
Hambleton District Council	1128
Ashford Borough Council	1126
Boston Borough Council	1124
Fareham Borough Council	1123
Cambridge City Council	1120
Test Valley Borough Council	1119
Wellingborough Borough Council	1104
Restormel Borough Council	1104
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	1103
Penwith District Council	1101
South Cambridgeshire District Council	1099
South Holland District Council	1098
Borough of Broxbourne	1098
South Kesteven District Council	**1096**
East Lindsey District Council	1085

Comparison of Council tax with members of our family group

Authority name	2004
Newark and Sherwood District Council	1367
North Warwickshire Borough Council	1263
High Peak Borough Council	1233
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	1214

Braintree District Council	1202
Wyre Forest District Council	1200
Vale Royal Borough Council	1197
West Wiltshire District Council	1194
Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council	1192
East Staffordshire Borough Council	1192
Borough of Crewe and Nantwich	1182
Stafford Borough Council	1153
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	1146
Kettering Borough Council	1140
East Northamptonshire Council	1132
South Kesteven District Council	**1096**