

**DRAFT  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
2007- 2010**

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# 1. Foreword by the Leader & Chief Executive of the Council

The Borough of Tunbridge Wells is an attractive and vibrant part of Kent. Residents and visitors benefit from a range of good services and facilities, award-winning parks and open spaces, excellent education, low rates of crime and one of the highest life expectancies in the county. However, the Council is in no way complacent. The Borough faces considerable challenges including a high cost of living, unmet demand for housing, increasing competition from other town centres, traffic congestion and pockets of very real (but often hidden) deprivation.

As a Council, we are committed to enhancing the attractiveness of the Borough, whilst recognising the need to accommodate new development to ensure economic growth. The Council has recently been through a period of profound, but necessary change. We have appointed a new senior management team, we are broadening our planning horizons and we are ensuring that we have the finances and capacity in place to deliver on our ambitions.

Local government in general and, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in particular, will face further change in future years. Government sees local councils, as democratically accountable bodies, having key roles in leading and shaping their local communities. We listen to our local people whose concerns are not always things that we can deal with in isolation. For me, future success will depend heavily upon partnership working. The Council is already working closely with partners in delivering its Sustainable Community Plan – ‘Enhancing the Quality of Life for All’ which was put together with key partners and founded on extensive consultation. We are also working actively with other local authorities in Kent and, in February 2006, agreed ‘The Kent Commitment’ – a statement of intent from all local government leaders to improve customer service, engage local communities, reduce costs, shape economic growth and work more closely together. I hope that this initiative will deliver real and tangible benefits for the future.

Looking back over the past 12 months, a number of key achievements stand out:

- 2006 was the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The Council celebrated the anniversary with a number of very successful events and projects throughout the year.
- Economic development is a key priority for the Council. In December 2006, the Council agreed plans to work with an external partner to develop strategic Town Plans for Royal Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook, Paddock Wood and Southborough
- Recycling is a key public priority and the Council has considerably increased its efforts in this area now recycling nearly half of its waste – one of the highest rates in the country and top in Kent
- We are also working more actively to enforce ‘enviro-crime’ such as litter and graffiti and we have been proactive in tackling a number of ‘grot spots’ in and around the Town.
- We have jointly funded and supported the development of a new community centre in Sherwood - one of our priority neighbourhoods and established a resident led board to manage it
- We have refurbished St John’s Recreation Ground and provided a new play area and achieved green flag, green heritage and national green apple awards for Dunorlan Park.
- We agreed a five-year Affordable Housing programme which will see 500 new affordable homes provided in the borough

- We provided over £300,000 in grants to community and voluntary organisations

At the same time, we are continuing to cut our costs and deliver our services more efficiently and effectively. Only seven per cent of the Council Tax you pay comes to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and our services are delivered for just £86 (24p per day) for the average Council Tax payer.

This Strategic Plan is a crucial document to build on these achievements and ensure the Council works in partnership and consultation to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives, works & visits the Borough.

**Cllr Melvyn Howell**  
**Leader of the Council**

For the past few years, the Council has been working hard to address the criticisms levelled at it by the Audit Commission in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment of 2004. The Strategic Plan is a key milestone for the Council: it is forward looking and externally focused. After a year of considerable change, the Council is now poised to deliver: it has clear priorities (founded on extensive community consultation), a new management team in place and a clear commitment to work with partners to deliver for our community.

We have come a long way over the past few years and the Council now ranks amongst the best in many key areas including recycling, housing benefits and planning. Surveys tell us that people find the Borough a great place to live, work and enjoy themselves in and we have high levels of satisfaction with our services and our overall performance as a council. We want to ensure that this improvement is sustained and embedded. We believe that we are now well on the way to realise our ambition to achieve a 'Good' CPA rating.

Local authorities, particularly district councils, operate within a complex and changing environment. In recent years we are being asked to do more with less: government is emphasising our role as a community leader whilst, at the same time, requiring us to do more with fewer resources. Value for Money has been, and will continue to be a watchword. Our challenge will be to continue to improve performance, whilst at the same time, reducing cost.

The next couple of years are going to be very demanding: the Council is undergoing Cultural Block Inspection in March 2007, a review of partnerships in April, a Planning Review in May and a Peer Review in the summer. The whole Council (cabinet, councillors, management team and staff) is up for the challenge and are looking forward to building on the real and tangible improvements that have been made over the past few years and a renewed focus on delivering excellent services to the community.

**Sheila Wheeler**  
**Chief Executive**

## 2. What is the Strategic Plan?

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council exists to serve the people of Tunbridge Wells. This Strategic Plan is the key strategic document for the Council over the next three years, it sets out local issues, national concerns and our commitments to achieving improvements for all those who visit, live, work and learn in our borough.

The Strategic Plan will also help ensure that the Council takes a planned and consistent approach to:

- the design and delivery of our services
- the prioritisation and allocation of our resources
- excellence in customer service
- the achievement of real value for money

The Strategic Plan sets out our corporate priorities and key targets, which will measure our success over the next three years. Every other plan and strategy we have will feed from and into the Strategic Plan.

Later in the plan, we have set out the following:

- the key corporate priorities and associated themes under each
- how we will measure our progress against our themes through Key Performance Indicators
- our underlying cross-cutting commitments to our communities

The Strategic Plan sits alongside a portfolio of strategies and plans that take into account national, regional, sub-regional and local priorities which, together, contribute to how we deliver services and manage our performance.

The Strategic Plan is grounded in the results of a wide range of consultation exercises including:

- Community Strategy consultation;
- Housing Strategy consultation;
- Development Plan preparation;
- Regular, ongoing dialogue with parish councils, the Town Forum and other key stakeholders;
- A 'Simultaneous Multiple Attribute Trade-Off' modelling (SIMALTO) exercise as part of the budget consultation process;
- The results of the triennial BVPI Customer Satisfaction survey; and
- Articles in the Borough Magazine – iLocal.

### 3. Broader Context

The Strategic Plan has been written during a dynamic and changing period for local government and is based on the challenges and opportunities that will impact on the way we work over the next three years.

Key drivers include:

- the publication of further conclusions on local government funding as part of the Lyons Review
- the impact of the Local Government White Paper and Local Government Bill
- the likely continued pressure of capping and constrained grant levels
- new inspection arrangements including Comprehensive Performance Assessment and other new assessments such as Use of Resources, Value for Money, Data Quality and Direction of Travel assessments
- the negotiation and agreement of a second-generation Kent Local Area Agreement in April 2008
- rising customer expectations and a general pressure towards 24/7 customer access
- the emerging South-East Plan preparation for development in the region
- an increased emphasis on partnership working both between and within local government tiers
- an increased emphasis on 'localism' and communities
- enhancing our commitments to equality and diversity

For Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, key issues include:

- continuing to improve service quality and performance across the board and embedding recent changes arising from in-depth reviews into the Planning and Housing functions
- developing a long-term vision for the Council and the borough, and medium-term planning and financial frameworks (including a Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Local Development Framework)
- moving away from a reliance on interest from reserves towards a balanced budget within the context of a Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- continuing to improve customer service and other mechanisms for gathering customer intelligence and ensuring that the Customer Relationship Management system delivers the intended benefits
- continuing to develop and improve key issues such as performance, financial and risk management, governance mechanisms and a procurement framework
- continuing to deliver efficiencies and value for money through a combination of active performance and financial management, technological innovation and business process re-engineering

This ambitious programme will need to be delivered against a backdrop of almost continuous inspection over the next 18 months. Forthcoming inspections include:

- LSP Peer Review in March 2007
- Cultural Block Inspection in March 2007
- Post Implementation Review of the Trevor Roberts' Planning Report by the Audit Commission in May 2007
- Peer Review in Summer 2007

- CPA Reassessment in late 2007/early 2008

The Council will clearly need to ensure that we have the capacity, resources and plans in place to deliver on our priorities, address key areas for improvement and meet the requirements of the various inspection regimes

## National, County and Local Priorities

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council sits within the largest two-tier structure in the country. The Council is committed to working with other districts to address countywide challenges and enhanced two-tier working to share good practice and develop innovative approaches to delivering better services to all communities.

## Central/Local Priorities

In July 2002, central and local government agreed seven shared priorities for service improvement, namely:

- Raising standards across our schools.
- Improving the quality of life.
- Promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities.
- Creating safer and stronger communities.
- Transforming our local environment by improving the quality, cleanliness and safety of our public space.
- Meeting local transport needs.
- Promoting the economic vitality of localities.

These central/local priorities are very much reflected in Vision for Kent, Kent Agreement, our Sustainable Community Plan, our corporate priorities and this Strategic Plan.

## Vision for Kent

The Vision for Kent is the Countywide Community Plan and sets the overall direction and vision for Kent. The document identifies eight key themes for improving the quality of life for all residents across the county and sets out short, medium and long-term priorities. Our Sustainable Community Plan is set within this wider context and we are committed to contributing to the wider county agenda.

## Kent Agreement

The Kent Agreement (LAA) is an agreement between central government and partners in Kent (including Kent County Council and districts councils), which sets out key areas for improvement across four themes: safer and stronger communities, children and young people, healthier communities and older people, and economic development and environment.

The Kent Agreement sets out a broad and ambitious programme of outcomes, that all districts are committed to working towards to improve outcomes for local communities.

The Kent Agreement underpins the work that the Council does and has informed our local priorities and, in particular, our Sustainable Community Plan.

## Sustainable Community Plan

The new Sustainable Community Plan – ‘Enhancing the Quality of Life for All’ – sets out the community’s vision for the borough and a partnership approach to delivering the joint priorities.

The Sustainable Community Plan is based on comprehensive public consultation and sets out a ten- year vision under nine local priorities:

- Safeguarding our environment.
- Maintaining a thriving local economy.
- Enabling people to take part and enjoy leisure activities.
- Maintaining community safety and reducing fear of crime.
- Transport - getting around the borough.
- Meeting the need for housing.
- Promoting health and improving well-being.
- Encouraging social inclusion by supporting independence.
- Learning for all.

The Community Plan Partnership is responsible for the delivery of the plan and consists of representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community organisations at a local level. Furthermore, we continue to work with our partners at a West Kent level to take forward our key strategic priorities for the sub-region. These structures have allowed us to develop clear delivery models for the Sustainable Community Plan.

All our partnerships are based on the understanding that a coordinated approach is required to address local needs and ensure that we maximise the use of resources to achieve positive outcomes for our communities.

Whilst the Strategic Plan is the Council’s medium-term framework, it nevertheless plays an important role in delivering the Sustainable Community Plan.

**Table 1: Relationship between the Community Plan and the Council's Corporate Priorities**

<b>Community Plan</b>								
Maintaining a thriving local economy	Safeguarding our environment	Enabling people to take part and enjoy leisure activities	Meeting the need for housing	Maintaining community safety and reducing the fear of crime	Transport - getting around the borough	Promoting health and improving well-being	Encouraging social inclusion by supporting independence	Learning for all
<b>Our Corporate Priorities</b>								
Promote and maintain a thriving and diverse local economy		Care for our environment	Have housing that is suitable for local people	Develop safer and stronger communities				
<b>Cross-Cutting Commitments</b>								
Delivering high quality services to our customers								
Improving customer service and satisfaction								
Ensuring that we are well managed, proactive and deliver value-for-money services								

## 4. Tunbridge Wells – The Place, People and Council

### Place & People

Tunbridge Wells is uniquely positioned within the Heart of Kent, and benefits from a rich historical legacy and is home to an array of well-established villages and rural communities, as well as the thriving town centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook, Paddock Wood and Hawkhurst. Fifty five per cent of our population lives in Royal Tunbridge Wells and forty five per cent in rural towns and villages.

Covering 33,133 hectares, the borough is home to a population of 104,030 residents, living in 42,695 households (2001 Census) representing 7.7 per cent of the county population. The borough neighbours East Sussex, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Ashford and benefits from good transport links to London and the south coast.

Tunbridge Wells was recently voted the third best place to live in the UK, with over two thirds of our borough being designated as an Area of Outstanding National Beauty and including ten Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Our residents enjoy a high quality of life with average life expectancy of 79.4 years and over 70 per cent of our residents live in owner-occupied households.

However, we also face significant challenges:

- The high cost of housing, coupled with a significant gap between housing supply and needs means that there is a significant challenge in balancing the housing market.
- Whilst in overall terms the borough appears to be affluent, there are areas of deprivation. For example, within the borough there are areas ranked among the most deprived twenty percent in Kent and Medway and in these areas, life expectancy is on average three years less than the borough average.
- The high cost of living makes it difficult to attract new people to the borough and adversely affects some of our vulnerable residents. It also makes it difficult for the Council to recruit and retain employees.
- Tunbridge Wells town centre is reliant on the retail economy and in recent years has suffered a relative decline in retail rankings in the face of increasing competition elsewhere.
- The geography of the borough which can lead to increased costs and the need to promote equal access to services in rural and urban areas
- An ageing population: by 2016, over 20 percent of our total population will be over the age of 65.
- Engagement with BME and new communities is challenging due to the small numbers within the district.
- Ensuring we both reduce our local contribution to climate change and promote adaptation to the consequences of climate change.

The Council acknowledges these challenges and has plans in place to address these as part of delivering its priorities and as part of its corporate and service planning process.

## The Council

Following the Council's 'Weak' Comprehensive Performance Assessment rating in 2004, we have been making profound changes to how we deliver our services and consult with our partners, residents and customers. We have restructured our senior management team and have undertaken an in-depth review of our under-performing services. We recognise that we must continue to change and improve and the Strategic Plan is a blueprint of how we will take the Council forward over the next three years.

The Council has 48 councillors, with overall Conservative control. There are nine Liberal Democrat councillors and one Labour councillor. The Cabinet consists of nine Conservative councillors. All Portfolio Holders complement the Council's functions and responsibilities.

The Cabinet is held to account by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its sub-committees. Overview and scrutiny in Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has recently been the subject of an external review, which has made a number of recommendations to improve its effectiveness. The Council has accepted these recommendations and put in place an action plan to improve overview and scrutiny, including the commitment of additional staff and financial resources to support the function effectively.

The Council employs over 400 people, with 50 per cent living and working within the borough. Following a recent restructure, the Council is now organised into three directorates, with Performance and Communication reporting directly to the Chief Executive.

The Directorate of Planning and Development has responsibility for Planning, Building Control, Economic Development and Regeneration, and Corporate and Community Planning. The Directorate is focused on achieving physical, social and economic improvements for the borough and its residents, with a focus on priority neighbourhoods, community engagement and town centre regeneration.

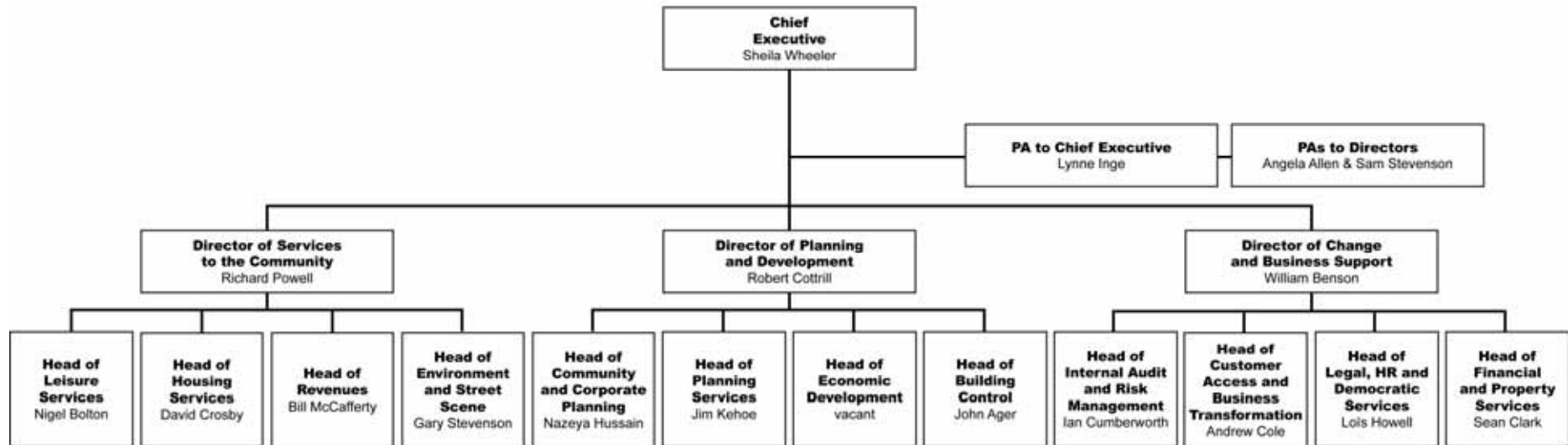
The Directorate of Services to the Community includes Housing, Leisure and Environment and Streetscene services, as well as Revenues and Benefits. The Directorate is leading on embedding the improvements delivered in Housing services, as well as enhancing the borough's public areas and the leisure and cultural offer, and continuing to maintain a very high performing Revenues and Benefits service.

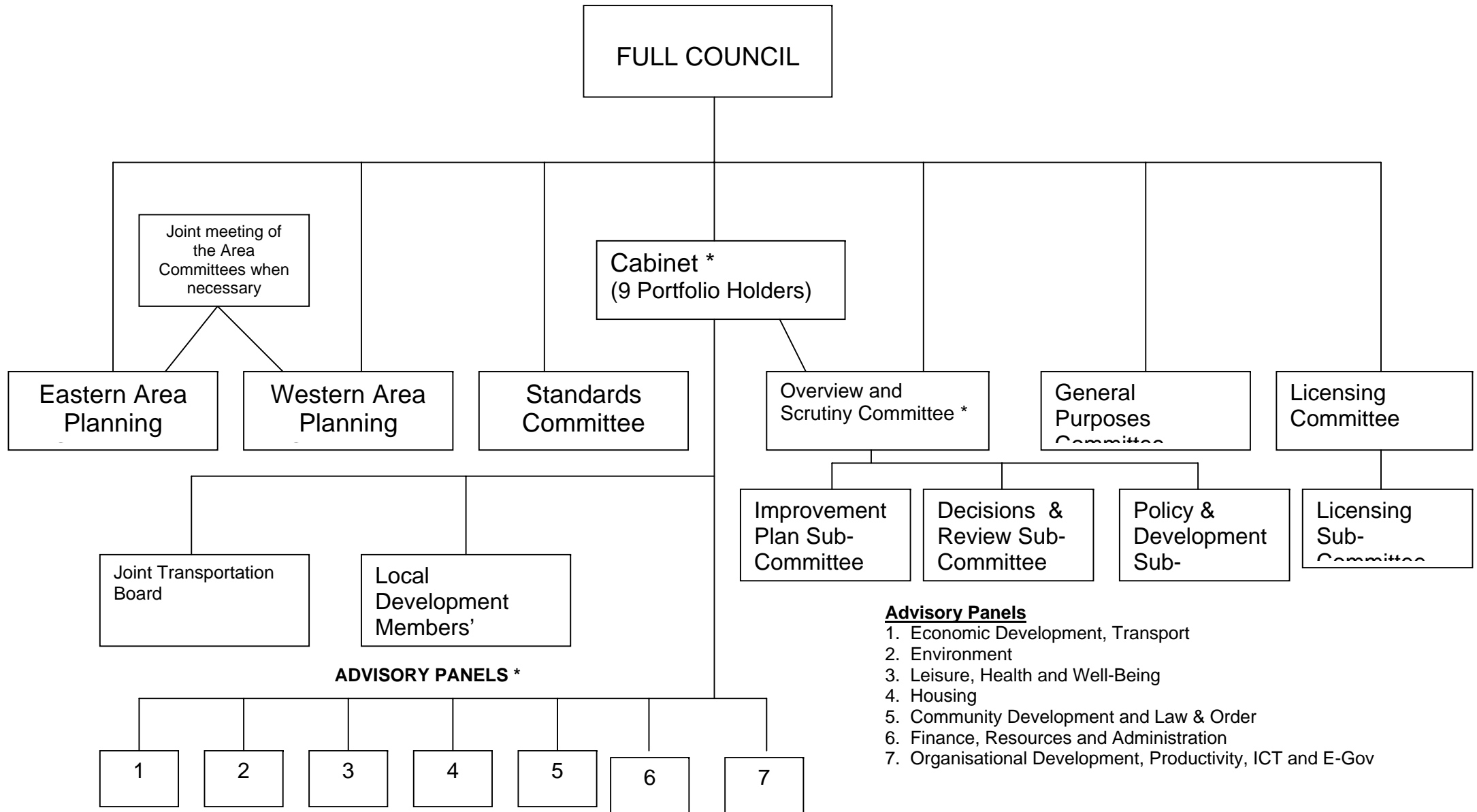
The Directorate of Change and Business Support provides internal support services to frontline services including HR, Legal, IT, Finance and Property Services. It has responsibility for strengthening the Council's governance arrangements, including Overview and Scrutiny and Internal Audit, and also plays a lead role in embedding a culture of change across all services and functions of the Council, through better use of ICT and improvements to business processes to achieve efficiencies and service improvements.

The Council is overseen by a Management Board comprising the Chief Executive, three directors, and the Council's two statutory officers - the Head of Financial and Property Services (S151 Officer) and Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer).

Management Team consists of the Management Board and Heads of Services and meets on a monthly basis to ensure a co-ordinated approach to delivering Council priorities, to address key cross cutting issues and to spread best practice.

**Tunbridge Wells Borough Council**  
*Chief Executive, Directors and Service Heads*





\* currently under review

## **5. Our Four Corporate Priorities**

**The Council will work in partnership to improve the quality of life for all who live, work and enjoy leisure time in the borough**

In 2005, the Council set itself four corporate priorities:

1. Promote and maintain a thriving and diverse local economy;
2. Care for our environment;
3. Have housing suitable for local people;
4. Develop safer and stronger communities.

Under each priority, the Council has set a number of corporate objectives (COs) and criteria for success. The Council has also agreed 37 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which will enable the Council to ensure that progress made against key objectives is on track. KPIs will be reported on a quarterly basis to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.

The Council also measures a wide range of nationally set Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and locally-set, Local Performance Indicators (LPIs). This is set out more clearly in Chapter 9 – Delivery, and in Appendix 1 which lists the indicators and targets for the next three years.

Underpinning the delivery of our Corporate Priorities are our three internal customer service commitments - further details are set out in Chapter 7.

### **Priority 1 - Promoting and maintaining a thriving and diverse local economy**

Although Tunbridge Wells is a thriving area with high levels of employment, some areas of our borough suffer from deprivation. We are committed to transforming these and other areas, which need investment. This means making our town centres more successful and attractive in the face of increasing competition elsewhere, and transforming some of our run-down housing areas.

The pressure for new housing and a strong economy set the context for our regeneration programmes. We recognise new housing is unpopular. However, as a result of the South East Plan there is likely to be a significant number of new homes planned for Tunbridge Wells over the next 10-15 years.

We are determined to ensure that these pressures benefit the borough. We can use new housing to help deliver stronger and thriving communities by addressing inequalities and facilitating new community and sports facilities.

#### **Attracting new businesses and inward investment**

New development is also the key to attract businesses and shoppers to our town centres. Royal Tunbridge Wells and other towns may be subject to the most pressure for growth, yet their town centres are in need of regeneration to ensure that they support the needs of local residents and businesses.

The Council's role is to use its powers as the local planning and housing authority to promote economic development and secure external investment. Our aim is to ensure that residents and businesses benefit from economic prosperity. We can then achieve our aims of improving Royal Tunbridge Wells, and other town centres, to meet changing needs and accommodate planned growth, whilst ensuring that our local villages, historic towns and rural areas retain their character and attractiveness.

## Reducing Traffic Congestion

Average traffic flows in the borough are about twice the national average. Unsurprisingly, traffic and transport-related problems consistently top the list of residents' concerns. The effect of the high volume of traffic on the condition of local roads is a matter of concern. The heavy traffic flows also cause increased noise and air pollution, as well as having an impact on road safety. It is essential that new development does not take place without adequate transport infrastructure, or at the very least a firm commitment to provide that transport infrastructure.

## Working in Partnership

All of these projects are ambitious and the Council cannot succeed without public and private sector help. We must make sure that we get the proper infrastructure, facilities and services to make our regeneration projects and new developments successful.

We have approached the major businesses and landowners in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre to bring forward development of key sites. We are also working closely with Kent County Council to secure better facilities, such as a new library in Paddock Wood.

Our Heart of Kent Partnership has been in existence since 1988 and is a partnership of the tourism functions at Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Ashford Council has been hugely successful in joint working and underpins our tourism services.

We will continue to work with all our partners on the West Kent Partnership and Community Plan Partnership to ensure that development improves local quality of life. It is essential that we plan for growth properly, ensuring that all of the services that the Council and our partners provide receive the funding required.

## Promote and maintain a thriving and diverse local economy

Since 2005 we have achieved the following to contribute to our Strategic Priority:

- We have established a new Pantiles Farmers' Market
- Supported a new one-price 'Shoppa Hoppa' bus service around the town centre.
- Developed business start-up courses for local residents.
- Further funding for the town centre farmers market.
- Funding for a thorough retail survey of the High Street and Pantiles.
- Funding to support Health checks for Paddock Wood & Cranbrook.
- Supported and delivered first Tunbridge Wells Business Awards 2006.
- Organised and delivered regular free one to one business support surgeries for local businesses.
- A comprehensive and up-to-date website dedicated to Business and Economy across Tunbridge Wells.
- Provided support and advice for local village shops and post offices at risk.
- Developed free vocational training and careers advice opportunities for local employee
- Developed a five year Tourism Strategy with the Heart of Kent Partnership
- Welcomed over 140,000 visitors to the Tourist Information Centre and supported local tourism businesses with over £135,000 worth of accommodation bookings since 2005.
- Established the Cranbrook Tourist Development Forum to further promote tourism in Cranbrook and the rural areas

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>This year we will:</b>	<b>By March 2009 we aim to have:</b>	<b>We will have met this priority if by 2010 we have:</b>
Promote a revival of our town centres as places to live, shop, work, operate and visit	Publish, together with our partners, a 'Town Plan' for Royal Tunbridge Wells to consolidate its economic position	Work with landowners to put forward the redevelopment of key town centre sites for public consultation  Published proposals for the future of Southborough,	Improved the relative ranking of Royal Tunbridge Wells compared with the top 250 town centres  Adopted formal 'Area Action Plans; for the town centre of

		Paddock Wood and Cranbrook	Royal Tunbridge Wells  Brought forward development in all our town centres with public support
Work with our partners to find innovative solutions to improve access to the town centre and across the borough	Commence an update of the Transportation Strategy to include appropriate travel options to meet the needs of the whole community	Completed a review of the Transportation Strategy to provide choice in travel modes to promote the economic viability, including a review of car parking systems, private vehicular access and re evaluation of Park & Ride options and operation of the Quality Bus Partnership	A real alternative to choosing the car as a method of visiting Royal Tunbridge Wells  Increased the percentage of local residents who agree that Royal Tunbridge Wells is easy to get around.
Take practical steps to promote a more entrepreneurial and balanced local economy	Carry out a feasibility study with Kent County Council to develop starter units at North Farm  Work with partners such as Locate in Kent to promote marketing of the borough	Agreed proposals for the development of the North Farm site	Started development of the North Farm site to provide flexible starter units for small businesses

## **Priority 2 - Care for our Environment**

We are determined to protect and enhance our local environment and to play our part in the sustainable use of resources, reducing waste, using energy efficiently and improving air quality. We live in an attractive area. We want to keep it that way by protecting the countryside, preserving and enhancing local character, and making sure that our streets and public places are kept clean.

### **Reduce, Re-use, Recycle**

The emphasis both nationally and regionally is on reducing the growth of waste. Our aim is to encourage communities to take responsibility for their own waste through the provision of recycling and composting facilities and by waste minimisation, in line with the Joint Kent Municipal Waste Strategy. Considerable progress is being made with composting and recycling, with around 44% of household waste diverted from final disposal.

### **Pollution Control**

Good air quality is vital for the health of our residents and is a key indicator for quality of life. The borough has few major industrial processes to generate air pollutants, but the effect of road traffic emissions has necessitated the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area for the A26 in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough.

### **A Tidy Borough**

Residents expect a clean and well-maintained borough. This is one of our highest priorities, and alongside the clearance of litter we aim to keep our borough free of graffiti, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles. When these nuisances appear, we seek to remove them promptly. Our built environment is attractive. Apart from the main towns, we have over 30 villages and local shopping areas. We recognise that some of these areas could be made more attractive, and we have a programme to address this.

### **Protection and Enhancement of Local Character**

The borough is subject to enormous pressures for development and from the impact of traffic, aircraft and everyday life in this busy part of the country. Retaining the quality of open spaces, countryside, pleasant residential areas and the borough's considerable heritage is important to residents and visitors alike. A balance between development and preservation is struck in the Council's Local Plan. The borough contains part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, local nature reserves, as well as some 25 Conservation Areas covering 783ha, and 3,000 Listed Buildings.

The Council is responsible for a wide network of recreational and open spaces including a range of historical parks in Royal Tunbridge Wells, and will ensure these assets continue to be effectively managed.

### **Energy Conservation & Renewable Energy**

Climate change and the pressure on our environment are driving the need to use energy more efficiently and identify sustainable energy sources. The Council will

examine its impact and actions through its Carbon Management Programme in terms of incorporating sustainable energy solutions in all Council services. We will also encourage sustainable development through our Sustainable Energy SPD.

## Working in Partnership

Household waste is an issue of national concern. We seek to tackle it by working in partnership through the Kent Waste Forum, with neighbouring District Councils and with the private sector. We work closely with the Police, DVLA and Environment Agency in tackling abandoned cars, graffiti and fly-tipping.

As we seek to progress energy initiatives, we will promote government schemes and work with partners in the private sector. We will also work with Kent County Council to improve the condition of our highways and footpaths, and will take a coordinated approach to the improvement of the whole street-scene, particularly in our village centres and local shopping parades.

## Care for our Environment

Since 2005 we have achieved the following to contribute to our Strategic Priority:

- In 2005-6 37 per cent of household waste was composted and recycled.
- Ten recycling sites now have banks for recycling plastic bottles.
- We have dedicated Graffiti and Cleaner Borough Hit Squads and a multi-disciplinary group to target grot spots.
- We have published a Sustainable Energy Supplementary Planning Document
- We have targeted abandoned cars in partnership with the police;
- We have signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on climate change, made commitments to become a 'Fair Trade Council' and
- Produced a Supplementary Planning Document on Renewable Energy
- Restored Dunorlan Park

Objectives	This year we will:	By March 2009 we aim to have:	We will have met this priority if by 2010 we have:
<p>Deliver a high quality household waste collection and recycling service that has the emphasis on waste reduction, recycling and diversion of material from final disposal</p>	<p>Continue our pilot scheme for the collection of plastic bottles for recycling at ten bring sites across the borough</p> <p>Continue our programme to improve the appearance of our recycling sites</p> <p>Work with the Kent Waste Forum to deliver the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy</p> <p>Assess whether to participate on a waste charging pilot</p>	<p>Put in place a new household waste and recycling collection contract to increase recycling and composting rates and reduce the growth in the amount of waste going to final disposal</p>	<p>Recycled and composted more than 20,800 tonnes of household waste</p> <p>Reduced the growth in household waste to 1.5 per cent</p>

	scheme		
Promote sustainable energy across the Council and borough	<p>Adopt a Sustainable Energy Supplementary Planning Document</p> <p>Continue to support the Warmfront Assistance Grants Programme</p>	Assessed how the rural economy can contribute to bio-mass production	<p>Incorporated sustainable energy solutions in all Council services</p> <p>Ensured all new major developments aim for 'Excellent' eco-homes standard</p>
Improve the street scene	<p>Review our cleansing regimes</p> <p>Continue to tackle graffiti and flyposting</p> <p>Introduce the use of fixed penalty notices for littering</p> <p>Work to clean up/encourage the redevelopment of grot spots</p> <p>Improve the appearance and maintenance of Borough Council street furniture</p>	<p>Put in place a new street cleansing contract that continues to improve the appearance of the street scene</p> <p>Taken formal action, where appropriate to improve grot spots</p>	<p>Improved cleanliness index to 10 per cent</p> <p>Improved our speed of response for the investigation and removal of abandoned vehicles to 90 per cent.</p> <p>Achieved satisfactory improvements to the ten worst grot spots in the borough</p>
Protect local character through the Town Planning process	Consult on a brand new Local Development Framework to guide future development , whilst implementing the current Local Plan (2006)	Implemented existing policies and produced new policies and submitted them to Government for approval	Adopted the Core Strategy of our Local Development Framework. Monitored annually the implementation of the current Local Plan (2006)
Maximise the quality of existing TWBC parks	Apply for two Green Flag awards for our parks	At least two parks which meet the Green Flag quality standard	Maintained at least two parks to Green Flag quality standard

### **Priority 3 - Have housing suitable for local people**

Tunbridge Wells is an area of intense housing pressure, primarily due to its location and the quality of the environment. This leads to high house prices and land values and the lack of affordable housing. The average resale house price recorded by the Land Registry in the period April-June 2006 was £286,986 (an increase of 9.4 per cent compared to the period April-June 2005). This has resulted in significant levels of housing need as recorded in the Housing Needs Surveys undertaken by the Council, and high numbers of households registered on the Joint Housing Register for the borough in need of housing/support.

There are continuing questions about future funding streams for new affordable housing, and pressure to reduce the use of bed and breakfast and other temporary accommodation for homeless households.

The lack of good quality housing/a decent home can affect a household's health and wellbeing, including their prospects of employment and educational attainment of children, and it can contribute to crime and disorder.

Whilst the Council no longer directly owns council housing stock as it was transferred, in 1992, to High Weald Housing Association (now part of the Town and Country Housing Group), the Council retains statutory responsibilities in respect of a range of housing issues, including:

- Assessing housing needs and house conditions.
- Homelessness.
- Enforcement action on properties where their condition affects the health and safety of occupants, as well as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and empty properties.
- Promoting improvements in the energy-efficiency of homes.

In addition, the Council plays an important role through its planning powers and its partnership working with housing associations and other agencies to enable the provision of new affordable housing.

### **Working in Partnership**

The Housing Partnership was developed in July 2005 to enable housing partners to work strategically to address key housing issues within the Borough. The Partnership consists of representatives from a number of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), private sector landlords, the Southern Private Landlords Association (SPLA), the Borough Council, and other related services such as the Youth Offending Team, Kent County Council Social Services, the Probation Service, the Primary Care Trust, Parish Councils, residents associations and voluntary agencies/advice groups.

The Housing Partnership is a sub-group of the Community Plan Partnership and has been involved in developing the Council's new Housing Strategy 2006-2011 and will review, assess and evaluate the Council's performance in meeting the targets set out in the Housing Strategy.

The Council also works in partnership with Parish/Town Councils and Action with Communities in Rural Kent to identify and meet affordable housing needs in rural areas.

Other partnerships include close working relationship with private landlords, including holding a regular West Kent Landlords Forum in partnership with Sevenoaks District Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and the Southern Private Landlords Association. The Council provides landlords with a six-monthly Landlord Bulletin.

Twenty eight Registered Social Landlords ( RSLs) operate within the Tunbridge Wells Borough and the Council currently has seven RSL Preferred Partners for the development of new affordable housing. The Preferred Partner arrangements are due to be reviewed again by the Council before the end of September 2007, and discussions are ongoing with Sevenoaks District Council on the selection of joint RSL Preferred Partners.

## Have housing suitable for local people

Since 2005 we have achieved the following to contribute to our Strategic Priority:

- Produced a new Housing Strategy for the period 2006-2011.
- Increased the promotion and marketing of our services.
- Agreed a five-year Affordable Housing Programme for the period 2006-2011, which aims to provide 500 new affordable homes in the borough in partnership with housing associations.
- Launched our Rural Exceptions Site Policy – known as the Rural HeLP project (Rural Homes for Local People) - to provide new affordable homes in rural areas in partnership with parish/town councils, Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) and housing associations.
- Improved our homelessness prevention/housing advice services, through regular housing advice surgeries (at the Town Hall and at Cranbrook and Paddock Wood) and our tenancy deposit/rent in advance schemes to help people access private rented accommodation.
- Introduced a Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) as required under the Housing Act 2004.
- Reviewed our Housing Renewal Grant Policy – the revised policy includes grants to help bring empty homes back into use as affordable housing.
- Instigated a joint West Kent Private Landlords' Forum in partnership with Sevenoaks DC, Tonbridge & Malling BC and the Southern Private Landlords' Association.

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>This year we will:</b>	<b>By March 2009 we aim to have:</b>	<b>We will have met this priority if by 2010 we have:</b>
To provide greater focus on achieving a balanced housing market and increasing the supply of affordable homes	<p>Ensure, in partnership with developers and landowners, at least 30 per cent of new homes on developments of 15 units or more are affordable</p> <p>Help provide 94 new affordable homes via Local Plan (2006)</p>	<p>Reviewed our housing policies in the LDF to contribute effectively to meeting housing need</p> <p>Adopted planning guidelines to maximise the amount of affordable housing achieved</p>	<p>Adopted new policies to ensure that new developments meet local housing need</p> <p>Helped provide at least 300 new affordable homes</p>

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>This year we will:</b>	<b>By March 2009 we aim to have:</b>	<b>We will have met this priority if by 2010 we have:</b>
	policies	through new developments	
To support more people, including vulnerable groups, to live in their own homes for longer	Increase the amount of Disabled Facilities Grant and introduce measures to improve effectiveness and management of Disabled Facilities Grant	Ensured that the Disabled Facilities Grant budget for 2007/08 is fully spent	Helped more people stay in their homes in a more cost-effective manner
To reduce homelessness in the borough and minimise the number of people at risk from homelessness	<p>Implement actions arising from the Homelessness Strategy</p> <p>Introduce joint working with secondary schools and youth groups to raise awareness of housing options and homelessness prevention amongst young people</p> <p>Reduce the use of B&amp;B &amp; hostels and other temporary accommodation for homeless households</p>	<p>Achieved a 15 per cent year-on-year reduction in homeless acceptances</p> <p>Held at least two sessions with secondary schools and youth groups</p> <p>Reduced the number of homeless households temporary accommodation</p>	<p>Reduced the number of homeless acceptances year-on-year, and reduced the level of homelessness amongst young people</p> <p>Reduced the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation by half compared to December 2005 levels</p>
Tackle fuel poverty and enable practical assistance for those who need help in heating their homes	Increase awareness of the Warmfront Grant Assistance Programme	Assisted 160 households to improve the thermal insulation/energy efficiency of their homes through Warmfront Grants/the KASH discount scheme	Improved the thermal insulation/energy efficiency of homes and reduced fuel poverty amongst householders
Improve the condition of	Implement a policy for non-	Inspected 20 HMOs and	Improved the condition of

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>This year we will:</b>	<b>By March 2009 we aim to have:</b>	<b>We will have met this priority if by 2010 we have:</b>
private sector housing	<p>licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to tackle worst conditions as a priority</p> <p>Implement a Private Sector Landlords' Accreditation Scheme</p>	<p>brought ten up to the required standard</p> <p>Accredited at least 20 privately-rented properties</p>	<p>private sector housing by having inspected 60 HMOs and bringing 30 up to the required standard, and accrediting at least 60 privately-rented properties</p>

## **Priority 4 - Develop Safer & Stronger Communities**

Safer and stronger communities are those, which are prosperous, and have local people who are willing and able to work together to help themselves and their area. They are characterised by low crime levels, services focused on community needs, and have available access to a range of leisure, cultural and sporting facilities. In developing our plans to foster self-reliant and thriving communities, we will have regard to the needs of all groups, including older people, young people, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

Whilst the Council wants to see a wide range of facilities for local people, it recognises that it is not necessarily the best provider in all circumstances. The private and voluntary sectors may be better able to deliver some services. This area of the Council's activities includes substantial expenditure on buildings used for leisure activities. The Council will review whether other forms of ownership and management can release resources to meet priority objectives. We will need to be radical in our approach if we are to generate sufficient funds.

### **Reducing Crime & Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour**

West Kent is the lowest crime area in the county and Tunbridge Wells is consistently one of the three lowest districts. In 2004–2006 there were 71-recorded crimes per 1,000 population in the borough. We will continue to play an active role in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and particularly through our youth, sports and arts development programmes, to divert young people from involvement in anti-social and criminal activities.

### **Healthy Living**

Our residents have relatively good health, but there are profound differences between the affluent and deprived communities in the borough. Social deprivation is associated with poor health. Up to 36% of households in some of our most deprived areas have at least one person with a long-term illness - far higher than the borough average of 26%. The Government has recently published its White Paper: 'Choosing Health - Making healthy choices easier', which recognises the role of local authorities in promoting healthy lifestyles.

The Council's role is to facilitate the provision of a range of leisure, cultural and sporting facilities and activities to the community directly and through partnership.

### **Community Engagement and Development**

In order to help local communities to be self-reliant and thriving, we will be developing Neighbourhood Action Plans throughout the borough. This will help ensure that residents' needs are reflected in how our partners and we deliver and improve services. We want to help communities prioritise for themselves and lever funds into their area. This is not just Council spending, but building capacity to seek Government and other agency funding.

### **Helping the most vulnerable including the young and elderly**

Not all of our residents are able to make the safe, healthy or informed choices that others take for granted. The Council currently provides a range of services to support

young people and older people and, in particular, is working with its partners to tackle deprivation and promote self-reliance.

## Working in Partnership

We recognise that we need to work with a wide range of partners to achieve our ambitious targets and in relation to the regeneration projects. In the area of leisure, the capital and revenue funding needs are significant and cannot be met by the Council alone. The Council will achieve savings and secure investment in our leisure facilities. We will continue to seek alternative ways of providing services more effectively.

We will work with our partners in the health sector to help them achieve the national targets for improving the health of our community. This will be primarily through our contribution to a local Physical Activity Action Plan.

Our bid to improve the Library & Museum in Royal Tunbridge Wells has been made in close association with Kent County Council.

The most appropriate organisation will take the lead for each project. For many activities, the Council's role will be one of issue identification, co-ordination, support and enabling.

## Develop safer and stronger communities

Since 2005 we have achieved the following to contribute to our Strategic Priority:

- Worked with partners to start building a new community centre in Sherwood and the development of a resident-led board.
- Developed a new Sustainable Community Plan.
- Introduced Charlton Athletic football training in priority neighbourhoods
- Developed the Oak Road Doorstep Green
- Restored Dunorlan Park
- Refurbished the Assembly Hall Theatre
- Provided free arts and museum activities for vulnerable people,
- Co-ordinated Royal Tunbridge Wells 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>This year we will:</b>	<b>By March 2009 we aim to have:</b>	<b>We will have met this priority if by 2010 we have:</b>
As a partner in the Tunbridge Wells Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership, tackle anti-social behaviour and reduce crime and the fear of crime	<p>Work with partners to prepare a scheme of CCTV enhancement</p> <p>Review how frontline Council services can be proactive in the communities they serve</p> <p>Provide diversionary schemes for young people through our leisure services</p>	<p>Implemented new mobile and fixed CCTV systems for public places in the town centre and those areas where it would make a difference</p> <p>Developed high visibility in tackling local issues and reduced fear of crime</p>	<p>Increased the number of people who feel safe during the day and night in our towns</p> <p>Reduced the number of recorded incidents in our town centres</p>
Work with and consult the community to identify the improvements which will most benefit local residents	Pilot a programme of community engagement led by local Ward Members	Produced six Local Community Action Plans with the support of local residents and businesses	<p>Evidence that local satisfaction with the Council's consultation process has risen</p> <p>Evidence of a redirection of</p>

Objectives	This year we will:	By March 2009 we aim to have:	We will have met this priority if by 2010 we have:
			<p>2½% of budget to local initiatives</p> <p>Evidence that our priority groups of older and younger people are involved and support the process</p>
<p>Enable the most effective organisation to deliver local services</p>	<p>Work with voluntary groups across West Kent to assess different ways of providing services</p> <p>Support local residents in managing TN2, the new community centre in Sherwood</p>	<p>Enabled voluntary groups and local residents to take an active part in service delivery</p>	<p>Assessed all of our services and assets in the context of shared services and different forms of provision</p>
<p>Improve the physical environment of priority neighbourhoods and address social problems</p>	<p>Complete a new community centre in Sherwood</p> <p>Work with partners to take forward estate-based regeneration plans</p>	<p>Introduced new services to the community centre funded in a sustainable manner</p> <p>Agreed regeneration plans and helped fund community development work in both areas</p>	<p>Delivered new community facilities and built new private and affordable homes</p> <p>A measured increase in residents' satisfaction</p>
<p>To encourage and help the provision of better healthcare and provide the opportunities for healthier lifestyles</p>	<p>Work in partnership with public and private partners to maintain and improve healthcare facilities and to promote Tunbridge Wells as a centre of excellence</p>	<p>Targeted young people at risk of offending or anti-social</p>	<p>Secured and agreed the re-development of Pembury Hospital</p> <p>Increased the number of visits to our sports centres, theatre and museums.</p>

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>This year we will:</b>	<b>By March 2009 we aim to have:</b>	<b>We will have met this priority if by 2010 we have:</b>
	Target our community sports, arts and museum programmes to those most in need	behaviour through a programme of sports,arts and museum activities	Increased the number of people attending sports arts and museum development courses

## 6. Our Three Customer Service Commitments

Underpinning our priorities are three cross-cutting commitments, which reflect our core principles in service development and delivery to our customers:

- Delivering high quality services to our customers
- Improving customer service and satisfaction
- Ensuring that we are well managed, proactive and deliver value for money services

We recognise that we must deliver appropriate, high quality services that meet the needs of our residents, whilst being prudent about public money and providing value for money.

### High Quality Services

The Council has considerably improved its performance over the past few years with the latest report from the Audit Commission showing that 53 per cent of performance indicators have improved since 2002-3 and 43 were in the top quartile in 2005-6 – better than the average ‘Excellent’ CPA-rated Council. The Council has reviewed and put in place improvement programmes in a number of its key services including Planning and Housing. However, we are not complacent and recognise that performance overall has slipped in some areas from 2004-5 to 2005-6. Details of measures we have put in place are detailed below under ‘Our Performance Management Framework’. Performance indicators only tell part of the story, however; in terms of outcomes for residents/service users:

- the Council is now amongst the top ten per cent of councils in the country for recycling rates;
- the crime rate in Tunbridge Wells is among the lowest in Kent
- proactive steps are taken to remove graffiti, fly-tipped waste and abandoned vehicles as soon as they are reported;
- Dunorlan Park has now been awarded a Green Flag award and is one of only 21 parks in the country to have received a Green Heritage Award (the only Green Heritage Award in Kent);
- the Council’s proactive work in housing has contributed to a drop of nearly 30 per cent in the number of households who applied to the Council as homeless in 2005-6 – the Council is now a top performer in this area;
- the Council welcomed 80,000 visitors to its TIC and tourism contributed over £195 million to the local economy in 2003.
- Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery has over 56,000 visitors – second only to Chatham Historic Dockyard in Kent and has worked with almost every school in the borough
- The new contract with Fusion-Lifestyle to manage the Council’s three sports centres will result in total savings of over £7million during the life of the contract, as well as immediate service improvements (including gym refurbishment at all three sport centres completed within three months of contract commencement).

### Improving Customer Service and Satisfaction

The Council is committed to delivering excellent customer service. It has in place a Customer Service Charter, a customer service handbook for all staff, conducts and participates in regular mystery shopping exercises to measure staff’s performance,

and has recently procured a Customer Relationship Management system to improve the way it manages customer enquiries and to help resolve the overwhelming majority at the first point of contact. The Council is currently responding to approximately 95 per cent of telephone calls within 15 seconds. The Complaints Procedure has recently been reviewed and, since its introduction, the Council has had no findings of maladministration by the Local Government Ombudsman. Public satisfaction with the Council remains relatively high at 65 per cent and satisfaction has improved in areas where the Council has invested money – notably parks and open spaces (following the refurbishment of Dunorlan Park) and recycling (where the Council has considerably improved its service). The Council also received the second lowest level of dissatisfaction with the overall balance of services it provides amongst over 60 authorities that have undertaken a ‘trade off’ budget consultation exercise. Other access channels are also being improved including the Council’s website a ‘one stop shop’ in Cranbrook (the Weald Information Centre) and new contact methods such as text messaging services for customers. Over the next few years, the Council will be looking to improve its reception facilities and to roll out new and innovative methods of consultation.

## Well Managed, Proactive and Value for Money

The Council is committed to ensuring that it is well managed, proactive and delivers value for money. It is working to improve its governance mechanisms through a Statement of Internal Control and a local Code of Corporate Governance. The Council has recently revised its Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Procurement Rules and Scheme of Delegation. As part of a broader review of the Constitution, it has also established an Audit Committee to receive audit reports and assure standards of corporate governance. The Council has also recently reviewed its arrangements for managing risk, procuring goods and services and managing projects and is in the process of reviewing and increasing support to its overview and scrutiny function.

With both absolute and real-term reductions in government grants, inflationary pressures, additional services required by government and restrictions on the level of Council Tax increases, the Council will always need to save money just to stand still. With the need to put additional resources into priority areas, Value for Money is effectively a fact of life. At the present time, the Council continues to enjoy relatively high levels of public satisfaction with its services (with very low levels of dissatisfaction) whilst, at the same time, maintaining one of the lowest Council Taxes in Kent – an average of just 23p a day.

The Council will be looking to deliver savings in a number of ways (further details are provided in the Medium Term Financial Strategy): The Council will be looking to re-examine its business processes to improve their efficiency and effectiveness and to maximise the potential impact of its Customer Relationship Management system; it will be looking to consolidate budgets wherever possible to improve efficiency and it will look to maximise the benefits of joint working. The Council will also be looking to make increased use of information and communications technology (ICT) to deliver efficiencies as part of the Transformational Government agenda. It will also be looking to deliver greater efficiencies through procurement and greater use of its assets. Finally, the Council will be looking to improve its approach to debt recovery and income management.

The Council is also developing and implementing a robust HR Strategy and Workforce Development Plan, which will ensure that the Council, human resources

are equipped for delivering the corporate priorities now and in the future. In particular, there will be a strong focus on ensuring that the right people are in the right jobs, that they have the necessary skills and expertise, and are being well managed in order to achieve best value for money.

## Customer Service Commitments:

Since 2005 we have achieved the following to contribute to our Customer Service Commitments:

- Procured a Customer Relationship Management System to improve the service we deliver to customers
- Reviewed key services we deliver to the public (including Planning, Benefits and Housing) and considerably improved performance in these areas
- Maintained the lowest district Council Tax in Kent by keeping Council Tax increases to a minimum in the face of considerable cost pressures and additional requirements placed upon us

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>This year we will:</b>	<b>By March 2009 we aim to have:</b>	<b>We will have met this priority if by 2010 we have:</b>
1. Ensure that the Council strives to improve performance and provides VFM	Review two key services, Building Control and Revenues and Benefits  Produce a shared services policy	Improved 25 per cent of our key processes and integrated them with CRM	Improved 75% of services and integrated with Customer Relationship Management (CRM)  Delivered more local services in partnership
2. Ensure that the Council's services are driven by our customers	Begin to introduce Customer Relationship Management to our switchboard and Tourist Information Centre (TIC)  Agree a communication and engagement Strategy	Made a further 5 per cent of appropriate services available through multiple channels  Made 100 per cent of consultations available on the internet (where possible)	Ensured that all appropriate customer services are available through multiple channels  Ensured that the results of consultation are reflected in the delivery and choice of Council services  Achieved a 10 per cent increase in residents' satisfaction with access to

			Council services
3. Ensure that those employed in the Council develop their skills to deliver more effective services	Produce a draft HR Strategy  Complete Leadership and Change courses and consolidate Member development	A training programme reflecting our key priorities	Achieved a culture of prioritising services to residents.  Ensured that our staff have the necessary skills, training and support to deliver excellent services to residents

## 7. Prioritisation

The Council continues to prioritise its services and resources according to residents' needs, stakeholder involvement and Government direction. We recognise that we are not best placed or resourced to deliver all services, and have therefore developed a strategic approach to identifying and focusing our efforts to ensure we achieve maximum benefit for our residents and businesses.

The Council's activities fall into three categories and are based on research and consultation with residents:

- Priority Services
- Important Issues
- Non- priority Issues

**The Council's approach to prioritisation is based on investing resources to improve 'priority services' and continuing to maintain service levels (through improved partnership working, ICT and other innovative ways) in 'important' areas, and being clear about redirecting resources from 'non-priority' services that the public would be prepared to see reduced if resources were insufficient to achieve everything.**

### Priority Services (increase resources)

- Economic Regeneration
- Transport Improvements
- Recycling
- Housing Services
- Community Engagement
- Partnership Working
- Enhancing our governance structure, such as Overview and Scrutiny function

### Important Issues (maintain resources)

- Sustaining improvements in Planning
- Sustaining improvements in Revenue and Benefits services
- Enhancing the use of ICT in planning and delivering services

### Non-priority Issues (redirect resources)

- Providing 'back office' functions in isolation (i.e. we will be seeking to work more in partnership to reduce cost and improve customer service);
- Providing leisure services directly where more cost-effective alternatives exist
- Responsive repairs to buildings (we will be looking to reduce the cost of responsive repairs by better use of planned maintenance);
- Direct subsidies to the Assembly Hall theatre
- Making the general Council Tax payer pay for services that are used by only some residents or non-residents (j.e. we will be looking to rebalance the resources we receive from Council Tax and fees and charges – a principle we tested in our recent budget consultation exercise);
- Events
- Grants to outside bodies in non-priority areas.

## 8. Delivery

### Internal Capacity

Following its Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the Council has already begun to implement changes to improve its capacity to deliver. The following has already taken place:

- Complete restructure of senior management, including new Chief Executive, three new directors and seven new heads of service.
- Increased consultative arrangements, such as the Town Forum and Parish Chairman's meetings and use of SIMALTO (simultaneous multiple-attributes trade-off modelling) as part of the 2007/08 budget proposals.
- Increase in staff capacity in Housing following recommendations from the Housing Inspection in Oct/Nov 2005.
- New Sustainable Community Plan in place.
- Achieved Investors in People re-accreditation.
- Staff adopting flexible working patterns.
- New CRM system in place integrating processes from Planning, Benefits, Housing and Environmental Services at present.
- Annual Gershon efficiency target achieved.
- External review of Scrutiny function undertaken by I&DeA, with recommendation being taken forward in partnership with Maidstone Borough Council.
- Recommendations from the Planning review (Trevor Roberts Report) being implemented.

Over the next 18 months, this work will be enhanced by a number of further activities:

- A more structured approach towards customer care (to be outlined in a Customer Care Strategy).
- Further work with other districts and KCC to look at opportunities for joint procurement and outsourcing to achieve further efficiencies.
- Production and development of a Medium Term Financial Strategy, setting out principles for investing our reserves.
- New HR Strategy/Workforce Development Plan.
- A new approach to neighbourhood engagement.
- Review of our partnership structures to ensure they are suitable for the changing position of the Council and Government policy.

### Partnership

The Council has a long history of working in partnership at the local, sub-regional and county level. We recognise the value and contributions that our partners bring and we continue to strengthen our relationships in delivering services and enhancing opportunities.

We have already spelt out ways in which Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is making active use of partnerships to deliver each of its key priorities. We will also continue to explore ways in which it can work in partnership with Kent County Council, other districts, the public, private and voluntary sectors to improve service delivery and value for money.

Councils as community leaders have been charged with leading the Local Strategic Partnerships and we have worked with our partners over the last year to establish the Community Plan Partnership. The Council has also recently assumed the chair of the West Kent Partnership (LSP) and co-chairs the Community Safety Partnership.

As part of our continuing commitment to improving outcomes for local residents, we are committed to ensuring our partnerships are 'fit for purpose'; to this end, we have asked SOLACE, I&DeA and Warwick Business School to undertake a peer review of our role and involvement in LSP. Recommendations will inform a wider review of partnership structures across the authority.

## 9. Our Performance Management Framework

Performance Management is about ensuring that once we have translated our high-level priorities into defined, measurable, time-specific targets, they are cascaded across and between all levels of the organisation. In Tunbridge Wells, we are committed to embedding performance management throughout all areas of our work and operations and will use the Strategic Plan as the key document to do this.

### Performance Indicators

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Responsible Owner</b>	<b>Reporting Arrangements</b>
BVPIs	BVPP	Government	Cabinet	¼ly updates to Cabinet
KPIs	Strategic Plan	Council	Cabinet	¼ly updates
LPIs	Appendix to SP	Cabinet	Portfolio Holders	(At least) ¼ly discussions between officers and PHs
Management PIs Service Plan action plan targets	Service Plan	Director	Head of Service	Reported via Covalent to Management Board/Team Six monthly update to Management Board to tie in with appraisal process

## Appendix 1 – Corporate Objectives

	<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	<b>Corporate Objectives</b>
<b>A1</b>	Promoting and maintaining a thriving and diverse local economy	Promote a revival of our town centres as places to live, shop, work, operate and visit
		Work with our partners to find innovative solutions to improve access to the town centre and across the borough
		Take practical steps to promote a more entrepreneurial and balanced local economy
<b>A2</b>	Caring for our environment	More sustainable waste management leading to less reliance on landfill
		Promote sustainable energy across the Council and borough
		Protect local character through the Town Planning process
<b>A3</b>	Having housing suitable for local people	Provide greater focus on achieving a balanced housing market and increasing the supply of affordable homes
		Support more people, including vulnerable groups, to live in their own homes for longer
		Reduce homelessness in the town and minimise the number of people at risk of homelessness
		Tackle fuel poverty and enable practical assistance for those who need help in heating their homes
<b>A4</b>	Developing safer and stronger communities	As a partner in the Tunbridge Wells Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership, tackle anti-social behaviour and reduce crime and the fear of crime
		Work with and consult the community to identify the improvements which will most benefit local residents
		Enable the most effective organisation to deliver local services
		Improve the physical environment of priority neighbourhoods and address social problems
		Encourage and help the provision of better healthcare and provide opportunities for healthier lifestyles
<b>A5</b>	Delivering high quality services to our customers	Ensure that those employed in the Council develop their skills to deliver more effective services
<b>A6</b>	Improving customer service and satisfaction	Ensure that the Council's services are driven by our customers
<b>A7</b>	Ensuring that we are well managed, proactive and deliver value for money services	Ensure that the Council strives to improve performance and provides VFM