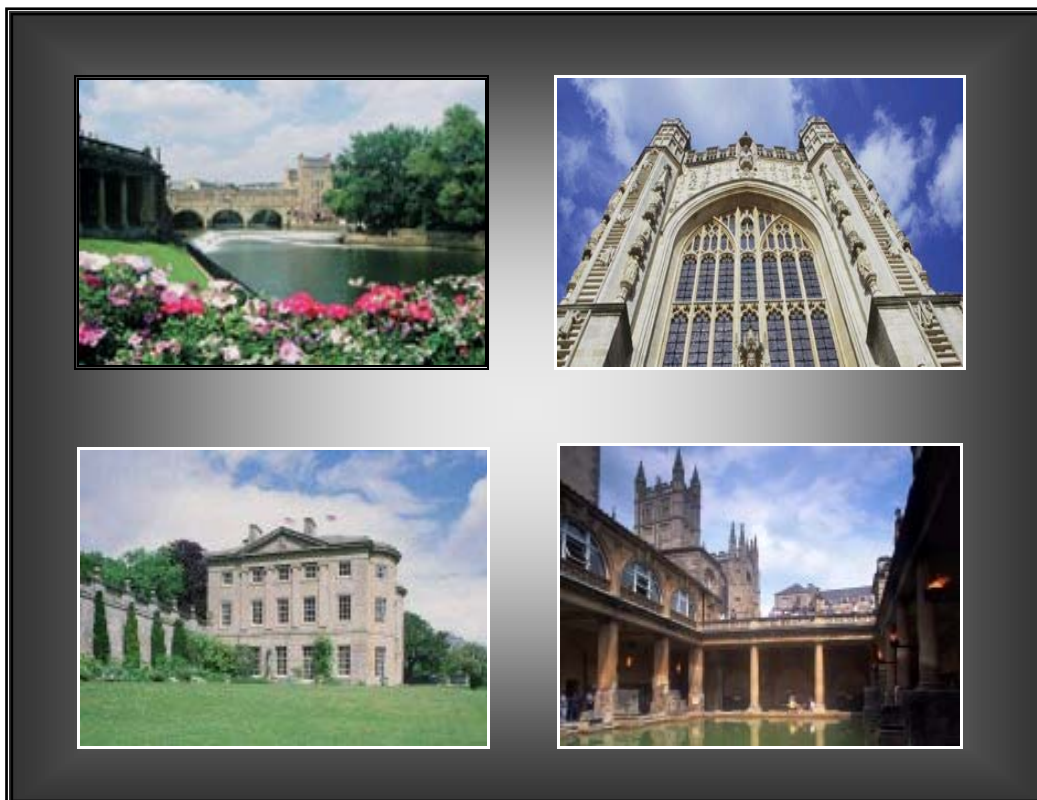


Making Bath & North East Somerset
a better place to live, work and visit

Summary Review of Bath & North East Somerset's 2003 – 2007 Corporate Plan



BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET

Introduction

This is a closing summary of our first Corporate Plan, which encompasses our overall ambitions for the communities of Bath & North East Somerset, expressed through ten clear and community focussed Improvement Priorities.



Cllr Paul Crossley,
Leader of the Council

Through successful partnership working and more effective redirection of resources to our priorities, we have made real progress in delivering community improvement outcomes, together with progress on addressing the area's structural weaknesses and challenges through our change and capital programmes, while maintaining high levels of performance in our traditionally strong services, such as recycling and education.

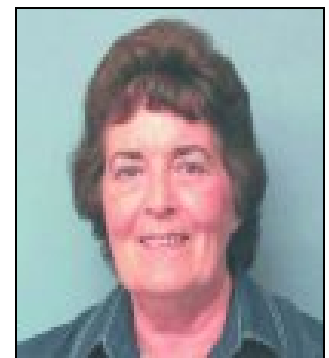


John Everitt,
Chief Executive

We have successfully balanced and managed a number of national, regional and local issues resulting from the changing central government agenda and have learned valuable lessons, which we will use as we embark on the next stage of the Council's mission to make Bath & North East Somerset a better place to live, work and visit. With this in mind, we continue to face our challenges with the same depth of commitment, professionalism and energy we have demonstrated over the last four years.



Cllr Francine Haerberling
Deputy Leader



Cllr Phyllis Gay

We hope you find this review interesting and informative.

Purpose of the Corporate Plan Summary Review

The summary review provides:

- ⇒ An introduction to the Corporate Plan
- ⇒ A closing account of our 4-year Corporate Plan
- ⇒ An overview of our key achievements against the corporate Improvement Priorities
- ⇒ An overview of the challenges we have faced throughout the life of the Corporate Plan
- ⇒ The valuable lessons learned on our journey through the Corporate Plan
- ⇒ Where we are going in 2007 and beyond
- ⇒ Glossary of Terms

The Corporate Plan

Our Corporate Plan for 2003 to 2007 is a dynamic and living 'rolling plan', which we have reviewed and updated annually throughout its four-year life cycle. It is all about how we can improve people's lives, both now and in the future and what we can do to achieve the Council's vision of "**Making Bath & North East Somerset a better place to live, work and visit**" by constantly challenging those activities that do not help deliver this vision.

Our vision complements and enhances the goal of the Bath & North East Somerset **Local Strategic Partnership** (LSP) to 'improve the quality of life in Bath & North East Somerset by introducing effective change, by tackling priority cross-cutting issues on behalf of the local community.'



In June 2003, we worked successfully with our partners in the LSP to formulate and agree our first ever **Community Strategy**. This sets out our 10-15 year vision for the area and focuses on a clear set of ambitions, based on a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the challenges facing the area - in particular a lack of affordable housing, an inadequate transport infrastructure and the need for a modern economic structure.

Our residents also challenged us to provide visible and tangible improvements in their neighbourhoods, for instance, by making them cleaner, safer and greener to promote pride in their communities and help make the whole area more sustainable and inclusive.

We carefully integrated these challenges into our ambitions and priorities for the area and in October 2003, we agreed our first ever **Corporate Plan**, setting out how we would contribute to addressing the ambitions identified in the Community Strategy, within the context of sub-regional issues and local / national shared priorities. The Corporate Plan prioritised these overall ambitions against the available resources, resulting in ten clear and specific **Improvement Priorities**.

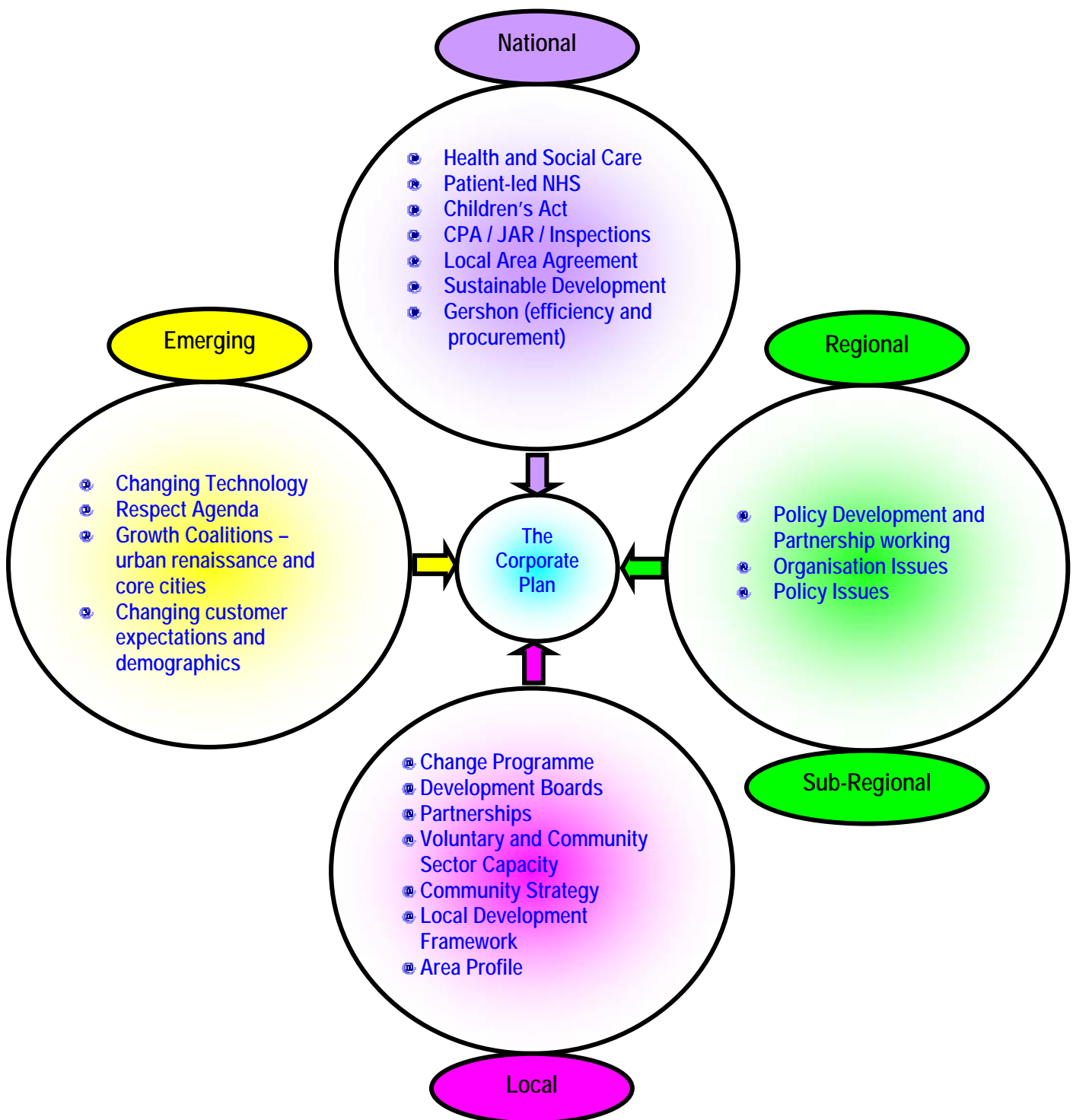
The Improvement Priorities

The Improvement Priorities are categorised into short to medium term goals and longer-term aspirations to reflect the key challenges that we face:

Short to Medium Term Goals	Longer Term Aspirations
<p>① Reducing the Fear of Crime – Increase public confidence and see a reduction in the fear of crime</p>	<p>⑥ Facilitating an Increase in the Availability of Affordable Housing – Minimise the growing gap between affordable housing and demand / need</p>
<p>② Promoting the Independence of Older People - Deliver services in an integrated and timely way to ensure the maximum level of independence possible for an individual, (i.e., the right service in the right place at the right time)</p>	<p>⑦ Improving the Quality of Public Transport, Roads and Pavements and Congestion - Agreed a 20 year Vision for Transport which identifies local and Sub Regional Projects to deliver real alternatives to improve access and reduce congestion</p>
<p>③ Improving the Life Chances of Disadvantaged Teenagers - Ensure fewer vulnerable teenagers are without employment, education or training placement after the end of the compulsory schooling</p>	<p>⑧ Developing a Sustainable Economy – Generate a sustainable economy with a more balanced mix of employment, in line with the Sustainable Economic Development Plan “Towards 2013”</p>
<p>④ Improving the Environment for Learning - Secure additional capital to invest in improving the quality of learning in classrooms and schools</p>	<p>⑨ Improving the Public Realm – Tangibly improve quality of public realm in a considered, coherent and planned manner through targeted transformations of spaces and initiatives focussed on street scene improvements</p>
<p>⑤ Reducing Landfill – Reduce household waste to landfill to 52,000 tonnes per annum by a combination of domestic waste reduction and recycling measures as part of the Council’s emerging Waste Strategy</p>	
<p>↓ ↓ ↓</p>	<p>↓ ↓ ↓</p>
<p>⑩ Improving Customer Satisfaction Improve access to services and information for all through integrated access channels so customers are dealt with at their first point of contact with the Council</p>	

The Challenges

Throughout the life of the Corporate Plan, we have actively managed a significant number of national, regional and local issues resulting from an ever changing central government agenda including Adult Health & Social Care, the Children's Act and the Local Area Agreement. The diagram below shows the issues that have directly affected the Council over the last three years:



National Issues

The Council Executive and Strategic Directors identified that some issues were of greater importance to the Council in terms of their potential impacts and shaping our direction of travel. The next few pages detail the actions we have taken to minimise the impacts of these key issues:

National Issues	
CPA – the harder test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In September 2006, we underwent an IDeA Peer Review inspection by a panel of experts to help learn and prepare for our next corporate inspection in 2008. The review identified a number of practical and valuable learning points, especially around more tightly focussing our ambitions and priorities in light of our ambitious capital investment programme and the need to raise the visibility of Council's successes, both locally and nationally, to build organisational and public confidence in the Council's ability to deliver for the community. • We have maintained an equivalent rating of 'Good' with the Audit Commission despite the revised CPA 'harder test' that was introduced in 2005. • The CPA Key Lines of Enquiry have been integrated into our annual service-planning regime to help focus resources into priority areas and we are developing a CPA balanced scorecard to enable us to monitor national and local indicators that are highly significant to the CPA.
Gershon, financial constraints and risk exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have exceeded Gershon efficiency targets, saving £1m more than our target and are on track to save £7m by the end of 2006/07. Services are investigating further ways to improve productivity to meet existing financial targets plus additional costs placed upon them by increased pension contributions and single status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > We expect to achieve savings of £440k by 2008/09 through our <u>Service Efficiency & Effectiveness Review</u> in Social Care services > Improved purchasing practices are delivering better value for money (vfm) from the efficient procurement of goods and services, e.g., we will achieve savings of £200k per annum by entering into a collaborative arrangement with Wiltshire Council to establish a framework contract with Temporary Staff Agencies • In July 2006, our high level vfm check demonstrated <i>we currently provide good value for money</i> in comparison to <u>all</u> other Unitary Authorities, with the following top level findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Consistent track-record of lower service spending per head, with the provision of many good and some excellent vfm services, e.g., we spend 70% of our total budget on education and social services yet we are in the bottom quartiles for spend and top quartiles for performance > Budget requirement per head is 3rd lowest spending per head in 2006/07 > 6th lowest revenue formula grant per head of population, a major contributory factor in explaining our near average level of Council Tax despite our low spending > Council Tax just below average having fallen relative to other Councils over the last 4 years • In response to our expanding capital programme and resulting exposure, we have introduced a Risk & Opportunity Strategy as an integral part of our corporate business processes, as well as embedding a robust set of governance arrangements with a constitution that clearly sets out accountability and decision-making powers for members and officers.

Regional Issues

Regional Issues

Sub-regional Agenda

- We were instrumental in forming the West of England Partnership, which has approved an ambitious 20-year vision for the sub-region, supported by four partnership sub-groups focussing on Housing, Planning, Transport and Environment, Economy and Skills and Culture, Leisure & Tourism. The pace and scale of these developments will have significant positive impacts on our improvement priorities, i.e., Affordable Housing, Public Transport and Congestion, Public Realm and Sustainable Economy.
- We have joined forces with Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire to develop a Joint Local Transport Plan, which sets out the shared strategic vision for the South West for the next 20–30 years to improve the efficiency of the transport system through large-scale investment into public transport and highway improvements. We have agreed that the transport investment will centre on our four shared priorities for improvement aimed at tackling congestion, improving accessibility, improving air quality and improving road safety.
- With the support of DEFRA funding, a sub regional Waste Partnership is exploring the delivery of larger scale waste solutions to add to our Council-led waste projects.

Partnership Working

- We have led, developed and provided extensive support in building the LSP as an inclusive “partnership of partnerships”, linking to delivery bodies for the Community Strategy’s key ambitions. The LSP has the overall remit for ensuring partnership arrangements are in place to deliver the Community Strategy, leading to the generation of effective partnerships for culture, sport and public health. Progress on delivery of the Community Strategy is reported through an interactive public website, which also acts as a project management system for the partnership and which allows partnerships and community groups to become involved in the LSP’s work.
- Our plans for the PCT integration are creative and ambitious, providing the potential for greater strategic leverage to influence the wider determinants of health, such as transport, education and leisure services, and complement our already excellent partnership working arrangements with the PCT. We are looking at new opportunities for closer working in Children’s Services, Adult Services and Public Health and have agreed to form a joint management structure for Adult Social Care and Health services and the joint appointment of a Director of Public Health
- As part of our Local Area Agreement, we have plans in place to allow partner agencies to gain access to our performance reporting system and to develop the performance management culture. This will demonstrate clear lines of accountability where we spend local authority funding through our partnerships, with their performance clearly managed.

Local Issues

Local Issues

Change Programme

We are in the second year of a five-year change programme with key milestones stretching into 2008 and a highly motivated management group (CPMG) providing inter-linkages and tackling any fragmentation across our eight main change projects:

⇒ Business Improvement Service	⇒ Customer Access Programme
⇒ Change for Children	⇒ HR Strategy
⇒ Community Resource Centres	⇒ Local Area Agreement
⇒ Culture Development Project	⇒ WorkSMART

Our change initiatives are tightly focussed on their outcomes to enable the successful delivery of the improvement priorities, improved customer service and service delivery.

Community Leadership

• The LSP brought together the Community Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset through extensive public consultation and this process of community engagement has been central to the development of our Local Area Agreement*. Working through the LSP, the LAA Project Board and a Project Team of identified theme leads have been able to actively involve local voluntary and community organisations, Parish Councils, Elected Members, members of the public and individuals from the private sector in its development. The Council's Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Chairs, Strategic Directors' Group and LSP have endorsed the achievement of each of the milestones set out in LAA project plan and Member Champions (see below) have been engaged in their areas of specialism, with a number of member workshops held to ensure that local members in their community leadership role can feed into the process.


• There is strong emphasis on Members being involved in the overall Council process. We have introduced ten Member champions in key priority areas and our revised planning framework supports Member involvement in planning and performance, facilitating more informed decision-making as part of the prioritisation process.

*Please see page 23 for further information about the Council's Local Area Agreement.

In addition to these key issues, there remains Council's underlying maxim to **maintain and improve performance** by ensuring we effectively apply the building blocks for improvement through initiatives such as our change programme and major projects capital programme.

Key Achievements

'Reducing the Fear of Crime'

- ➔ In 2003, we introduced our Community Warden Scheme to make neighbourhoods Cleaner and Safer and to contribute to improving the environment and to reduce crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour. The wardens cover most of the authority and act as a link between the police, other council officers and the community to help to get things done quickly, dealing with 90% of requests for action immediately. They were the first in the country to be awarded **Charter Mark** for public service excellence.
- 
- ➔ Several areas of the authority have benefited from our innovative **Environmental Action Days** (EADs). This initiative involves a wide range of enforcement and partner agencies including the Police and Community Safety and Drugs Partnership and has been highly successful in working with communities to improve the public realm in specific communities. EADs involve actions like removing graffiti, fly tipping and abandoned vehicles, addressing issues around vehicle taxation and roadworthiness, and resolving issues around damaged / old litter bins. In addition communities have received information on fire safety as well as free smoke alarms fitted, which combined with safer housing designs, has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of deaths and injuries as a result of accidental fire in dwellings.
 - ➔ Our **Mentoring Plus** project has enjoyed another successful summer. The youth crime prevention project provides 12-17 year olds with an intensive community based mentoring and education support programme structured over one year. Core-funded by ourselves with support from Bath Communities Partnership, Connexions, Youth Service, the Police, local businesses and charitable trusts, it targets young people who have offended or are at high risk of offending, with many of the participants having a history of truanting, exclusion from mainstream education, being in care and unemployment. Some of the most significant outcomes are the visible reductions in drug taking, violent behaviour, criminal damage and trouble with the police, demonstrating that investing time in these children will lead to safer and stronger communities in the future.

Key Achievements

'Promoting the Independence of Older People'

- ➔ As part of a multi-million pound partnership between ourselves and our housing partners Somer, we have opened a state-of-the-art 'extra care' housing scheme for 30 older people in Bath, which offers a combination of independent living, security and the opportunity to receive care and support from an on-site care staff team 24 hours a day. We are also investing a further £27m to replace old elderly person's homes with three modern and fully accessible facilities called **Community Resource Centres**, providing a further 60 extra care tenancies, 100 high dependency and EMI residential beds and purpose built day centres at all 3 locations.



- ➔ We have agreed a joint strategy with the Bath & North East Somerset Primary Care Trust to improve the quality of life for our older residents by improving their access to social and health care and promoting their independence within the community. For example, integrated community teams have resulted in a reduced number of unplanned admissions to hospital and the joint equipment store has reduced delivery times for equipment, with over 800 people receiving the aids and minor adaptations they need for daily living in under 7 days.

- ➔ We provide free bus travel after 9am for all residents aged 60 and over or with permanent disabilities on local services within the Greater Bristol area. We have invested in 110 low floor buses and raised kerbs at bus stops to make it easier for elderly and disabled passengers to access public transport, enhancing their quality of life by facilitating their access to the community. We have also expanded our dial-a-ride scheme



into new areas of the authority to reduce social exclusion for rural residents with little or no public transport.

- ➔ Through joint working with the Benefits Agency, over 3,000 pensioners are better off, with an improved take up rate of the attendance allowance - 38% against the national average of 16% - and an increase in benefit take up of £650k over the last year.

Key Achievements

'Improving the Life Chances of Disadvantaged Teenagers'

- ➔ We have received positive and encouraging reviews in the areas of Adoption Services and Children and Families from the Commission for Social Care Inspections, with our 2006 Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services concluding we consistently deliver above the minimum requirements for children and young people.
- ➔ Schools have agreed a cooperative approach to exclusions to reduce the number of children permanently excluded and no looked after children have been permanently excluded in the last academic year.
- ➔ The participation of teenagers aged 16 and over in Education, Employment and Training (EET) is 93.5%, (circa 2,000 students each year), well above the national figure (84%). Similarly, through targeted effort, the EET rates of care leavers at 19 have significantly improved (73% in 2006 against 45% last year).

Local young people identified a lack of affordable public transport as a key factor in EET retention rates and as a result, a new prospectus is being introduced to rationalise distances to learn and we have established an Integrated Passenger Transport Board, which works closely with young people to ensure we address their particular transport needs.

- ➔ We have opened 2 of the 4 new schools we are building as part of our capital programme, one of which incorporates a new children's centre where parents can seek help and advice about the wellbeing and health of their children. A children's centre was also opened on the St Martin's Garden Primary School site (Bath) in July 2006 and a further centre is planned on the site of St Kenya, the new Primary School in Keynsham.
- ➔ Following our successful Overview & Scrutiny review on school meals, (pre-dating but helped by Jamie Oliver's national campaign), the nutritional standards and quality of food across all schools in Bath & North East Somerset have improved to such an extent that we submitted an application for Beacon status for healthy schools.

Key Achievements

'Improving the Environment for Learning'

- ➔ We have excellent standards of education in our schools, achieving outstanding results in all key stages. We achieved an all time high ranking of 11th out of 150 in the 2006 national performance tables, rising as high as 4th place for Maths at key stage 2. Our GCSE results have shown sustained improvement over the last three years, increasing from 60% in 2004 to 65% in 2005 and an excellent 68% in 2006.
- ➔ Falling birth rates mean fewer children are being enrolled in schools, creating surplus places in many schools. We are committed to providing the best educational facilities and in response to improving the efficiency and standards of service within schools, in 2003 we introduced a 5-year programme of geographical area reviews in all primary and secondary schools:
 - Eight of the 13 Primary School area reviews have been completed resulting in 6 school closures and the opening of 2 new Primary Schools - a further 4 schools will close by September 2007 with one new school opening. These decisions have had a major impact on reducing surplus places, removing 6 schools from the category of schools with more than 25% surplus places.
 - Two of the 3 Secondary School area reviews have been completed with the findings due to be presented to the Council Executive in July 2007. This will provide the strategic direction for decisions in the context of our award of £22m from the DfES to rebuild or refurbish at least one secondary school (to open September 2009).
- ➔ The review of Special schools has resulted in the closure of three small special schools in Bath and the building of a brand new Generic Special School, due to be occupied in September 2007. In addition, we have secured funding of £4.2m from the DfES to re-model Fosse Way Special School in Midsomer Norton, with work due to start in 2007. Our Education and Behaviour Difficulties (EBD) special school was closed in July 2006 and re-opened as a new remodelled EBD school in September 2006.



Key Achievements

'Reducing Landfill'

- ➔ We remain one of the top councils in the country for recycling and were awarded **Beacon Status** in 2001 in recognition of our achievements. We are renowned for our unique **Zero Waste** strategy to steer the development of our waste services, which means we will strive to reduce, reuse and recycle as much waste as possible and that we are working with businesses and the community to achieve this goal.



As part of the delivery of our 15-year strategy, a series of new initiatives were introduced across our recycling sites from May 2005 and the amount of material sent for recycling and re-use has increased significantly. Our 2005/06 results show excellent progress in waste and cleansing - 10,000 composting bins are now being used for home composting and household waste - either recycled or composted - rose to 32% and is now approaching 40%, with the proportion of waste to landfill falling from 70% to 68%.

Many of our recycling initiatives are nationally respected, including our incentive and reward scheme in Norton Radstock with the amount of household waste, recycling centre waste and landfill tonnage down by 8%, 23% and 15% respectively from the previous year

- ➔ We are working to procure a new waste partner in 2007 to deliver further improvements in our recycling performance and to replace a key waste site with new recycling centres and a new waste transfer station.

Key Achievements

'Facilitating an Increase in the Availability of Affordable Housing'

- ➔ In 1999, we reinvested £18m from the sale of Council houses to provide a targeted 600 units of affordable housing over the next 6 years. By March 2005, we had successfully provided 727 units, achieving 147 of these by using some of investment to refurbish existing social houses. We have agreed a new 3-year plan for the period 2005/06 to 2007/08, with an intended £3m set aside each year to complete a further 381 units of affordable housing.



- ➔ We have committed to developing sustainable communities by ensuring new affordable housing is integrated with private housing at the design stage, with policies in place to achieve 30% affordable housing on new developments. The **Regional Spatial Strategy** also aims to increase housing in the area by 25% over the next 20 years in order to address specific housing needs, in particular affordable housing.
- ➔ We have launched a successful 'homefinders' scheme, which has allowed 35 families to access the private rented sector in a property and location of their choosing, preventing the breakdown of community ties that can occur when households are forced to accept social housing in an area they do not choose.
- ➔ Our Housing Service works with property owners and tenants to raise standards within the private rented sector. We have introduced a Management Code requiring accredited Property owners to adhere to specified standards and the voluntary Property Accreditation Scheme seeks to raise the physical standard of these properties, particularly fire safety standards. The scheme has pioneered innovative delivery mechanisms and as a result has been extremely successful, winning national recognition within the sector. There are currently over 1,350 properties registered on the scheme.
- ➔ We are bringing empty properties back into use, as well as working with our Registered Social Landlords partners to upgrade and regenerate housing estates. Using funding from the Housing Renewal Strategy, we are encouraging the use of local contractors to undertake building and repair works and have improved 400 homes over the last 18 months.

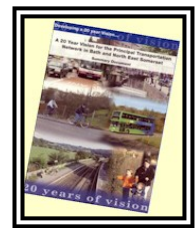
Key Achievements

'Improving the Quality of Public Transport, Roads and Pavements and Congestion'

- ➔ The investment of private and government funding into local bus services has resulted in an increased usage of 5.5% from the previous year, with 700,000 extra passengers and a sustained increase in Park and Ride users. Amongst the many public transport improvements are First Bus' significant investment in 110 new environmentally friendly buses, increased frequency of buses, better bus stops and shelters, a comprehensive Public Transport Map delivered to 77,000 households, a new and intuitive zonal parking system, new pay on foot systems and 'Parkmobile' automated parking payments.



- ➔ Through our Joint Local Transport Plan, prepared in partnership with our three neighbouring authorities, we have received funding of £62m for the Greater Bristol Bus Network to deliver 10 showcase bus corridors across the sub-region to ensure fast, reliable and accessible services whilst also tackling congestion, improving road safety and air quality. We have also submitted a bid of £41m for a 'Bath and North East Somerset' transport package to implement a rapid transit scheme across Bath, showcase bus routes, travel information systems, HGV schemes, pedestrianisation and access controls.



- ➔ Members of the public, who are unable to use conventional public transport due to disability or age, can take advantage of the 17 Community Transport schemes across the authority that provide fully accessible transport. Overcoming social exclusion is at the heart of community transport and we actively support these schemes both in terms of direct support such as advice on operational matters and in terms of funding. Local bus service routes have also been revised to ensure more rural households are within a 13-minute walk of an hourly or better bus service to help meet the needs of socially disadvantaged groups.
- ➔ Pioneering work with the Traffic Commissioner has resulted in our being the first Council in the country to deliver traffic regulations to improve the routing and emissions of open top tour buses, which will improve the environment, reduce noise and balance the needs of tourists and residents.

Key Achievements

'Developing a Sustainable Economy'

- ➔ We have invested extensively in an extremely ambitious capital programme (circa £2bn) developing a long-term embryonic vision for the future revitalisation and expansion of Bath and the surrounding area. Building on the city's historic strengths, 'Future for Bath' identifies a series of themes to uniquely position the city both nationally and internationally, as well as establishing a clearer role within the region and sub-region, to provide a basis for securing the long-term success of the city as a key driver for the local economy across Bath & North East Somerset.

Some positive work has been undertaken with the Vision in producing a greater depth of strategy to provide context and clarity to the Council's economic and development aspirations for the area, for instance, Bath Western Riverside, SouthGate Shopping Centre and our Spatial, Transport and Economic Development Strategies. Many of these initiatives are now proceeding towards the first phase of development, with plans to provide substantial numbers of new homes, (25% affordable housing), and a significantly improved transport infrastructure.

- ➔ Following its opening in August (2006), the Bath Spa has been very well received, with initial visitor numbers exceeding expectations and a third of all visitors resident in Bath & North East Somerset. The Spa was developed as



an opportunity to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of our tourism product, as well as boosting economic regeneration, and has allowed our residents and visitors to Bath to bathe in the thermal waters for the first time in 20 years. We are aiming to place Bath on an equal footing with other leading European Spa towns and in another step towards achieving this objective, our proposal to licence a casino in Bath has been short-listed.

- ➔ In response to the national focus on climate change and increases in the price of fuel, we are driving a groundbreaking energy efficiency scheme to cut energy consumption across the Council by 10% over the next 3 years – the scheme has been awarded nearly £800k by the Government and could save around £4.7m between now and 2012.

Key Achievements

'Improving the Public Realm'

- ➔ We have established a partnership with the Police and local Businesses and formed a City Centre Management Group to work collectively to resolve local city public real issues. Successes include night cleaning shifts, an agreed approach to buskers and roofless sleepers and attempts to create a more vibrant and friendly evening economy.
- ➔ Consultants have recommended new city signage concepts to synchronise with and promote our vision for Bath, which will initiate a revitalisation programme to lift the city's economy.
- ➔ We have signed up to the LGA's Reputation Campaign and have achieved 'gold' standard for all elements of the 'Cleaner, Safer and Greener' environment. For example:



- Our street cleanliness has improved significantly, moving us to one of the best performers in the country, with the number of public spaces with an unacceptable level of litter falling from 25% to 9%.



- We have improved accessibility in the public realm with the introduction of more accessible and hygienic public toilets, an increase in the proportion of crossings with tactile paving to improve accessibility for the disabled and actions to reduce street clutter such as 'A' boards.

Key Achievements

'Improving Customer Satisfaction'

- ➔ Through our Customer Access Programme, we have improved customer choice and flexibility by dealing with 80% enquiries at the first point of contact:
 - Our new call centre (Council Connect) handles queries for key services including public transport, refuse, recycling, libraries and planning. The centre has handled a 65% increase in phone enquiries, (20,000 in June compared with a pre-launch average of 7,000 calls per month), enabling experienced officers to deal effectively with the more complex issues.
 - Our investment in a state of the art Customer Relationship Management system enables us to deliver an integrated service across all access channels, as well as improving frontline efficiency by providing one point of contact when dealing with enquiries. Customers will benefit from experienced call agents who can provide feedback on enquiry progress and are aware of other related customer issues.
 - The installation of cash machines in the Guildhall for the payment of Council Tax has halved waiting times for customers during peak periods.
- ➔ We have committed to achieving corporate Charter Mark accreditation, the recognised standard for excellence in customer service. We have set best practice in our approach to rolling out a Charter Mark programme across the organisation, which we have aligned to the objectives of our ongoing culture work to build a 'can do' attitude and bring the Council's values to life so that we all work more efficiently, effectively and courteously. 
- ➔ We are increasingly using electronic channels to inform and engage residents, using our website as a primary source of information and communication. Our free weekly e-newsletter is emailed directly to local residents and businesses and features the latest council bulletins and practical information, such as road closures, bank holiday refuse collections, job opportunities, travel details, opening times and local events. Over 1,000 households currently subscribe to Inform and since its launch in February (2006), website usage has increased by 35%. 

Things we have not achieved...

There are some things we have been prevented from achieving as a result of making necessary and difficult choices to balance national and local priorities, performance and Council Tax, as well as absorbing the impact of events that have not gone as planned:

	Issue	Actions Taken
Capital Programme	The management of our vast and ambitious £2bn capital programme resulted in a significant element of senior management resource diverted away from the day-to-day activities of the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Brought in specific expertise by appointing a Development and Major Projects Director in 2004 from the private sector ⇒ Adopted a more formal and co-ordinated approach to capital projects through a Project Programme Board ⇒ Reviewed funding and risk and standardised reporting processes
The Spa Complex	The Bath Spa was a millennium project that was scheduled to be completed in 2000 – it has been the subject of much adversarial local and national publicity as the project was finished 6 years late and significantly over budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Measures taken to address the issues with the capital programme board had a positive and energising effect on the Spa project, enabling the project team to regroup / refocus, resulting in a successful opening in August ⇒ Took expert advice on the best way to manage media interest and provide local people with accurate information about the true position
Customer Access	Slow to deliver Customer Access solution – it has taken longer than expected to move service functions into the contact centre and three one-stop shops has not been realised due to balancing priorities and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ It remains our aspiration to have 3 one-stop shops however whilst funding remains an issue, we are improving the facilities we currently offer ⇒ We have conducted a number of invaluable pilots which despite a steep learning curve, have allowed us to develop much slicker processes for migrating functions
Customer Satisfaction	We experience comparatively low customer satisfaction for the Council as a whole when compared with the high levels of satisfaction enjoyed by individual services, i.e., recycling, parks and open spaces, leisure	Research shows 'excellent' Councils are synonymous with good communication, proving a strong link between a resident's satisfaction with their Council and how well the Council keeps them informed. In June 2006, we launched a campaign to raise customer perception of the corporate body through the use of targeted messaging, i.e., bright, cheery and focussed communications throughout community focal points such as schools.

Lessons Learned

This section highlights the main lessons we have learned over the course of the last 4 years and shows how we have evolved and improved our processes through the annual review process:

- ☺ **Re-appraisal of the Improvement Priorities:** We reassessed the improvement priorities to ensure there was sufficient focus on what we need to do to generate enough resources to deliver our more challenging priorities. This resulted in five short to medium term goals and four longer-term aspirations, all leading to improved customer satisfaction (see page 5).
- ☺ **Clearly articulated outcomes:** Prior to last year's review, there were no clear indications of outcomes, i.e., the Improvement Priorities were 'statements of intent' without clear deliverables for the community or links to the Council's performance indicators. We have identified which local and national indicators are key to successful outcomes through the improvement priorities, which we monitor and record through our performance management system.
- ☺ **Cohesion across our Change Projects¹:** We identified a general lack of direction across the change projects, leading to the creation of a [Change Programme](#) in January 2005. The programme is led by the [Change Programme Management Group](#) (CPMG), whose role is to ensure all of the change projects are communicated and rolled out in a consistent and joined up manner to ensure everyone understands the importance of the individual initiatives within the overall context of organisational change.
- ☺ **Focus on the Comprehensive Performance Assessment² (CPA)** – we structured last year's review around the key elements of the CPA to ensure we have sufficient focus on what we need to achieve and deliver ahead of our next corporate inspection in May 2008.

¹ Change projects contribute to releasing the resources that are necessary to achieve the Council's improvement priorities, i.e., they significantly shape and change the way staff carry out their work.

² In December 2002, the [Audit Commission](#) introduced the [Comprehensive Performance Assessment](#), the Government's evaluation of how well local authorities are delivering and improving services to local people and communities.

IDeA Peer Review Recommendations

In September 2006, the Council underwent an IDeA Peer Review³ inspection by a panel of experts to help learn and prepare for our next corporate inspection in May 2008. The review identified a number of valuable and practical learning points, especially around the need to:

- a) focus our ambitions and priorities even more tightly in light of our ambitious capital investment programme
- b) raise the profile and visibility of our successes, both locally and nationally, in order to build organisational and public confidence in the Council's ability to deliver for the community

From their recommendations, we have identified the following key themes and objectives, which we are integrating into our strategic plans for improvement going forwards:

- ① Develop our Performance Management Culture
- ② Better Communication of Vision and Direction (both internally and externally)
- ③ Improve Ownership of Corporate Body
- ④ Drive Community Leadership
- ⑤ Review Change Programme
- ⑥ Improve Reputation Management of the Council
- ⑦ Improve Customer Satisfaction

³ The Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA) is an organisation that encourages and supports continual and self-sustaining improvement within local government by focussing on sharing ideas, expertise and best practice. A 'peer' in this context is someone who understands the issues and challenges that a Council faces, very much like a critical friend. Working with peers from the IDeA enables a Council to assess itself truthfully and pinpoint strengths and weaknesses, without creating the questioning and often interrogative environment of an external inspection.

Beyond 2007 - Local Area Agreement

The Corporate Plan is a dynamic 'rolling plan', which we have continuously reviewed and updated throughout its four-year life cycle. Looking forwards to 2007 and beyond, we will merge our Corporate Plan and Community Strategy to express our ambitions for the whole community in a more holistic manner through our emerging Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The LAA is a new government idea that is being introduced across the country with the aim of improving services in local areas by better co-ordination between central government, local authorities and partners. They have been developed so that a) local public service delivery can be more joined up and b) relationships between central government, local authority and partners can be more flexible and responsive. Accordingly, LAAs set out:

- ➔ Shared priorities for the local area
- ➔ How partners will work together to achieve these
- ➔ How services will develop to achieve these
- ➔ How achievement will be resourced
- ➔ Enabling measures requested from central Government

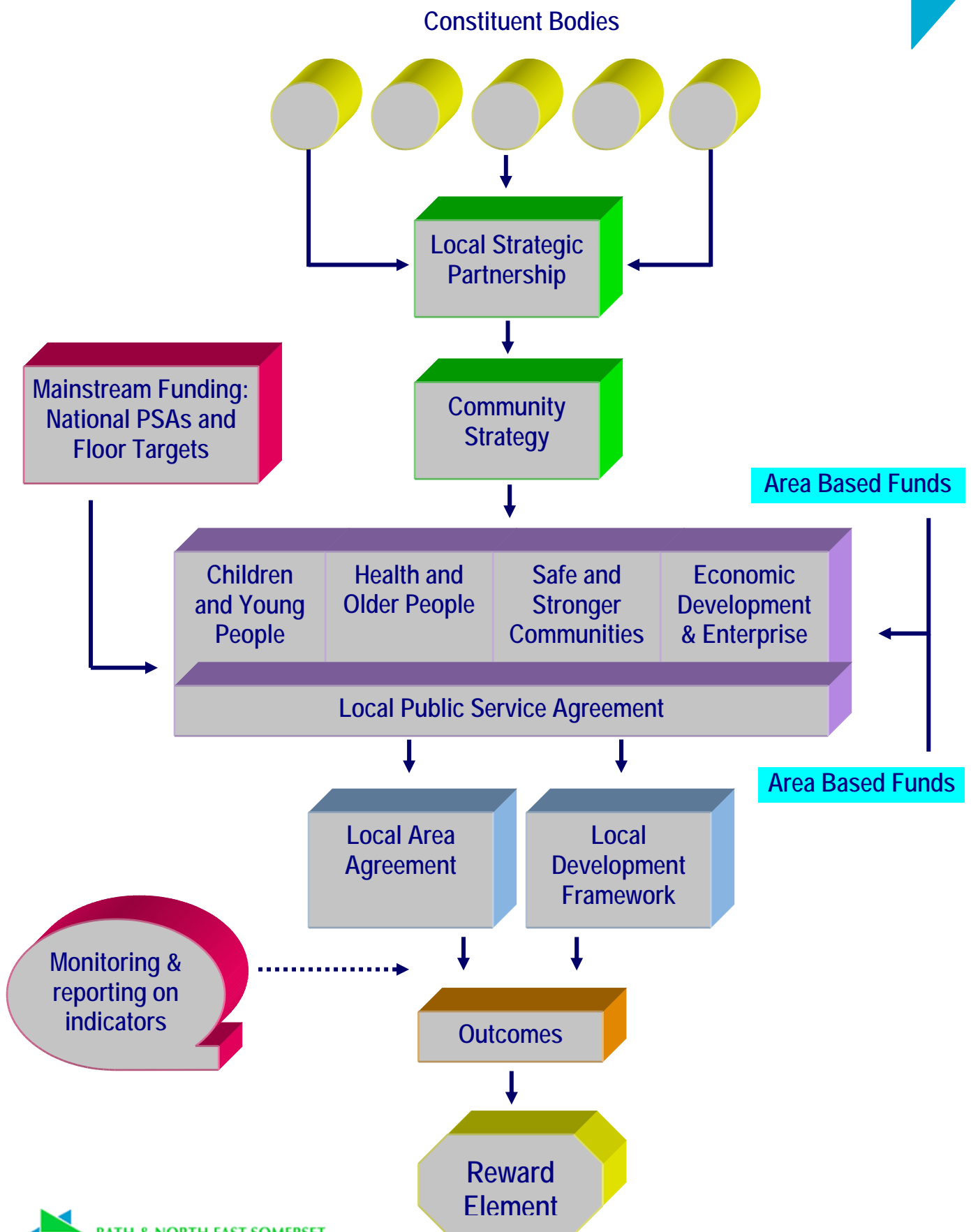
Our LAA will start on 1st April 2007 and run for three years. It will build on the work of the Community Strategy, working with the Local Strategic Partnership and key partnerships such as the Police and PCT, as well as Councillors and voluntary and community organisations. It will be built up in the following 'blocks' (policy areas):

- 😊 Children and Young People
- 😊 Healthy Communities and Older People
- 😊 Safer and Stronger Communities
- 😊 Economic Development and Enterprise

Within each block, our LAA document will list the outcomes to be achieved⁴, the targets to support these outcomes and identify funds that help meet these targets. The diagram on the next page provides an overview of how the new process works.

⁴ The LAA will incorporate some 'stretch' outcome targets, which will replace the current Local Public Service Agreement and attract a performance reward grant - although only a small number of targets will include a stretch element, all outcome targets will be local priorities.

Overview of Local Area Agreement Process



Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
Balanced Scorecard (BSC)	The BSC holds the Council's performance information in one place and is designed to ensure that analysis of performance is 'balanced' against 4 perspectives - Customers, People, Processes and Resources. Every service has its own scorecard which contains a combination of national (Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)) and local indicators, reflecting priorities identified in the Corporate Plan and Service Plans.
Bath Western Riverside (BWR)	This is one of the largest brownfield regeneration projects in the South West, comprising around 70 acres of land to the west of Bath City Centre. The project is the last major opportunity for Bath to deliver a platform for the City's future economic and social prosperity, so it is critical that the great potential of this opportunity is fully realised.
Business Improvement Service (BIS)	Implementing new technologies and methods of service delivery to make us a leading edge provider of public services
Change for Children	Making the right changes to comply with the new Children's Act
Change Programme	The change programme is a route map of what is happening and when to help us co-ordinate the timing of important changes and the distribution of limited money between each major change project.
Change Programme Management Group (CPMG)	CPMG has been created to ensure individual 'change' projects are 'joined up' and properly coordinated and communicated.
Charter Mark	Charter Mark is the Government's national standard for excellence in customer service and is a recognised development tool for driving continuous improvement in customer service. By adopting the Charter Mark principles, we will be able to find out what our customers truly want and how we can best deliver that effectively.
Community Resource Centres (CRC)	This project is investing £27.8m in replacing our old day and residential care buildings with purpose built, modern and fully accessible facilities – these will include residential care beds and extra care flats for older people as well as day centres for people with disabilities.

Glossary Continued

Term	Meaning
Community Strategy	Our Community Strategy is about maintaining and improving the things that make our communities better places to live in (such as clean streets, safe neighbourhoods and a green environment).
Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)	This is the Government's evaluation of how well local authorities are delivering and improving services to local people and communities. It was introduced by the Audit Commission in 2002 and revised in 2005 to be a much harder test.
CPA Key Lines of Enquiry	
Culture Development Project	The purpose of this project is to create greater organisational flexibility by embedding a 'can-do' culture, quicker customer responses and adaptability to change.
Customer Access Programme (CAP)	This will deliver improved access to information and services by creating a consistent branded front office made up of a contact centre, one stop shops and an interactive web site.
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	Government office whose core purpose is to improve the current and future quality of life by integrating environmental, social and economic objectives.
Environmental Action Days (EAD)	These bring together a wide range of enforcement and partner agencies to demonstrate that different organisations can work together to improve the environment, reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, improve public safety and improve their confidence in the ability of the partners represented to deal with issues that cause them concern. EADs aim to leave an area in such a condition as to encourage the residents to keep it that way and to encourage those residents to take responsibility for the environmental condition of their neighbourhood.
Gershon	Following Sir Peter Gershon's review of public sector efficiency, 'Gershon' refers to projects and initiatives concerned with efficiency and procurement activities.
HR Strategy	Planning for people development so that we have the right people, working in the right place at the right time in order to deliver our corporate targets.

Glossary Continued

Term	Meaning
IDeA Peer Review	The Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA) is an organisation that encourages and supports continual and self-sustaining improvement within local government by focussing on sharing ideas, expertise and best practice. A 'peer' in this context is someone who understands the issues and challenges that a Council faces, very much like a critical friend. Working with peers from the IDeA enables a Council to assess itself truthfully and pinpoint strengths and weaknesses, without creating the questioning and interrogative environment of an external inspection.
Joint Area Review (JAR)	Evaluates how local services work together to contribute to the achievements, progress and well-being of children and young people growing up in an area against the five outcomes identified in the Every Child Matters green paper.
Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP)	Created by officers from each of the four ex Avon authorities and building on the strategies contained in each of the council's Local Transport Plan, joint strategies have been developed taking a wider cross-boundary approach, whilst still taking into account issues specific to particular areas. Increased joint working will enable faster progress towards achieving significant improvements to the areas transport system.
Local Area Agreement (LAA)	A new initiative that is being introduced across the country with the aim of improving services in local areas by better co-ordination between central government, local authorities and partners.
Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	Formed in June 2002, the LSP is made up of public services such as the Council, Police, Primary Care Trust and Somer Housing Group - as well as voluntary, community, and business sector representatives. Its primary function was to produce the Community Strategy and it is currently chaired by Cllr Paul Crossley, the leader of the Council.
Overview & Scrutiny (O&S)	O&S review the work of the executive, enhance the performance of services and provide a forum through which policy review and policy development can be extensively examined before consideration and decision by the Executive / Full Council.

Glossary Continued

Term	Meaning
Primary Care Trust (PCT)	Plans, develops, buys and delivers local health services for circa 190,000 people to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote and improve the health of local people • ensure the highest standard of care for patients • support and develop all staff working in the PCT • support and develop primary care The PCT is accountable to the local population and central government.
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	The RSS looks forward to 2026 and is designed to manage the change and development the South West will need if it is to rise to the challenge of a growing population and play its role in national and regional prosperity.
Service Efficiency & Effectiveness Review (SEER)	SEER is a review of how services are delivered and supported within Social & Housing Services. The focus of the project is to identify and implement opportunities to make services more efficient and financially sound.
Southgate Shopping Centre	The regeneration of SouthGate will create a new retail quarter in Bath, with a mix of new shops, leisure facilities, restaurants and homes, all served by a modern public transport hub and set within a series of newly designed streets and public squares.
Value for Money (VfM)	Term used to assess whether we have obtained the maximum benefit from the services we provide within the resources available to us.
West of England Partnership	The West of England partnership consists of 4 unitary authorities and a range of social, economic and environmental partners. The partnership is driving forward action to sustain prosperity, quality of life and enhance the confidence of public and private investors.
WorkSMART	WorkSMART deals with changing the way we work - it aims to deal with flexibility, new technology and changes in working practices to provide better customer service.
Zero Waste	We have adopted a long-term vision of zero waste in our waste strategy. Our vision is to reduce consumption of goods by ensuring that products are made to be reused, repaired or recycled.

This document has been compiled by Bath & North East Somerset Council. It is a closing summary of our 2003-2007 Corporate Plan, with the full document available on our website at www.bathnes.gov.uk.

If you would like a copy of this document in an alternative format, such as large print, Braille or another language, please either call us on 01225 477486, write to the Strategic Performance Team at The Guildhall, High Street, Bath, BA1 5AW or send an email to corporate_performancefeedback@bathnes.gov.uk.



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