

Gedling Borough Council

Organisational Assessment 2008-09

Managing Performance Self-Assessment

Overview

This self-assessment summarises the Council's achievements with regard to the issues addressed through the Key Lines of Enquiry during 2008/09. Where relevant, it looks back further to put achievement into context, and projects forward into the early part of 2009/10 to demonstrate progress.

It shows the significant progress the Council has made since the CPA Corporate Assessment carried out in July 2008, including substantially addressing the main areas for improvement identified in that report.

The self-assessment draws on some of the evidence already submitted for the Use of Resources self-assessments. Appropriate cross-references are made to those sources of evidence, rather than repeating in full. Auditors are requested to have regard to the evidence previously submitted wherever relevant.

KLoE 4.1 How well is the organisation delivering its priority services, outcomes and improvements that are important to local people?

1. The organisation is effective in identifying and delivering priority services and outcomes

Identifying priority services and outcomes

The Borough's Vision and Priorities are clear and ambitious, and based on a robust understanding of current and future need.

A new vision, and priorities to deliver the vision, have been developed and agreed with the Borough Local Strategic Partnership (the Gedling Partnership), during 2008/09. There is strong shared ownership of the vision amongst partners.

The vision and priorities draw on a strong and robust evidence base, the State of the Borough, developed through the Partnership but led by the Council. The State of the Borough brings together empirical, performance and perception measures about the Borough as a place to live and work. Its findings were the subject of full and extensive consultation in Summer and Autumn 2008, including consultation with hard to reach groups. Consultation findings and empirical evidence were then brought together in the final Vision and Priorities document, agreed by both the Council and the Partnership in December 2008.

The Vision and Priorities align closely with those in the Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement. The Borough Vision and Priorities have been fed into the ongoing review of the Nottinghamshire Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Council has begun to translate the new vision into strategic aims and improvements. The Council's own strategic planning has fully encompassed the new Vision and Priorities by building a new Council Plan around them. The Council Plan is fully aligned with the Priorities - with the addition of a specific priority around the Transformation of the Borough Council, this new Plan effectively supersedes the previously adopted Borough Council Strategic Corporate Plan. It also continues to incorporate the Council's Budget. The result is a clearer, much more streamlined corporate planning process without the overlap previously apparent between Borough Council and Gedling Partnership priorities.

The Council Plan is improvement focused. Proposed improvements designed to deliver the priorities are identified, largely over a three year period, and these are backed by SMART, outcome focused targets. The Plan is supported by Departmental and Section Plans, also developed around the new priorities, creating a stronger "golden thread" linking high level outcomes to practical on-the-ground activity. This addresses one of the key improvements raised in the 2008 CPA report.

The Plan, and departmental and section plans, are at the base of a new performance management system, using purpose-designed externally procured software

(Covalent). This new system has improved the quality and presentation of performance information for managers and members, addressing a further CPA improvement point. The new system went live on 1 April 2009, after developmental work during 2008/09. First quarterly reports from it are due for production in July.

The Council Plan incorporates one-year budgets, retaining the strong link between budget and service planning. The aim is to more closely integrate the medium term financial strategy in future editions.

Further improvements planned include: -

- A summary version of the Council Plan, for wide circulation to employees and on line, for publication in Summer 2009
- A refresh of the full document, to incorporate new performance management framework and updated corporate approach to equality, thus retaining the positive features of the former Strategic Corporate Plan, for publication in early Autumn 2009
- Development of a wider Partnership delivery plan through the Gedling Partnership, to develop the Vision and Priorities into the new Sustainable Community Strategy for the Borough by the end of 2009.

The Council was assessed as “good” on CPA corporate reassessment in 2008, against the “harder test”. Further and significant improvements have been made since that assessment in performance management, equalities and member development, as evidenced in this self-assessment.

Other recent external assessment includes the successful application of all five of the Council’s Leisure Centres for QUEST accreditation, an industry standard quality assurance system. Green Flag status has also been retained for Arnot Hill Park.

Delivering Priority Services and Outcomes

Details of how the Council is improving the services and outcomes it is responsible for, and how it is contributing to wider community outcomes are set out in sections 2 and 3 below.

Here we have set out a selection of Case Studies of achievement against our priorities during 2008/09.

Case Study 1 - Homelessness Prevention and Management

Demand for homelessness provision has increased significantly during the economic downturn. Homelessness (or the imminent risk of homelessness) is a key cause of vulnerability and the Council is committed to safeguarding against it. Addressing homelessness cuts across three of the Borough’s main priorities; for safe and strong communities; to treat people fairly and for a healthy and active lifestyle.

The Council has succeeded in delivering a range of positive outcomes against this backdrop of economic difficulty over the past year. It has adopted a positive and proactive approach, making best use of accommodation available to it, increasing

the supply of temporary accommodation available, proactively preventing homelessness and planning effectively to address longer-term provision.

A new facility providing supported accommodation for young homeless people across Gedling, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe Boroughs (Elizabeth House) opened in April 2008. The site is in Gedling Borough, and was developed by Framework Housing Association in partnership with the three Boroughs. Development of the site was initially very unpopular with local residents but a strong community developmental approach to the issue led by the Council has successfully addressed local concerns. Local people who initially opposed the development now champion it within the community¹.

Following this, the Council successfully negotiated a lease agreement on a new but unsold flat development for use as temporary accommodation for families accepted as homeless. Given the continued demand for temporary accommodation, this arrangement represents better value for the taxpayer while providing a far better standard of accommodation than would be available if bed and breakfast was used. The Council also negotiated the retention of 6 flats from Gedling Homes, for its own use as temporary accommodation, and most recently has supported the acquisition of 6 new build flats by Framework Housing Association for accommodation for young families, having secured Supporting People funding for the purpose. This too avoids use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for young families, and assists the Council in honouring the Governments target that bed and breakfast accommodation should not be used for specific vulnerable groups by March 2010.

To prevent homelessness, the Council is using a range of techniques, including a Deposit Guarantee Scheme and using its housing waiting list to allocate homes to those at greatest risk of becoming homeless.

For the future, work has begun on tendering for the redevelopment of Killisick Court, Arnold, a disused sheltered accommodation scheme which, after negotiation, was not included in the stock transfer to Gedling Homes. This will include a proportion of short term units for homeless families, accessible to the Council through 100% nomination rights. Separately, work is also being programmed to replace the Council's current Homeless Hostel in Colwick.

Outcomes of this work include: -

- A reduction in the number of households living in temporary accommodation (from 30 to 18 as measured by NI 156). This has further reduced to just 9 for the first quarter of 2009/10 (in comparison, in October 2005 there were 238 temporary tenancies)
- Reduced waiting times for homeless applicants – down from an average of 21 days in 2007/08 to 16 days in 2008/09
- Reduced use of Bed and Breakfast and reduced associated costs. Spending projected at £120,000 for 2008/09 was reduced to £90,000 actual, as the initiatives above came on line. For the first quarter of 2009/10, just £550 has been spent on Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

¹ See email 24 Feb 09 from Andrew Redfern re Vale Liaison Group and Elizabeth House

Case Study 2 - Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of Housing Stock

2008/09 saw the successful conclusion of the transfer of the Council's Housing stock to a new Housing Association, Gedling Homes.

The Council has recognised it would not be able to deliver the improvements to housing its tenants wanted, and had chosen Large Scale Voluntary Transfer as its preferred solution. Housing tenants represent some of the more deprived communities in the Borough, and a disproportionate number of older people. The transfer represented the best way of ensuring investment to meet the housing needs of these disadvantaged groups.

The transfer was a "negative value" transfer, making it more complex to deliver. This required significant negotiations with CLG, on top of the already significant workload involved in a transfer such as the tenants' ballot, choosing a partner organisation and the practicalities of negotiating delivery of the transfer. This put significant strain on the Council's overall capacity.

The Council delivered all this while continuing to deliver as a landlord right up to the transfer in November 2008.

The outcomes of the transfer include £41.5 million investment in social housing in the Borough over the next 5 years, investment that the Council could not have offered had it continued its landlord role, which will fund significant improvements to the housing stock.

It has also brought in £2.75 million to improve the local environment in housing areas, through a fund of public realm works successfully negotiated into the transfer deal, while Gedling Homes has introduced a "Community Chest" to fund smaller scale local development, worth a further £2.5 million also over 5 years.

Case Study 3 - Responding to recession

The Council responded quickly to the recession, working closely with the business-led Gedling Business Forum, to identify practical ways in which it could support businesses.

Building on the success of the regular Business Breakfasts hosted by the Gedling Business Forum, the Forum and the Council organised a Business Conference in December, outlining the recession and its effects in the Borough and more widely, and putting local businesses in touch with specialist advice and support. Further events, including a "Meet the Buyer" session, have since been hosted and well-received. All were brought together quickly and in a timely way, reflecting the need for swift action.

The Council also set about increasing its understanding of impact of the recession on the local economy and on the organisation by tracking performance monthly

against a set of economic indicators². These include measures of how the Council is performing in supporting local business, how the recession is affecting the Council's business and the effects of the recession in the wider community. This work continues, and a range of initiatives to support businesses, householders and the wider community have been introduced as a result. They include: -

- Payment of local suppliers within 10 working days
- Targeted marketing to retain custom at the Borough's leisure centres
- Joined-up advice services, working with partners, for people losing their jobs
- Early interventions to prevent homelessness
- An edition of the Council magazine "Contacts" focused on practical advice on dealing with the recession and its impact³
- Increased staffing in Housing Benefits to manage demand and ensure the continued timely processing of applications.

Increasing unemployment, especially in the Killisick ward, evidenced through the tracking of these measures had informed the Council's support for the development of the new Diploma qualification in the Borough, as a means of addressing low skills in parts of the Borough identified in the State of the Borough report. This shows how the State of the Borough work links with the more practical economic indicator tracking, and how both together inform solutions to problems raised.

Both strands of this work have been praised by Government Office East Midlands. The speed of the response, and the business-led approach are particularly positive features.

The work reflects the increased importance now attached to economic development and regeneration in the Borough. In stronger economic times, the Council has played a less active role in economic development, but in the light of early evidence of relative decline, gleaned from the State of the Borough work, the Council and partners have placed greater priority on the issue over the past year, as reflected in the Vision and Priorities. This demonstrates the Council's flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.

Case Study 4 - Effective and appropriate use of CCTV surveillance to detect crime and anti-social behaviour

Reducing crime and the fear of crime has been a top priority for the Council for many years, reflecting local concerns. The Council has consistently made good, but also appropriate and proportionate use of the powers available to it to use covert CCTV to prevent and detect crime and anti-social behaviour.

Examples include: -

² See Economic Indicators report and email from GOEM 3 March 2009

³ Contacts Spring 2009 <http://gedling-nt5/inter/contacts21webb-2.pdf>

- Young people (aged 14-16) were damaging a resident's fence when they were going to and from school. Patrols by Police Community Support Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens led to only limited improvement as the damage didn't occur when they were in the area. The Council installed Covert CCTV into a residential property, which identified some young people that caused the damage. This allowed for remedial action to be taken at the School by the police.
- On an industrial estate there were reports of 'boy racers' gathering in large numbers leaving a lot of litter in the area and racing on the straight piece of road. Covert CCTV installed in an industrial unit showed how many vehicles were gathering and the times that they were in the area. This allowed the police to target their resources to the most suitable times to carry out their patrols and operations.
- Racial incidents had been reported in a local village. The reports were of large numbers of young people gathering together, preventing certain people who they perceived to be 'different' going into the village's only post office/store and take away. The Asian shop owner phoned the police to make complaints, but was unable to get witness statements from other residents to support the complaints. The Police approached the Council to install covert CCTV cameras which showed when incidents were happening and provided unbiased evidence of those participating and the extent of the problem. This was in turn used to inform the timing of Police and Neighbourhood Wardens patrols of shops and, while no formal action was taken, the relationship between the young people and council/police vastly improved and the confidence of partners to deal with such incidents was strengthened. Neither the Police nor Council are now receiving complaints from the residents

During 2008/09, national media coverage of the use of alleged excessive and inappropriate use of CCTV by some local authorities threatened the continuation of this valued and good practice work. The Council acted quickly, using its influence and networking in the Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) group to raise concerns – examples of the Council's proportionate use of CCTV were included on LACORS good practice website⁴. The Council supported the Local Government Association in its attempts to demonstrate the positive and valuable contribution that proportionate use of CCTV can bring to the fight against crime, and directly lobbied government ministers to urge that the sensible use of surveillance powers should not be curtailed as a result of some of the more sensationalist media coverage at the time.

As a result, a facilitated event was held in the county, in partnership with Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils, at which good practice, including that of the Council, was highlighted (the Council was seen as a positive exemplar with its use of CCTV). The meeting was attended by the then Local Government and Police Minister, who acknowledged the Council's good practice approach to the issue and

⁴ LACORS good practice examples, the website homepage, archive 23/12/08

the role the Council played in positively raising the profile of this work⁵. The event also saw the launch of Home Office consultation on RIPA changes.

This has led to a greater understanding of the importance of covert use of CCTV and reassurance that it is used sensibly and proportionately. Retention of these powers remains very important to allow the Council and its partners to fight crime and anti-social behaviour effectively and efficiently.

The Council has also played a leading role in DEFRA's Fairer and Better Environmental Enforcement Project, where one of its officers is a member of the project board. This has helped to shape legislation around the use of civil enforcement to address environmental crime and related issues using powers in the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008.

2. The organisation is improving the services and outcomes for which it is responsible

The Council continues to deliver high quality services across the full range of services it is responsible for. Services continue to improve from already high levels, with a strong focus on priority services.

Analysis of 2007/08 BVPI outturn shows that 37% of BVPI returns were in the upper quartile, compared with an average of 33% for all district authorities. The Council still managed to improve its performance against 58% of indicators between 2005 and 2008, in line with the average for all districts, even though its actual performance started from a higher base. Best performance continued to be in environmental service areas, reflecting the issues that surveys show consistently matter most to Borough residents and issues that the Council has consistently prioritised.

2008/09 outturn⁶ shows continued improvement and high performance in these priority areas, and improvement in areas of previously poorer performance.

- Recycling increased from 35.74% to 37.05% – in 2007/08, the Council had the best rate for dry recyclates (i.e. excluding garden waste) in the East Midlands, and 2008/09 saw further improvement on that already high level of performance. The target set was secured.
- Street cleaning standards improved further, with better than target performance against all four elements of new NI 195.
- The amount of residual waste was recorded at 242 kg per head, better than target and continuing a trend of waste reduction in recent years.

Significant improvements were made to customer service, another key priority area, as the Council progressed its Transformation Programme⁷. Planning and Environment public enquiries transferred to the Customer Service Centre in

⁵ Letter from John Healey; 22 April 2009

⁶ See Performance Digest 2008/09 <http://www.gedling.gov.uk/index/ac-home/ac-perfmanagement.htm>

⁷ Details of the Transformation Programme have been included with Use of Resources documentation

November, followed by Direct Services in June 2009. Other major front-line services are scheduled to transfer later in 2009/10.

During the year, 79% of all calls to the Customer Service Centre were answered, compared with a target of 70% (79% is approximately at the industry standard but the target set reflected the anticipated transitional nature of the year). 91% of Planning and Environment related calls to the centre were answered after its transfer in November. Performance at peak times improved dramatically – around the time Council Tax bills are issued, the answer rate rose from 46.5% in 2007/08 to 83% in 2008/09.

Other areas of significant improvement include Homelessness (as outlined above) and Benefits processing. Here, DWP quarterly monitoring highlighted 3rd quartile performance in 2007 – the Council responded by increasing capacity and improving efficiency and, in 2008/09, reduced the time taken to process Housing/Council Tax Benefit new claims/changes to circumstances to 9 days (the target set was for an average of less than 13.25). The Council recognises the importance of this measure for some of its most vulnerable customers, especially in recession, and has injected additional resource to meet growing demands on the service in 2008/09, backed by government funding.⁸

These services continue to be delivered at significantly lower cost than similar authorities⁹, demonstrating efficiency and good value-for-money.

Improvements to sickness absence had also been a previous cause of concern, but the trend of significant improvement continued in 2008/09. Following a 22% improvement over the previous 5 years, outturn for the year was 8.97 days/shifts lost per employee, down from 10.85 and significantly exceeding the 10.3 day target for the year. 194 employees recorded no sickness absence during the year – their achievements were acknowledged in personal letters from the Deputy Chief Executive. These improvements are the result of the introduction of positive sickness management policies and practices, now embedded in the Council's management practice. Improvements have continued in the first two months of 2009/10.

Satisfaction rates for key Council services continue to be high, absolutely and comparatively. 2008 Place Survey results¹⁰, published in June 2009 show that

- Satisfaction with refuse collection up 5% to 85%, the best rate in Nottinghamshire
- Satisfaction with recycling at 84%, also the best in Nottinghamshire
- Satisfaction with street cleaning down slightly to 64% but still well above national averages
- Satisfaction with parks and open spaces steady at 74%

⁸ Staffing reports to Personnel and Resources Committee. These show how careful management ensured that additional resource only deployed when absolutely necessary. <http://committee-web.gedling.gov.uk/aksgedling/images/att4110.doc> and <http://committee-web.gedling.gov.uk/aksgedling/images/att3868.doc>

⁹ See CIPFA benchmarking reports for Council Tax 2009 and for NNDR 2009.

¹⁰ For full results please go to <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/placesurvey2008>

While overall satisfaction with the Council fell to 56% from 65% in 2006, this has to be put in the context of a fall across the country. The Council's position relative to other Councils remains very good – it is 19th best district in the country and 2nd only to Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire (Rushcliffe has the highest satisfaction rating of all districts nationally). Gedling's performance also exceeds the level of satisfaction to be expected when compared with Borough deprivation levels.

Perceptions of value-for-money remain very strong – 44% agree that the Council provides good value for money, placing the Council 11th amongst district councils nationally for this measure. Communication is also seen to be highly effective – 51% say they feel well informed about local public services in the Borough, second only to Rushcliffe BC in Nottinghamshire. The Council is one of comparatively few authorities with a net positive score for this measure (i.e. the number of people saying they feel well informed is greater than those saying they are not well informed). Once again, the Council delivers this high quality service with comparatively low levels of resource, again demonstrating good value-for-money.

The Council continues to take steps to drive improvement, exploring and delivering radical solutions where necessary, consistent with its drive for continuous improvement. The housing stock transfer (see above) is perhaps the biggest example of a radical solution, as the Council recognised it could not deliver the improvements tenants wanted from the resources available to it.

In Leisure, where income is critical to the Council's overall financial well-being, the Council has taken steps to stem the decline in usage of its facilities through innovative marketing and changes to pricing structures¹¹. As a result, user numbers have steadied in spite of recession and stiff competition from the private sector, though Fitness membership continues to decline. Recognising the wider social role of leisure, the Council supports wider developmental activity – it has also taken up the government offer to provide free swimming for over 60s (in spite of uncertainties over the long term financial effect for the Council of this move).

New house building is also proving challenging during the recession, but the Council is doing all it can to address the issue positively, while understanding that ultimately this is a market issue it cannot fully control. A positive and proactive approach to strategic land use planning over the years means that the Council has made a good supply of land for development available, significantly exceeding the five year land supply requirement, and Local Plan policies have been successfully saved. Over the past year, it has followed up all planning permission to explore landowners' intentions with regard to development of sites in future – though this trawl was inconclusive, it did anticipate a trickle of houses coming forward and prompted a few sites with planning permission going back to the market. The Council has also engaged HCA and Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS) to increase capacity and progress delivery of one of its largest but potentially most difficult to develop brownfield sites (Gedling Colliery)¹². Good progress has been made towards

¹¹ See note on Leisure Stemming the decline

¹² See Gedling Colliery – ATLAS plan document

granting planning permission and securing funding for this major scheme, which will build a new community of over 1,000 homes and supporting facilities.

A pragmatic approach to affordable housing has seen the Council support proposals from private developers to sell unsold properties to Housing Associations for social housing, increasing the supply of affordable homes available in the Borough. Progress has been made towards a full review of planning policy towards affordable housing – a Supplementary Planning Document is due for publication later in 2009.

Turnaround times for dealing with planning applications fell back slightly, reflecting an unusually high volume of appeals and public inquiries. Steps have been taken to address the issue and strengthen capacity, including developing junior officers and introducing officer shadowing on major applications. Performance has improved in recent months, and all are currently running above national targets.

Customer views are taken fully into account in designing new services. The reintroduction of weekly non-recyclable refuse collection during the summer months was introduced in 2007 in response to customer concerns about maggots and smells from bins – satisfaction with the service has increased as a result. More recent changes (in Spring 2009) have led to glass and other recyclates being collected on the same day of the week, addressing previous customer confusion and resulting in an initial increase in take up of the service¹³.

Other examples of how the Council engages with customers to identify improvement needs and design flexible services that fit people's lives and meet individual needs include:-

- Involvement of young people in the design of new play areas, most recently at Bell's Field, Netherfield and in Newstead Village (two of the Borough's most deprived areas)
- Developing Play Areas in Papplewick, Lambley and ball court in Colwick after Play consultation with residents and Play Forum members
- Various changes to leisure activities and programming in response to customer feedback¹⁴
- Increasing the number of call centre operatives in the Customer Contact Centre, to reflect customers' expressed preference for contact by phone
- Introduction of Trade Waste recycling in response to the expressed wishes of business (30% of trade waste customers have asked for this)

The examples show how the Council treats citizens and people who use services as 'active partners'.

Tackling and reducing inequality are increasingly embedded in the Council's work (see section 4 below). In practical delivery terms, the Council's work is exemplified in its work to improve benefit response times, to improve the quality and availability of

¹³ Tonnages initially increased but have since fallen back as have tonnages of other materials collected. It is thought this is due to recessionary pressures, the result of people consuming less and throwing less away

¹⁴ See note on Leisure customer consultation changes

social housing and to prevent and manage homelessness outlined above, as well as in targeted interventions in more deprived neighbourhoods in partnership with other agencies, also as outlined (in section 3) below.

3. The organisation is contributing to wider community outcomes

The Council has a good understanding of local needs, as evidenced above (see re State of the Borough) and uses this knowledge to work with partners to deliver positive community outcomes. This delivery is targeted at areas of greatest need.

2008 Place Survey results show increased satisfaction with the area as a place to live (up 6% to 83%). This places Gedling 104th out of 201 districts, the second best performer in Nottinghamshire. Its performance exceeds the Nottinghamshire (79%) and national (80%) averages. The Council plays a key role working with partners to address the quality of life issues that impact on satisfaction with the area, focusing on identified priority issues.

Reducing crime and fear of crime has consistently been a Borough priority over the years. Positive outcomes have continued to be delivered during 2008/09, building on sustained success in this area from 2004-2008, with the Council playing a full part in this improvement.

Overall recorded crime in the Borough fell again in 2008/09, by 295 offences (a 3.4% reduction). This follows a 29% reduction between 2004 and 2008.

Significant reductions were secured for priority offences including acquisitive crime where burglary fell by 22.7% (359 offences) in 2008/09 and vehicle crime by 25 offences (a 2.3% reduction, building on a 35% fall from 2004-2008). Criminal damage fell by 81 offences, a 3.6% reduction in the year.

Key in securing the burglary improvements was a Prolific and Priority Offender initiative, supported by the Council and funded through the South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership. Local officers have been involved in the development of an Integrated Offender Management Strategy and Action Plan that addresses prolific and priority offenders as well as General Offender Management and preventative work aligned to the National Offender Management (NOMs) "Pathways Out Of Offending".

The Council continues to be an active member of the South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership, which completed its first full year in merged form, and plays an increasing role in the work of the Safer Nottinghamshire Partnership. Development of the South Nottinghamshire Partnership during the year included progression of an effective performance management system and development of the Community Engagement and Communications Strategy and Action Plan that is currently being progressed to be adopted by the Gedling, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe LSPs. The Council played a leading role in each of these developments – in addition, the Council's Community Safety Manager is Chair of the South Nottinghamshire CSP Partnership Business Support Group, which provides strategic action planning, delivery co-ordination, financial management and performance management for the

Partnership. South Nottinghamshire recorded the best overall performance amongst the Nottinghamshire CDRPs.

The South Nottinghamshire Partnership has also led to improved efficiency between the partner organisations – for example, Area Based Grant is now administered by one council on behalf of the whole partnership, who monitor spend according to profiles, budgets, audit and deal with all monitoring forms for issue to delivery partners. This significantly reduces duplicate monitoring and invoicing to the separate districts, while retaining funding allocations to individual district areas. The Partnership has also improved efficiency for county-based partners, reducing the number of meetings they need to attend thus increasing the likelihood of empowered representatives being able to be present.

A Partnership Analyst has also been appointed – this allows for more efficient use of resource, while the evidence gathered and analysed helps ensure optimum use of partnership human and other resources to target problem areas effectively. Continued and targeted performance improvements show the effectiveness of this approach.

Perceptions are key to improving community safety, in particular fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Targeted work by the Council and partners in recent years, including joint tasking of Council Neighbourhood Wardens and Police Community Support Officers, has been designed to increase reassurance and is being successful. Place survey results show improved perceptions of anti-social behaviour in all except one category compared with the last national survey. Particularly significant improvements are evident in perceptions of teenagers hanging around, where the proportion seeing this as a big problem has halved (from 29% in 2006 to 15% in 2008). These improvements have contributed to overall improvement in perceptions across Nottinghamshire.

Table – Perceptions of Anti-Social Behaviour – 2006-2008

Issue	% problem 2006	% problem 2008
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	15%	10%
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	62%	46%
Rubbish and litter lying around	39%	33%
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	39%	34%
People using or dealing drugs	31%	23%
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	21%	22%
Abandoned or burnt out cars	14%	8%

Sources – Best Value Performance Indicator survey 2006
Place Survey 2008

Other successful outcomes delivered in partnership during the year include better than target performance for adult participation in sport, as measured by NI 8 – 23.8%, compared with a target of 21.5%. This is particularly important as an agreed LAA outcome and relates closely to the Council’s priority for a place where people

can lead a healthy and active lifestyle. A range of initiatives delivered by the Council's Leisure Service department have contributed to this improvement.¹⁵

A wide range of successful outcomes continue to be delivered in the Borough's most deprived neighbourhoods through the Area-Based Initiative neighbourhood regeneration programmes managed through the Gedling Partnership. Details of successful outcomes in these areas were included with evidence for KLoE 2.1.

More recently, the Council has worked with health partners to raise awareness of men's health issues in Netherfield, by organising a "Street Doctor" event, following the model seen in the BBC tv programme¹⁶. Four cases of diabetes were diagnosed on one day through this intervention, none of which the patients were aware of.

To support and encourage high quality environmental design, the Council worked with its partner Newark & Sherwood District Council to organise an awards ceremony to recognise high standards of construction, workmanship and customer feedback amongst local builders and architects. More than 30 builders and architects across the two districts received awards at the ceremony held in May 2009.

Future partnership developments progressed during the year include: -

- Arnold MasterPlan – progress has been made towards redefining the scheme, with a new design blueprint developed. Early priority issues around land acquisitions have been identified, and negotiations with the PCT continued over siting of the proposed new Health Centre. This project will be pivotal in addressing the Council's priority to contribute to a vibrant and prosperous Greater Nottingham.
- Gedling Colliery site redevelopment for housing – A radical partnership approach has been adopted for this major development, with partners working together to agree a vision for the site. Key support has been provided by ATLAS (Advisory Team for Large Application Sites) as the Council made the most of capacity available to it. Discussions with emda and with the Homes and Communities Agency have also led to significant progress with planning and funding issues. The project addresses all of the Council's priority themes.

The Council is also supporting development of the new Diploma qualification in the Borough, participating in the structure and governance of the Gedling Schools Partnership and advising on the development of course content. This has potentially great significance in addressing skills issues amongst young people in the Borough¹⁷.

The Council continues to play an active role in development and delivery of the Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement. It is the only district council to take the theme lead role – a Gedling Council officer leads the Sustainability theme group. Targets set out in the first LAA were successfully delivered and the Council

¹⁵ See note on Leisure Increasing Participation

¹⁶ For details, see "Street Doctor" poster and <http://gedling-nt5/inter/index/ac-home/webteam-newpage/ac-news-archive/ac-news-article.htm?newsid=31454>

¹⁷ See Gedling Schools Partnership presentation to Senior Management Team

consistently delivers against LAA targets within its area of responsibility, including for recycling and street cleaning as outlined above.

At conurbation level, though agreement was not reached between the City and County Councils on a Multi-Area Agreement for Greater Nottingham, the Council continues to encourage and support conurbation wide working. This is most evident in work to develop aligned Core Strategies across the Housing Market Area, agreement for which was reached during the year through the newly created Joint Planning Advisory Board. Aligned Issues and Options are due for consultation during Summer 2009.

This joint working also allows for more efficient procurement and economies of scale¹⁸ – examples include the joint procurement of evidence studies across the conurbation (in 2009, this included a jointly procured Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) and potential savings that may be derived from a single enquiry across Greater Nottingham later in the Core Strategy development process, rather than separate enquiries for each district.

Cross-border working within the conurbation also works at more practical levels – for example, in the Warren Hill area, real and practical improvements have resulted from joint working between City, County and Borough authorities, promoted by the Council as part of the Bonington Area-Based Initiative, and also involving Nottingham City Council's ALMO, Nottingham City Homes¹⁹.

There is strong alignment between the Council's priorities and the latest LAA and LAA targets the Council contributes to are fully embedded in the Council's performance management arrangements. Council priorities have also been fed into the continuing review of the Nottinghamshire Community Strategy, where the Council plays a full role in the Development Group.

4. The organisation is tackling inequality and improving outcomes for people in vulnerable circumstances

The Council has significantly improved its understanding of and response to the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities across the Borough, first through the State of the Borough work and most recently through the development of its new Equality Improvement Plan, "Towards a Fairer Gedling"²⁰.

This new document shows how the Council has now adopted a "strategic approach to equality and diversity", addressing one of the key areas for improvement identified in the 2008 CPA Corporate Assessment. It maps the Borough's communities in detail, identifying issues arising from this, and sets out objectives and priorities arising from that analysis, delivery of which will be managed through a focused set of targets fully embedded in the Council Plan. Those targets demonstrate the Council's clear ambitions to deliver fair and equitable services and outcomes to all its communities.

¹⁸ See JPAB 2 July 2009 – Agenda item 3

¹⁹ See Neighbourhoods note attached – section on Bonington/Warren Hill

²⁰ "Towards an even fairer Gedling" – Equality Improvement Plan – Cabinet 9 July 2009

Delivery of the Plan is supported by self-assessment against the new local government equalities framework, demonstrating the Council's alertness and openness to latest developments in this area. A full programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) is included in the Plan, some of which have already been completed. These are cross-referenced in relevant Department and Section Plans and progress will be managed through the new Covalent performance management system, also ensuring embeddedness. EIAs can identify improvements to better address community needs – for example, the EIA of the adult “Positive Moves” programme led to sessions being programmed in the evening as well as during the day.

In practical terms, the Council continues to target efforts to ensure it has impact where needs and equality gaps are greatest. Examples above around homelessness and benefit take up (the Council now employs a Benefit Income Maximisation Officer) are just two examples of this.

Working with partners, the Council continues to prioritise interventions in its more deprived communities through the Area-Based Initiative programme, as outlined above in KLoE 2.1. Recent successes in Bonington, Daybrook and Netherfield are included in the Neighbourhoods note attached.

Other practical examples of the Council addressing diversity and tackling disadvantage include: -

- The “Growing Older in Gedling” event, organised through the Borough Cohesive Communities Forum in partnership with the Asian Elders Group (see KLoE 2.1)
- A “Faith in Gedling” event, also organised through the Cohesive Communities Forum, which brought together representatives from various faith groups in Spring 2009
- A rolling programme of “awareness raising” initiatives that have so far featured disability and sexual orientation
- Further development of the Gedling Multi-Faith Calendar, which has been praised for its value in raising awareness of different cultures in the community
- Securing funding (£646,000) for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision, in partnership with the City Council (though it has not proved possible to progress the original site and alternatives are now being sought)
- Positive and proactive involvement with the Safeguarding Children agenda, working closely with the County Council as Children’s Services Authority and ensuring widespread sharing of key information and advice to all relevant employees (including circulating a summary leaflet on the issue to all employees²¹)
- Various examples of programmes designed to address vulnerable and marginalised groups in Exercise Promotion

²¹ Safeguarding leaflet

- Continued activity to prevent and address consequences of domestic violence, encouraging confidence to report incidents. Activities include a series of workshops to encourage and support victims and a publicity campaign. At a practical level, the Sanctuary scheme in place since July 2007 has supported 17 families so far, with a further 6 being progressed.

The Council's work with its partners is leading to improved outcomes for disadvantaged groups and those at risk of disadvantage. At the highest level comparative deprivation levels have improved since 2004, with fewer neighbourhoods amongst the worst 20% nationally for deprivation. Comparative improvement is evident in all of the neighbourhoods covered by ABIs.

At a more practical level, the examples above around benefit maximisation, homelessness and community safety illustrate this, as do some of the "softer" outcomes in arising from ABIs, such as improved perceptions and greater community confidence resulting from the Carlton Valley ABI²². Within its own workforce measures are more mixed, but with a comparatively small workforce, indicators relating to management positions in particular can be affected by the departure and/or appointment of one person. Steps are taken to ensure posts are advertised in a suitably wide range of publications, and vacancies are tracked according to diversity criteria at application, shortlist and appointment stage. Targets in the Equality Improvement Plan will ensure further focus on these issues in future.

Latest place survey results also suggest improvements to community cohesion. In 2008, 80% of respondents felt their area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, an improvement of 9% compared with 2006. This is one of the best rates of improvement in Nottinghamshire, and significantly exceeds the average 5% improvement across the county.

²² See evidence submitted with KLoE 2.1

KLoE 4.2**Does the organisation have the leadership, capacity and capability it needs to deliver future improvements?****2. The organisation has the leadership, capacity and capability it needs to be effective**

The Council's political and officer leadership is strong, focused on improvement and efficiency and works effectively together.

Managerial strength was recognised in the 2008 CPA corporate assessment and has been further strengthened since then, with the new Deputy Chief Executive in post and established in the role. This has been pivotal in the progression over the past year of improvements in performance management, equalities and dealing with recession and its effects, as highlighted in KLoE 4.1.

Managerial leadership skills continue to be developed, as outlined in UofR storyboard 3.3. Most recently, all senior managers attended a two day coaching skills course, important for developing the skills and attitudes required to help the Transformation Programme progress. Very recently, all of Senior Management Team attended a facilitated "Awayday" to review the Council's organisational vision and values and to plan for the future.

Member leadership has also been strengthened over the past year through a range of development opportunities²³. This includes training in risk management, a specific issue raised through CPA. Funding has also been obtained from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership to support further member development, as the Council recognises the need for continual improvement in this area.

Cabinet portfolios have recently been adjusted to reflect priorities and the Council's organisational vision²⁴. This shows how the Council adjusts its organisational architecture to reflect changing circumstances.

Scrutiny has taken an increased role, engaging constructively with policy development and review. Examples include reports on anti-social behaviour and leisure services budget issues²⁵, as considered at Cabinet in April, and practical

²³ Members Development programme 2008-2010

²⁴ Executive decision and report on new portfolios <http://committee-web.gedling.gov.uk/aksgedling/users/public/admin/kab86.pl?operation=DETAILS&edname=ed492&phase=two>

²⁵ Reports to Cabinet – 2 April 2009

Anti-social behaviour <http://committee-web.gedling.gov.uk/aksgedling/images/att3975.doc> ;
<http://172.16.100.253/ProgressMessages/att3976.doc?proxy=172.16.100.253&action=complete&index=8&id=17406876&filename=att3976.doc> ;

Leisure services - <http://committee-web.gedling.gov.uk/aksgedling/images/att3973.doc> ;
<http://172.16.100.253/ProgressMessages/att3974.doc?proxy=172.16.100.253&action=complete&index=29&id=17432156&filename=att3974.doc>

engagement with development of the new performance management framework and system, through a dedicated development group²⁶.

The Council maintains its focus on priorities and directs resources to ensure those priorities are delivered. As outlined above, the Borough's Vision and Priorities have been recently reviewed. They are clear and ambitious, and based on a robust understanding of current and future need. The development of the Council Plan around the priorities demonstrates a firm and absolute focus on these priorities, in making investment decisions and increasingly informing disinvestments. The Council Plan includes longer-term targets to improve quality of life in the Borough. It incorporates detailed budgets for the first year of the three year programme, and cross references to the MTFs in further years, retaining previous links between budget and service planning (see UofR storyboard 1.1 for more information). Further work now in progress aims to project longer-term targets as part of Action Plans for the Vision and 5 Priorities.

The Gedling Transformation Programme remains the key vehicle through which the Council aims to increase efficiency, strengthen customer service and modernise the way the Council works. It is specifically reflected in the priorities through the "Transforming Gedling Borough Council" theme.

The programme progressed well during 2008/09, with the transfer of Planning and Environment enquiries to the Customer Service Centre (probably the most complex department in terms of the variety of services covered) and good progress made towards the transfer of other services.

The Programme has already led to significant improvements to customer service as outlined in KLoE 4.1. It has also led to the full remodelling of a wide range of processes and ongoing staffing savings of £65,000 p.a. (see UoR storyboard 2.1 for more detail).

The introduction of a new performance management framework²⁷, and the related introduction of the Covalent Performance Management system, further strengthens the focus on priorities. The new framework was introduced to all managers at briefings in January 2009²⁸, while Covalent has been supported by a training programme targeted at managers, system users and members. Further detail is included in KLoE 4.1 and in the relevant Use of Resources self-assessments, including 2.2 which evidences the Council's approach to data quality.

Like most businesses and public sector bodies, the Council is being hit by the recession. It has therefore had to make difficult resourcing decisions, but has ensured the decisions are supported and understood by residents and reflect its priorities. During 2008/09, the Council took the difficult decision to introduce charging for use of shoppers' car parks in the Borough. In doing so, it recognised the potential detrimental effect the change may have on the shopping centres but also recognised

²⁶ Working Group Report to Performance Review Scrutiny Committee – 6 July 2009 <http://committee-web.gedling.gov.uk/aksgedling/images/att4138.doc>

²⁷ Plans diagram and report to Cabinet 19 Feb 2009 (sections 2 and 3) <http://committee-web.gedling.gov.uk/aksgedling/images/att3879.doc>

²⁸ Performance management presentation slides – January 2009

the importance of ensuring financial capacity to protect other priority services. Before making the decision, the Council consulted with all households²⁹, explaining its need to balance its books and offering options to fill the budget gap. Residents overwhelmingly supported the car park charging proposal from the options offered, informing the decision finally made. This is an example of the Council responding swiftly to changing circumstances – see also case study on Response to Recession in 4.1 above. The Council's in depth understanding of risk is evidenced in UoR storyboard 2.4.

The Council's efficient and effective use of resources is reflected in the latest Audit Commission's Use of Resources assessment – the Council again scored 3 overall, while its aggregate score across the Use of Resources theme was the joint highest amongst all East Midlands districts³⁰. The Council has consistently delivered against challenging efficiency targets and continues to do so, using the techniques and programmes highlighted above and in UoR storyboard 1.2.

The Council has a good understanding of its capacity and the resources required to deliver its priorities. The aligned Council Plan/Budget continues the good practice of joined up service and financial planning, and the examples above around difficult decisions show the Council's ability to review the resources available to it and to make adjustments accordingly. UofR storyboards 1.1, 1.2 and 3.3 also evidence this.

In addressing recessionary impact, the Council has identified the need for staffing savings of £245,000 in 2009/10 and £345,000 thereafter. However, rather than seek redundancies, the Council has decided to deliver this saving through freezing a number of posts and, where appropriate, redeploying staff out of areas of less current priority into areas of higher priority. An example is the secondment of a senior Development Control Officer out of his substantive role (where the number of applications received has fallen) into a role to support Planning Policy (where a vacancy had arisen) and to support progression of the Arnold MasterPlan, a key corporate priority. This approach reduces the need to pay redundancy costs but, more importantly, allows the Council to retain experienced employees for when recovery starts, retaining key capacity.

The Council strengthens capacity through sharing key services and forming strategic alliances where appropriate. Examples of shared procurement arising from these alliances are set out in UoR storyboard 2.1, and in 4.1 above regarding joint planning work across Greater Nottingham.

The Council seeks out and pursues opportunities to contribute to community leadership. It has been a leading partner in Area-Based Initiatives as outlined in 4.1 above, and most recently took up the issue of addressing the recession with local businesses, also set out in 4.1. Recent examples of community-led interventions arising from Area-Based Initiatives include environmental improvements in the Daybrook area, in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council and Gedling Homes, and prioritisation of health issues in Netherfield in partnership with the

²⁹ Budget consultation leaflet and report

³⁰ Use of Resources score slide to SMT Briefing

Primary Care Trust. Customers are also more widely engaged in service design, as outlined in 4.1 above.

The focus of Area-Based Initiatives in the Borough's areas of highest deprivation is an example of the importance the Council attaches to fairness and inclusion. The new Equality Improvement Plan, "Towards a Fairer Gedling" further mainstreams and embeds equality and fairness into the Council's activity.