

Appendix A

Corporate Plan 2005/08 2006/07 update incorporating Best Value Performance Plan

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**The Corporate Plan update is available in larger print, on
tape or in other formats on request – please telephone
0115 901 3809**

Introduction

This document is the second update of Gedling Borough Council's Strategic Corporate Plan. The Plan was published in 2004 and was first updated in 2005.

It refreshes the Plan, setting out current progress including further developments of our vision and priorities for the Borough.

It also outlines progress with our Improvement Plan and flags up further improvement ideas, consistent with our commitment to continuous improvement across the organisation.

The update links to service and theme specific plans and programmes throughout the Council and to plans and strategies of partnerships and other agencies operating in the Borough. It fulfils the statutory requirement to produce a Best Value Performance Plan.

The Plan is primarily about the Council and its work, but recognises the increasing importance of working in partnership with other agencies. The Council is firmly committed to partnership working in order to deliver its priorities and the wider themes of the Gedling Partnership - the issues that matter most to local people. We will work with agencies in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to deliver these goals.

Gedling Borough Council is a "good" Council, as independently assessed by the Audit Commission. We believe that the Council can be an "excellent" Council and it remains our ambition to be recognised as one.

This Corporate Plan update sets out our progress towards that goal.

Cllr Roland Spencer
Leader of the Council

Cllr Ivan Gollop
Deputy Leader of the Council

Peter Murdock
Chief Executive

June 2006

Vision and Priorities for the Borough

The Borough Council's vision has been derived from various sources, reflecting: -

- Needs and aspirations of the community
- Political priorities of the current administration
- Sub-regional priorities reflecting the Borough's position in the Greater Nottingham conurbation
- Wider county, regional and national priorities set by Government.

Borough Vision and Priorities

The Borough vision, adopted by the Gedling Partnership in 2005 is of

“Gedling Borough as a community in which everyone plays their part in bringing about greater security, greater prosperity, improved health and a better environment for all. A Borough where people want to live and do business”.

Partnership priority themes to address this vision are

- **Building Social Capital and Pride in the Local Area**
- **Action for Youth**
- **Tackling Health Inequalities**
- **A Safer Community**
- **A Better Local Environment**

The vision and priority themes draw on extensive consultation, detailed in the revised Borough Community Strategy published in 2005

http://www.gedling.gov.uk/gedling_community_strategy_screen-3.pdf . The Council works closely with partners to progress towards the vision.

Borough Council priorities

The Borough vision complements and expands the vision adopted by the Borough Council in 2002 for the Borough to be

“Healthy, Green, Safe and Clean”

The Borough Council pledged that its mission would be to direct its own services and work with partners in order to move towards this vision.

Political priorities for improvement were further refined in 2004 to target efforts more precisely at those activities where public expectation is highest and where current measures suggest improvement is most needed.

The improvement priorities for the Council itself are to: -

- **Improve Community Safety**
- **Develop facilities, activities and a safe environment for children and young people**
- **Enhance the physical environment of the Borough**

These priorities for improvement steer the Council's immediate future investment plans. Where appropriate, the Council has redirected resources away from other areas in order to support these priority areas, using its recently developed assessment mechanism to assess revenue and capital funded development bids against priorities. This ensures that decisions on use of resources fit with priorities.

Sub-regional, regional and national priorities

The Borough is one of the four authorities making up the Greater Nottingham conurbation and its economy is intrinsically linked to that of the conurbation. The Council is part of the Greater Nottingham Partnership, the strategic sub-regional partnership for the Nottingham conurbation, and supports the vision and priorities set out in the City Development Strategy "Drawing Together"
<http://www.gnpartnership.org.uk/drawingtogether>.

The Council also supports wider regional and national priorities, as set out in the shared national/local priorities agenda. These include:

- § Support for older people
- § Improvements to waste management and recycling
- § "Decent Homes" and other Housing commitments
- § Council Tax collection and e-government improvements.

The Council's priorities already align closely with these shared national-local priorities, particularly as they relate to the work of district councils.

The Council will continue to work towards these national, regional and sub-regional priorities and targets in key service areas. It has made commitments to support delivery of targets set out in the Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement, and is working with Greater Nottingham Partnership and partner authorities on the development of a Conurbation Area Agreement for Nottingham.

Partnership working

The Council will work in partnership with other agencies wherever it makes sense to do so, and will look to complement the work of other agencies in its own approach rather than to compete with them. The **Gedling Partnership**, the Borough's Local Strategic Partnership, is at the hub of this work, bringing together a wide range of statutory and non-statutory service providers and agencies working in the Borough, from the public, private and voluntary sectors. A number of other key partnerships

fall within its remit, including partnerships addressing Health and Well-being, Young People and Community Safety.

The Borough Council and the Gedling Partnership are also part of the Nottinghamshire Partnership, a Local Strategic Partnership covering the administrative county of Nottinghamshire.

Future trends

The Council is using use a range of qualitative and quantative data to review emerging trends and keep priorities under review, using its developing Community Profiles as a key tool <http://www.gedling.gov.uk/index/gcp-home.htm> . As an example, emerging trends showing an increased level of worklessness in the Borough have led the Council to engage closely with Greater Nottingham Partnership to ensure that partnership approaches to addressing the issue across the conurbation are targeted at relevant areas of the Borough.

However, anything that is not stated here as a priority, and is not a national, regional or local priority to which the Council is committed, ***is not currently an improvement priority for the Council.***

Progress with Improvement Plans

The Council is committed to continuous improvement. It has consistently set challenging improvement targets, and delivered a wide range of projects across the range of its services.

When the Council was inspected under the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment programme in 2003, the Commission concluded that the Council is a "Good" Council. A full copy of the report is available on the Audit Commission website (www.audit-commission.gov.uk).

The Commission confirmed the Council's strengths in front-line service delivery, achievement of improvement, performance management and investment.

It also identified key areas for further improvement around ambition (what are the Council's long term aims for the areas), prioritisation (what are the most urgent priorities the Council needs to address, and what are not priorities) and capacity (what skills does the Council have available to it to deliver against its priorities).

As a result, the Council developed an ambitious Corporate Improvement Plan, to address these issues, while maintaining and where possible further improving performance in areas of relative strength.

That Improvement Plan was built around 12 Improvement Themes and has now substantially been delivered. It included a wide range of tasks, largely for delivery over the two to three years following the inspection.

Having prioritised improvement work around four programme areas agreed with the Audit Commission during 2004/05, the Council progressed a further range of projects during 2005/06. Continued good progress has been made in all areas.

a. Vision, Prioritisation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

- The Gedling Community Strategy was fully reviewed and updated, incorporating a new vision for the Borough agreed with partners. The Strategy incorporates Social Inclusion Strategy for the Borough.
- The Strategic Corporate Plan was updated, rolling forward programmes by a further year to 2008. The Plan includes an updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which has since been further revised to reflect changing circumstances.
- Community Profiles have been further developed to include outcome-focused measures against which progress towards priorities can be measured, alongside the key demographic, socio-economic and related measures for the Borough previously included. Coverage of priorities is not yet universal – there remain some areas where new measures are still being developed or baseline

data needs to be gathered – but the Council is now much better placed to assess the extent to which it is delivering its priorities and progressing towards the Borough vision. The work on Community Profiles was recognised by the Audit Commission as an example of “notable practice”.

- Through the Gedling Partnership, the Council launched the first two neighbourhood focused “Area-Based Initiative” regeneration programmes. These community-driven programmes focus activity at super output area level, bringing together resources and activity targeted at priorities identified by the local community. Decisions on areas to be covered are informed by Community Profiles. The Council and its partners aim to roll out two further Area Based Initiatives every year, with each ABI lasting for around three years.
- The assessment process introduced in 2004/05 to assess new revenue and capital growth proposals against priorities was further developed and drove Budget and Service Plan development for 2006/07. 100% of money available for new initiatives was directed towards priorities as a result.

b. Internal Corporate Leadership and Communication

- An Employee Conference, allowing employees to help define their role in taking the Council forward to an agenda set by employees themselves, , was held in June and was a great success. Results have informed future organisational development and a further conference is planned for Summer 2006.
- An Employee Attitude Survey was completed in Autumn 2005 and this too is informing future organisational development.
- The Council made a commitment to seek Investors in People reaccreditation in 2006.
- A summary version of the revised Strategic Corporate Plan was developed and circulated to every employee, clearly communicating the Council’s vision and revised priorities.
- The Council signed up to the Local Government Association/Improvement and Development Agency “Reputation” programme and introduced campaigns themed to its priorities (around “Safe”, “Clean” and “Green”) to raise awareness of these issues in the community and amongst employees.

c. Planning Service Improvement

- Significantly higher levels of performance secured in 2004/05 were further improved and the Council is now amongst the best performing authorities in the country against these key national performance indicators.

- The Council ceased to be deemed a planning standards authority in March 2006 and was congratulated by the government on its performance.
- Improvements set out in the 2004/05 Best Value Action Plan for the service were delivered, including a move to on-line planning which secured a maximum score under the “Pendleton” assessment.
- The Local Plan for the Borough was finally adopted and progress made towards the introduction of the new Development Plan system.
- Extra Planning Delivery Grant paid to the Council as a result of service improvements delivered in 2004/05 will help deliver further service improvements in 2006/07 and beyond.

d. Other Improvements

- The Council was judged to be “performing well” by the Audit Commission in its first annual Use of Resources assessment of the Council under new Comprehensive Performance Assessment arrangements. The Council scored 3 out of 4 overall, including for value-for-money, where the Commission observed, “a good balance is achieved between costs, service delivery, performance and outcomes”.
- In its annual management letter on the Council, the Audit Commission confirmed that “services are improving in priority areas such as community safety, recycling, housing repairs and planning”, indicating that the Council’s Direction of Travel is positive. It also gave an unqualified opinion on the Council’s accounts.
- The Council was one of a handful of district authorities nationally that took part in the Audit Commission’s piloting of a new approach to Comprehensive Performance Assessment for district councils. This exercise included a corporate assessment, which will help the Council target future areas for improvement.
- Further innovative partnership approaches to service delivery were explored and arrangements entered into. These include a shared Procurement Officer with Rushcliffe Borough Council and shared payroll and sundry debtor services, also with Rushcliffe BC. Agreement was reached in principle to move towards a merged Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership across South Nottinghamshire, covering Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Gedling Boroughs.
- Regular joint Cabinet meetings with Rushcliffe BC were introduced to explore and develop opportunities for shared services and wider strategic partnering activity, backed by regular joint Management Team meetings between the two authorities.
- No Best Value inspections of the Council were carried out this year.

Future Improvements

The Council will continue to pursue the few outstanding improvements identified in its 2003 CPA Improvement Plan.

It has also begun consideration of further improvement as it moves towards its ambition to secure “excellent” status in the near future.

Work has already started on a reassessment of organisational vision (the sort of organisation the Council wants to be), focused on how it can contribute towards securing the Borough vision. This is likely to lead to further developmental activity from 2006 onwards.

This work, together with the findings of both the Use of Resources Assessment and CPA pilot, will inform the development of a further Improvement Plan during 2006/07.

Service-focused improvement tasks are set out in the council’s annual Budget/Service Plan document, available on request from the Head of Finance.

The Council will work towards the transfer of its housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord as part of its objective of providing housing that meets the standards demanded by tenants.

High-level outcome focused indicators and targets for improvement against priorities are included in Community Profiles. A full list of service improvement targets is set out in the performance indicator section.

Progress towards improvement tasks and targets is assessed quarterly and published in a quarterly performance digest <http://www.gedling.gov.uk/index/ac-home/ac-perfmanagement.htm> . These digests also include a summary of financial performance. A fuller digest is produced and reported at the year-end.

Our approach to Equality

The Council is committed to achieving equality of access to all of its services and equality in its employment policies and practices.

The Council already has in place a Race Equality Scheme to meet the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

Having reached Level 1 of the national Equality Standards for Local Government in 2004/05, The Council aims to reach Level 2 during 2006/07. This will involve the development of a Corporate Equality Plan, an assessment of current practice and equality impact assessments for priority areas.

Corporate commitment and leadership in addressing equalities is integral within this plan and there are also specific areas of commitment and practice that can be emphasised.

The Council is committed to consulting with the community and will seek out and listen to the views of all, including minority groups.

The Council will review its services and seek improvements for all the community, with an overall aim of looking to improve equality of service delivery. It will make use of Equality Impact Assessments and work closely with other partner agencies in doing this.

As an employer, the Council complies with all legal requirements to eliminate discrimination. It carries out an extensive training programme to ensure all employees are aware of these and how to promote equality of opportunity. It monitors the make up of its workforce and seeks to identify ways in which it can improve recruitment, training and employment practices.

The Council has completed a council-wide job evaluation programme and has implemented the national "single status" agreement for local authority employees.

Performance Management arrangements

The Council's performance management framework is based on good practice guidance from the Audit Commission. Key components include: -

- A clearly stated vision and priorities, developed in consultation with the community.
- A single, co-ordinated budget and service planning process, incorporating improvement planning and focused on delivery of Priorities.
- Full integration of statutory Best Value requirements in this corporate framework – for example target setting against national performance indicators, and incorporation of improvement tasks arising from Best Value reviews and inspections.
- Incorporation of Best Value principles and an improvement focus in day-to-day management.
- Robust target setting against national and local performance indicators, with local indicators developed to reflect the Council's key priorities.
- Standard format Project Plans with key milestones and outcome indicators for all key improvement tasks.
- A strong "outcome focus" to Improvement Tasks so that their impact and contribution towards delivery of priorities is systematically considered - this is particularly important in cross-cutting service areas.
- Monthly monitoring of progress against improvement tasks and performance indicators in departments, acting as an "early warning" system.
- Alignment of budget and performance management processes creating a single performance reporting framework.
- Formal quarterly reporting on an exception basis using a "traffic light" warning approach to senior managers, and to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees, with the opportunity to take formal remedial action where needed.
- Sharing and cascading key performance information to employees and residents using appropriate media.

Progress towards the priorities is measured through establishing benchmarks against agreed performance indicators for each priority theme where these do not already exist, and setting improvement targets over the lifetime of the Corporate Plan and/or Community Strategy. Performance indicators, baselines and targets for many of these outcomes have been developed over the past two years as part of the Community Profile project. Indicators, baselines and targets for the remaining outcomes will be developed and included in future updates of the Strategic Corporate Plan. The targets form the basis on which the Council measures progress towards the Borough vision.

These arrangements are being integrated into the Council's performance management framework and are likely to form part of the Council's latest Improvement Plan. Stronger links between outcome measures in Community

Profiles and current performance management arrangements will help develop a “golden thread” between high-level outcomes and day-to-day activities.

Further improvements to performance management will draw on latest Audit Commission findings and other good practice examples. These will cover partnership as well as Council performance.

The Council also recognises its role in supporting the management of cross-cutting performance across the public sector. As outlined above, it is a signatory to the Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement and is strongly supporting the development of a Nottingham Conurbation Area Agreement. It will explore opportunities to further strengthen performance management offered in the forthcoming Local Government White Paper.

Summary of Plans and Strategies

More detailed service related plans for improvement are set out in the following strategy documents.

Improve Community Safety

Gedling Community Safety Strategy 2005/08
Gedling Licensing Strategy
South Nottinghamshire Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy (draft)

Develop facilities, activities and a safe environment for children and young people

Gedling Leisure Strategy
Gedling Sports and Physical Activity Strategy
Gedling Parks and Open Space Strategy
Gedling Leisure and Community Facilities Strategy
Gedling Arts Strategy
Gedling Homelessness Strategy

Enhance the physical environment of the Borough

Gedling Local Plan
Gedling Local Development Framework
Gedling Parks and Open Space Strategy
Gedling Waste Management Strategy
Gedling Housing Strategy

Other Key Improvement Plans

Gedling Waste Management Strategy
Gedling Housing Strategy
Gedling e-government Strategy
Gedling Race Equality Scheme
Gedling Medium Term Financial Strategy
Gedling Capital Strategy
Annual Budget and Service Plans
Annual Statement of Accounts
Financial Strategy 2006-2011

Consultation and feedback

The Council would welcome your views on this update document.

Please write to

Head of Cabinet Office
Gedling Borough Council
Civic Centre
Arnot Hill Park
Arnold
Nottingham
NG5 6LU

Or email cabinet.office@gedling.gov.uk

The Council also carries out a wide-ranging consultation programme on various service developments and wider issues each year.

Please take the opportunity to participate wherever you can.

Appendix 1

Statement on Contracts

The Council has not awarded any contracts in the past year which involve the transfer of staff. The Council is committed to, and will comply with, the requirements in the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts in such instances.

Appendix 2

Performance Indicator results and targets

The tables on the following pages show the Council's results against national and local performance indicators for 2005/06, and set out its targets for these indicators where appropriate for the years 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09. The table shows the "Direction of Travel" for each indicator for which a result is available for 2004/05 and 2005/06, comparing performance over the two years.

The tables also compare the Council's current performance with latest available national results from other Best Value authorities, at national and county level, and with authorities sharing similar characteristics ("family" authorities) across the country. Definitions of "family" authorities are set out below.

Explanations of significant variations between actual and targeted performance are included at the end of the tables.

This complies with the required content of Best Value Performance Plans for good and excellent authorities as set out in ODPM Circular 02/2004.

"Family District" Definitions

"Nearest neighbour" or family districts were chosen for their similarity to the Borough of Gedling. Criteria used to measure similarity were: -

- Total population
- Population aged 0 to 17 (%)
- Population aged 75 to 84 (%)
- Population aged 85 plus (%)
- Enumeration District based Density
- Enumeration District Based Sparsity
- Taxbase per Head of Population
- % Unemployment
- % Daytime Net Inflow
- Restaurants per 1,000 Population
- Shops per 1,000 Population
- Housing Benefit Caseload (weighted)
- % of People born outside UK, Eire, EC, Old Commonwealth and USA
- % of Households with less than 4 rooms
- % of Households in purpose-built flats rented from Local Authority or Housing Association
- % of Persons in lower socio-economic classification
- Standard Morbidity Ratio for all persons
- Authorities with Coast Protection Expenditure
- Non-Domestic Rateable Value per Head of Population
- % of Properties in Bands A to D
- % of Properties in Bands E to H
- Area Cost Adjustment (Other Services Block)