

Harborough District Council Annual Report 2008/09

Good practice and innovation in the heart of rural England

Our vision is...

Through partnership and consultation, to provide innovative, accessible and responsive services that ensure the district of Harborough is a healthy and happy place to live, work and visit

We aim to achieve...

Good practice and innovation in the heart of rural England

Front cover photo: Children's play area, Welland Park

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Aerial photo of Market Harborough - Harborough District Council offices; large building in front of the church
Photograph: Clive Mason

Welcome

Welcome from the Leader of the Council

Each year the council undertakes a structured planning process, setting out the council's aims and objectives within the current financial year. These aims and objectives form the Business Plan, published at the beginning of the financial year. At the end of the financial year this Annual Report is produced, which looks back at how we have performed over the previous 12 months.

Last year was particularly difficult. We adopted a different business planning process, which started late, due to the change of political leadership in September, and was followed by the worst banking disaster since World War One. The UK subsequently went into a 'deep' recession with companies facing loss of earnings or, worse still, bankruptcy, and many people facing redundancy. Harborough saw first hand the affects of recession, with business closures, staff redundancies and major shops and companies leaving our district.

At Harborough District Council we also had financial difficulties, with a shortfall between incomings and outgoings of approximately £1 million, based on known and guaranteed income from the Government/Council Tax. Whilst all previous years' finances had balanced, we were previously able to rely on government grants which were more in line with the increase in costs, plus other 'expected incomes and/or reductions in costs' and with support from reserves. These were used to offset the growth undertaken in the organisation, but left an underlying deficit in the financial base of the council.

With recession expected to last over the next 12 months, we find ourselves no longer able to 'rely' on any additional income to offset a potential shortfall; with the loss of interest earned on investments due to the drop in interest rates, reduction in Local Authority

Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) funding, expected decrease in planning applications, and the greater public debts expected due to the economic downturn.

The Government's proposed eco-town development within the district also severely affected council business. Whilst we have continued to make improvements, and achieve our priorities, the rate of improvement has been slower than other councils. Officers' and councillors' time being diverted to the issues of the eco-town, away from normal council business. As a small district council, this was not unexpected, and we have continued to make substantial improvements. One major achievement is our recent negotiations for a new kerb-side waste collection and recycling contract which will take us into the top waste recycling authorities in the UK.

Cllr. Alistair Swatridge, Leader of the Council



Harborough in Brief

Size	592 sq. km (230 sq. miles)
Population (estimate for 2009)	84,700
Households	34,688
Towns	Market Harborough and Lutterworth
Unemployment (2005)	0.7%
Ethnicity	4.2%
No. of staff employed by Harborough District Council (2009)	230 FTE (full time equivalent)



Harborough is a diverse, largely rural district located in South Leicestershire. It serves a growing population and is geographically the largest of the Leicestershire districts. The two major population and commercial centres are the market towns of **Market Harborough** and **Lutterworth**. These two towns, together with the villages of **Thurnby**, **Bushby** and **Scraptoft** adjoining Leicester City, and the villages of **Broughton Astley**, **Great Glen**, **Kibworth Beauchamp**, **Kibworth Harcourt** and **Fleckney** accommodate 67% of the district population. The remaining residents live in villages varying from populations of several hundreds to hamlets comprising a handful of dwellings.

The district borders Warwickshire to the west, Rutland to the east, Leicester city to the north and Northamptonshire to the south.

The prosperity of the district owes much to its diverse local economic base. Although agriculture still plays an important part in the local economy, manufacturing, distribution and the service sector are of ever-increasing importance.

In the 2009 Halifax 'Rural areas quality of life survey', which tracks where living standards are highest in Great Britain's local rural authorities, Harborough came 14th and was deemed to have the best quality of life outside the south of England. Houses are larger than average, life expectancy is very high and GCSE results are some of the best in Great Britain.

Market Harborough is on the Midland Mainline into London, with journey times of less than ninety minutes, and there is good access to the M1, M6 and the A14. Nottingham East Midlands Airport is approximately 35 miles from Market Harborough.



A year in Harborough



- 1 - Recycling 'nodes' installed at five locations across the district.
- 2 - Special edition TalkBack published to keep residents informed about the Government's plans for a possible eco-town in Harborough district.
- 3 - New Chairman of the Council, Cllr. Brian Smith.
- 4 - Official opening of Welland Park by local youngster Eva

- 5 - Cllr. Michael Rook tackles the Commons car park refurbishment.
- 6 - Rt. Hon. Caroline Flint, Minister for Housing, visits HDC.
- 7 - SureStart children's centre built in Market Harborough.



8 - London Olympic Handover Flag raised in Market Harborough simultaneously with regions around the UK.

9 - Dancing classes held at villages around the district.

10 - Hi-visibility jackets handed out to door staff at pubs and clubs as part of Pubwatch

11 - Workplace Health and Well-being Award presented to two local businesses.

12 - Domestic Violence Ad Van in the district.

13 - Representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors attend the State of the District event.

14 - Open play sessions for children and their families assisted by the Play Rangers.

How the council works

Our constitution (set of rules) sets out how we:

- work
- make decisions
- follow procedures to make sure we are efficient, open, and answer to local people

We have a structure which sets out who is responsible for making particular decisions:

The full council is responsible for deciding policies, making decisions and setting council tax.

There are 37 district councillors made up of 26 Conservative and 11 Liberal Democrats.

For 2008/9, the Leader of the Council is Councillor Alistair Swatridge and Deputy Leader is Councillor Mike Rook.

Chairman of the Council is Councillor Brian Smith (Con.) and Vice-Chairman is Councillor Jan Tooley (Lib. Dem.)

Standards Committee

Our Standards Committee promotes and maintains high standards of behaviour from councillors. The panel is currently made up of five district councillors, two parish members and three independent members

Executive

Our Executive makes most of our day-to-day decisions. It is made up of eight councillors (with eight portfolio areas) and is responsible for making decisions about individual services

Planning

Our Planning Committee makes decisions on planning applications and enforcing planning regulations. It is made up of 12 councillors

Constitutional Review

Our Constitutional Review committee has responsibility for maintaining a working, relevant, constitution for the council to work to. It is made up of 12 councillors

Scrutiny Commission

Our Scrutiny Commission oversees the scrutiny and overview function of the council, challenging decisions and holding the Executive to account where appropriate. It is made up of twenty-three councillors in total, and has three sub-panels for People, Places and Resources

Licensing/Regulatory

Our Licensing/Regulatory Committee looks after the licensing, registration and regulation functions of the council. It is made up of 12 councillors

District Councillors

We have 37 councillors who represent 25 wards. Following the local elections in May 2007, the **Conservative** group had the majority with 26 seats and the **Liberal Democrats**, led by Cllr. Simon Galton, have 11 seats.

 Cllr Steve Charlish Billesdon	 Cllr Brian Smith Bosworth	 Cllr Mark Graves Broughton Astley - Astley	 Cllr Colin Golding Broughton Astley - Broughton	 Cllr Paul Dann Broughton Astley - Primethorpe	 Cllr Bill Liquorish Broughton Astley - Sutton	 Cllr Peter Fuchs Dunton	 Cllr Michael Smith Fleckney
 Cllr Charmaine Wood Fleckney	 Cllr Geoff Hallam Glen	 Cllr Grahame Spendlove-Mason Glen	 Cllr Christopher Holyoak Kibworth	 Cllr Phillip King Kibworth	 Cllr Eileen Roeber Kibworth	 Cllr Blake Pain Lubenham	 Cllr Gary Hack Lutterworth - Brookfield
 Cllr Geraldine Robinson Lutterworth - Orchard	 Cllr Richard Dewes Lutterworth - Springs	 Cllr Janette Ackerley Lutterworth - Swift	 Cllr Dr Sarah Hill Market Harborough - Great Bowden and Arden	 Cllr Barbara Johnson Market Harborough - Great Bowden and Arden	 Cllr Alistair Swatridge Market Harborough - Great Bowden and Arden	 Cllr Derek Evans Market Harborough - Little Bowden	 Cllr Angie Hill Market Harborough - Little Bowden
 Cllr Dr Paul Bremner Market Harborough - Logan	 Cllr Peter Callis Market Harborough - Logan	 Cllr Roger Dunton Market Harborough - Welland	 Cllr Beverley Field Market Harborough - Welland	 Cllr Julie Simpson Market Harborough - Welland	 Cllr John Everett Misterton	 Cllr David Beatty Nevill	 Cllr Graham Hart Peatling
 Cllr Amanda Burrell Thurnby and Houghton	 Cllr Simon Galton Thurnby and Houghton	 Cllr Jan Tooley Thurnby and Houghton	 Cllr Michael Rook Tilton	 Cllr Rosita Page Ullesthorpe			

The Executive

The portfolio system is designed on the Leicestershire Performance Framework through the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and based on National Performance Indicators. Although not all performance indicators are applicable to a district council role, they drive the council's overall aims, and aid our objectives of working within our Leicestershire partnership. It will support the Comprehensive Area Assessment, in which we will, in future, be judged for efficiency and effectiveness. The portfolios are designed to make it simpler to understand who is responsible for what issue:



**Cllr. Alistair Swatridge
(Leader of the Council):
Corporate and Service
Delivery portfolio**

The 'corporate identity' of the council, including the staff, the councillors role and

training, the council infrastructure, IT systems and how we deliver our services, communications, community liaison, and web-based technology.



**Cllr. John Everett:
Development and Future
Opportunities portfolio**

The improved quality of life in Harborough, through transportation, new development, housing and

planning strategy, tourism and economical development. Incorporates the Local Development Framework.



**Cllr. Dr. Paul Bremner:
Community Cohesion and
Wellbeing portfolio**

The wellbeing of the community including leisure, supporting people, adult, youth and senior citizens,

homelessness, deprivation and all aspects of rural affairs and its lifestyle.



**Cllr. Paul Dann/Cllr. Janette
Ackerley:**

**Community Safety and
Enforcement portfolio**

The regulatory side of the council: generic, parking and planning enforcement; trading standards; licensing; environmental health and community safety including the role of countering anti-social behaviour.



**Cllr. Grahame Spendlove-
Mason:**

Finance portfolio

Financial services, internal audit, council tax, and benefits.



**Cllr. Michael Rook:
Environmental Delivery
portfolio**

The delivery of all outdoor services, promoting neighbourhood pride including grounds

maintenance, parks, play areas, street cleaning, waste collection, recycling, car park standards, sports grounds, grass cutting and day-to-day environmental issues.



**Cllr. Mark Graves:
Asset management
portfolio**

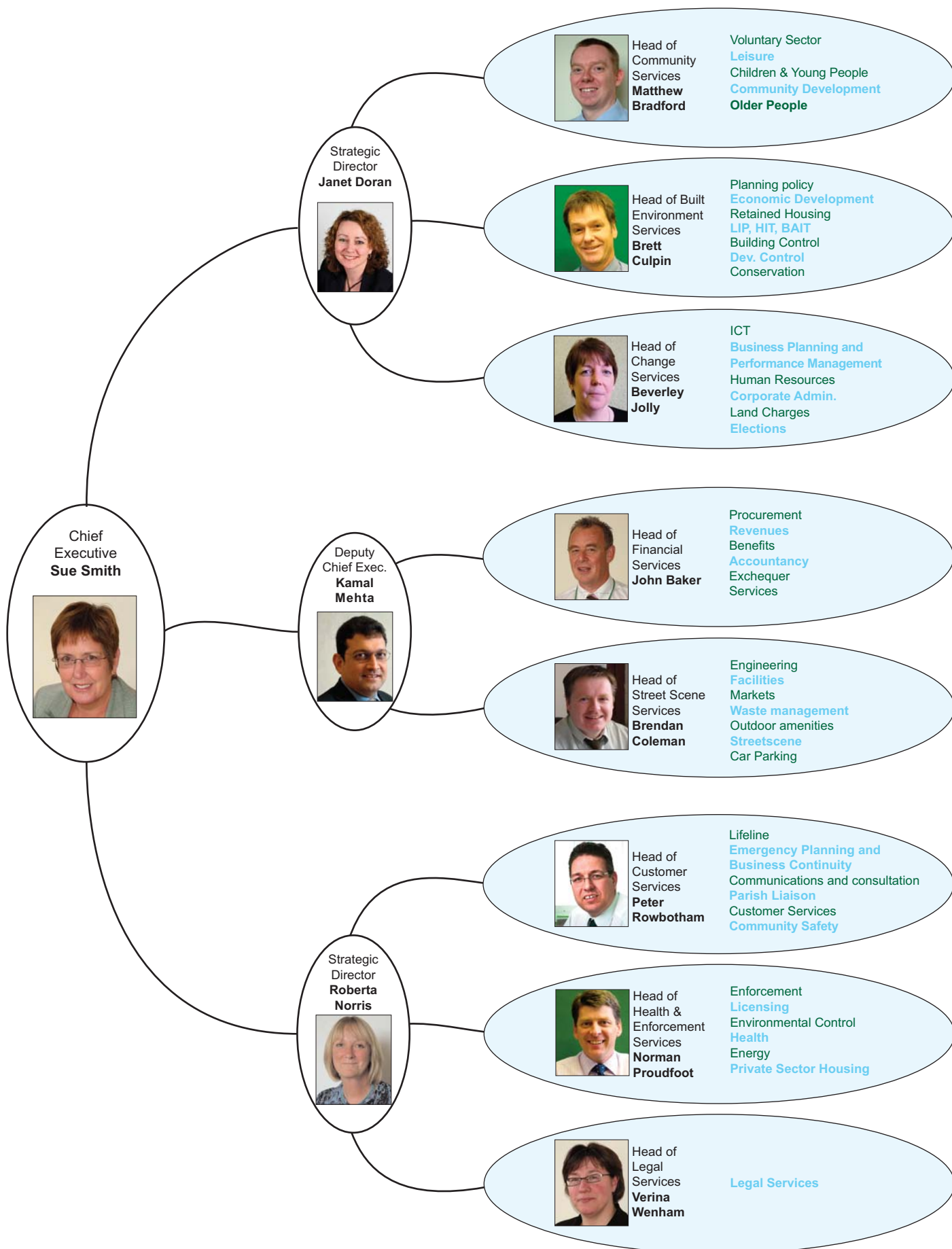
Asset management of council owned property.



**Cllr. Janette Ackerley:
Community Engagement
and Customer Services
portfolio**

Customer services, rural affairs, partnership working, HIT, LIP, BAIT, parish liaison.

Officer structure



Finances

We produce a full set of accounts each year. The purpose of the accounts is to explain our financial position as at 31 March 2009. A full copy of the accounts is available from our main reception in Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough or from our website www.harborough.gov.uk

The accounts will be audited by the Audit Commission who will report their findings to us and issue a formal opinion.

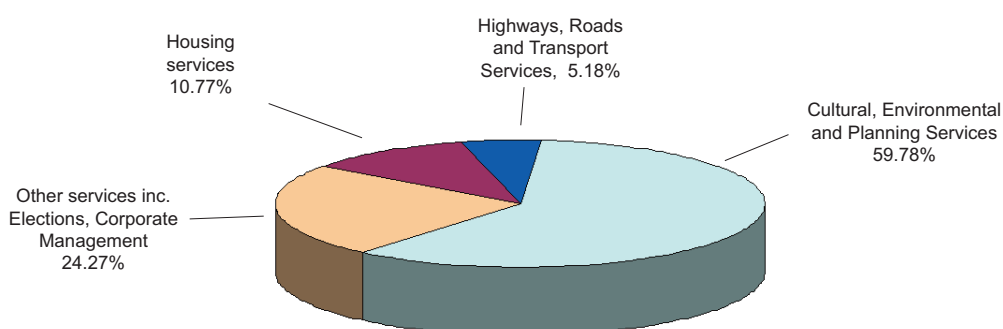
Our planned general budget for 2008/09 was £11.7m. A further £2.7m was spent on capital schemes. Although there were considerable demands on services we have achieved a balanced outturn and were able to keep the expenditure within budget.

The following tables give a summary of the main financial statements.

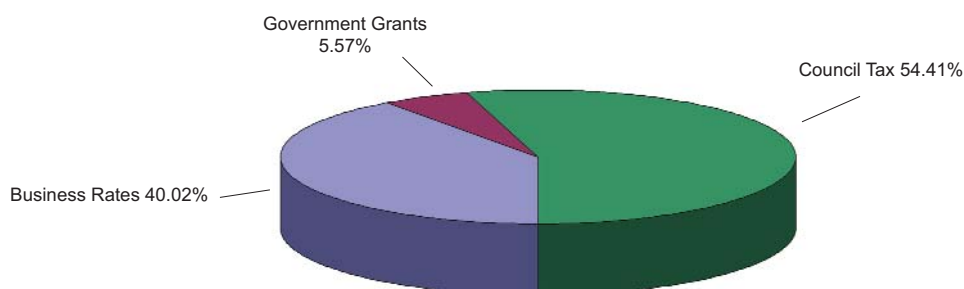
Our income and expenditure

This covers income and expenditure relating to all our services, and how the cost of services have been financed.

What the money is spent on



Where the money comes from



A Working Balance and General Reserve is held to use for any unforeseen liabilities.

The Balance Sheet

This is a statement which is a snapshot of our financial position as at 31 March 2009. It shows what we own (assets) and what we owe (liabilities). The balance of these two items is made up from reserves and balances.

	£'000
<u>Assets</u>	
Fixed and long term assets	24,634
Money owed to the council	7,490
Cash, investments and stock	3,500
Total assets	35,624
<u>Liabilities</u>	
Items owed by the council	(3,402)
Borrowing	(1,506)
Pension Scheme	(11,369)
Other liabilities	(7,812)
Total liabilities	(24,089)
Net assets	11,535
Non-spendable reserves	5,779
Spendable reserves and balances	5,756
Net Worth	11,535

Land and buildings owned by us

These arise from the financing and revaluation of fixed assets and are not available to spend on our services

Cash Flow Statement

This shows a summary of the cash movements during the year, demonstrating how we have moved to the financial position reflected on the Balance Sheet.

Movement of cash		
Cash flows in: council tax payments, business rates, Government grants, cash received for goods and services		£'000
	Revenue activities	(872)
	Returns on investments	(490)
	Capital activities	1,575
	Financing	6,000
	Short term deposits	(6,500)
	<u>Net increase in cash</u>	(287)
Cash flows out: employees, benefits, business rates pool, precepts, interest on borrowings		

Collection Fund

The Collection Fund shows the transactions relating to the collection of council tax and business rates. We also collect council tax on behalf of Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police Authority, Leicestershire Combined Fire Authority and parishes. Business rates are collected by us and paid over to the Government and then a proportion of it is given back to us.

2008/09	£'000
<u>Income</u>	
Council tax	(45,012)
Business rates	<u>(33,099)</u>
Total income	(78,111)
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Harborough District Council	6,146
Leicestershire County Council	31,918
Leicestershire Police Authority	5,080
Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Fire Authority	1,578
Business rates transferred to the Government	33,100
Other	430
Total expenditure	<u>78,252</u>
Deficit for the year	141

Progress with our priorities

Our annual priorities set out the additional things we will deliver for the community alongside the day-to-day services. On pages 16 to 22 we look back at some of the things we've achieved over the last year and some of those that we did not quite achieve, which will be rolled over into 2009/10.

It is important not to forget that we are here to deliver good services to our residents.

The national indicators on pages 39 to 43 are just one way we measure whether we are getting these services right.

But we can't do everything on our own and our work with partners shows how we're getting together to deliver real improvements for people living and working in the district. You can find out more about this on pages 24 to 27.

So how did we do...

Over the next few pages we set out a summary of our performance for 2008/09. It shows how well we are doing at providing the best possible services and meeting the needs of more than 80,000 residents and over 2,500 businesses.

Our corporate priorities fitted under three main headings:

1. **People**
2. **Place**
3. **Resources**

The priorities within these headings are **highlighted in green**, with our actions immediately following, in black.



Bottled water handed out free to revellers in town centres to prevent binge-drinking

Annual Parish Liaison meeting

People

Business

Planning permission secured for the Harborough Enterprise Centre, private sector partners secured and building work on the site started

Planning permission granted and work continues to bring a range of funding partners together. The project is being developed in conjunction with Prospect Leicestershire to deliver an Innovation Centre in Market Harborough to provide space for young businesses to develop.

Work with Harborough Improvement Team, Lutterworth Improvement Partnership and Broughton Astley Improvement Team to deliver one project in each area

As a response to the economic downturn HIT, LIP and BAIT joined forces with Harborough District Council and the Welland Strategic Partnership to offer local businesses £30,000 worth of specialist retail training and small improvement grants.

Community Safety

Identify, promote and deliver sustainable solutions to problems of anti-social behaviour in two identifiable areas; and hold two three-day action events in hotspot areas

Working with a range of agencies, anti-social behaviour reports in Thurnby reduced by around 60%. To counter similar problems in The Square, Market Harborough, a new CCTV camera was installed to help identify offenders and deter anti-social behaviour.

Develop the Business Against Crime Initiative to have ten members

Following a successful conference in Market Harborough, a number of businesses signed up to join the new Business Against Crime scheme. Working closely with Harborough Improvement Team a small team is working to roll the scheme out on industrial estates.

Develop a robust method of retaining performance information on the CCTV system

A comprehensive performance management process is now established and is now able to highlight incident recording, maintenance and repairs.

Train all CCTV operators to the recognised national standards

CCTV operators are trained to Security Industry Authority standards, all have received certificates and are now putting their new skills to good use on a daily basis.

Ensure funding is secured for continuation of the post of Community Involvement Officer

An external funding grant enabled the employment of the Community Involvement Officer who is ensuring that all agencies and services respond to complaints of anti-social behaviour as a matter of priority. This officer works closely with the police to investigate complaints and support victims.

Deliver on outcomes identified in the Community Safety Strategy 2008-11

Led by the HDCSP, a series of crime-reducing initiatives were rolled out during the year. Most significant was Operation Christmas Presence, to respond to drink fuelled violence in town centres. The number of assaults reduced substantially.

Increase the membership of HART/Pubwatch to 106

The HART and Pubwatch partnership goes from strength to strength having a real impact on town centre crime and violence. Due to the economic downturn some members have

withdrawn from the scheme. There are currently 95 members. A Lutterworth Pubwatch scheme has also been set up where a number of licensed premises now work closer with the police and council staff.

Undertake work on memorial safety testing in cemeteries and closed churchyards

The mapping and ground work has been completed for this project with section and row markers installed at Northampton Road cemetery, to assist visitors. A contractor has been appointed to start a rolling programme of surveys over three to four years.

Continue with a rolling programme of tree inspections

Tree inspections have been completed at Little Bowden and Symington Recreation grounds and other priority sites. Urgent work from these surveys has been commissioned or completed. Through partnership with the Welland Procurement Unit a contractor has been appointed for the next three years to undertake tree inspections at council owned sites throughout the Welland Partnership area, providing more efficient and effective services for the community.

Health and wellbeing

Determine the future of hostel provision

Agreement was reached with Seven Locks Housing to replace the hostel, which is not accessible for all, with housing units that will more readily meet people's needs and which will be managed on behalf of HDC.

Ensure 90% of the year one target in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is achieved

This was re-scheduled for 2009/10 because there is a county-wide Health and Wellbeing Strategy being developed by the Healthier Leicestershire group and it is important that our strategy is closely linked to this overarching strategy. We are represented on the working group developing this strategy and it should be published during 2009/10.

Promote the Healthy Workplace Award Scheme standards to two businesses in a 12-month period

Two large businesses located at Magna Park, Lutterworth have been awarded the Healthy Workplace Award which acknowledges the employers actions to improve the diet and lifestyle of their workforce. The scheme is being further promoted to a wider range of businesses.

Agree and implement the revised Homelessness Strategy

This was approved in July 2008. Additional preventative work commenced with recruitment of a Private Sector Liaison Officer.

Promote the use and adoption of the HSE Stress Toolkit by two businesses above 200 employees

Working in partnership with the LCC Stress Co-ordinator, two large businesses have received training and mentoring and have fully implemented the HSE Stress Management Toolkit.

Ensure full engagement with the Market Harborough and Lutterworth hospital working groups

A consultation event was held with the PCT in May 2008 to discuss hospital projects within the district. The PCT attended a Scrutiny Panel in September 2008 to discuss the consultation on the hospital developments. The Executive approved a response to the consultation in September 2008 and the council was represented on the evaluation panel for the proposed projects in November 2008. The PCT met with local stakeholders at the council offices in February 2009 to share the outcome of the consultation and details of the proposed projects.

Our staff

Revise the current employer discretionary policies in respect of the new Local Government Pensions Scheme

Changes to legislation and regulations within the LGPS regulations have delayed progress

on the revision of discretionary policies. This priority will be included in the 2009/10 service plan as changes to the current scheme at the time may have had a detrimental impact on the BPER process.

Rural

Support for BAIT through a part-time Community Engagement Officer

BAIT officer started work in September 2008 and is based in the Broughton Astley Parish Council office.

Work with Fleckney Parish Council to provide a skating/BMX facility for young people

Following representation by young people, £30,000 contribution made to Fleckney Skatepark Committee for the development of the skatepark at Fleckney recreation ground, through the Children's Play Programme from the Big Lottery Fund (£200,000 allocation to the district). Awarded 95% of grant to them at end of financial year. Construction of skatepark commenced in December 2008, and was officially opened in April 2009.

Develop a draft Section 106 policy and infrastructure framework

Draft 106 framework approved by Scrutiny Panel in March 2009 for wider consultation. The consultation period will run from 8 June

2009 until 20 July 2009 when a further report will be produced.

Research and write a district-wide Transport Strategy

District Transport strategy to be expressed within LDF Core Strategy document .

Support two youth groups to facilitate the provision of youth facilities in their areas

Skatepark in Fleckney – predominantly youth led group.

Enable Youth – this youth led group submitted a bid in partnership with HDC and VASL for a five year project which includes the development of five facilities for young people across the district.

The Well – Kibworth - Support and advice given to develop a drop-in youth facility within a larger community project – conversion of former café and house on Kibworth High Street.

Tilton on the Hill – work was undertaken with the parish council to develop a youth café facility at the village shop.

Place

Affordable accommodation

Deliver a draft new Housing Strategy and identified actions, including alternative accommodation for the homeless

Housing Strategy 2009 - 2013 developed and

submitted for Executive approval. Alternative accommodation for homeless families secured through partnership working with Seven Locks Housing.

Enforcement

Complete the planning enforcement review, delivering a sustainable staffing structure

Planning Enforcement is continuing to develop with performance data now being available for planning enforcement cases as measured against the Planning Enforcement Protocol. During the year 80% of the outstanding planning enforcement cases were successfully dealt with and closed. There were a total of 320 new complaints and 66% of these were investigated and closed during the same year. A new staffing structure was considered in the business planning process and subsequently

approved for implementation in 2009/10 which will bring further service improvements for planning enforcement customers.

Achieve year two targets set within the revised planning enforcement service standards

This was achieved by the end of March 2009 with the exception of two items which will be completed by September 2009 relating to outstanding enforcement notices and the feasibility of a shared service for planning enforcement.

Environment

Develop and implement a Climate Change Strategy

We took part in the Carbon Management Programme in partnership with the Carbon Trust and Rutland County Council. The aim of the programme is to highlight our carbon management, identify potential improvements to reduce emissions and to take the lead. It also aims to assist partner organisations and stakeholders to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and thereby reduce the carbon footprint of the district as a whole.

Complete redesign of the Commons Car Park, to Park Mark standards

Project has been successfully completed, delivering a flagship car park for residents and for visitors to Market Harborough.

Develop a programme of environmental enforcement with the car parking wardens

The civil enforcement officers have been trained and are able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for environmental crimes committed within the district. They are also able to issue FPN's in a more limited capacity on behalf of partner districts within the five district parking partnership.

Take ownership of land drainage works and maintenance of watercourse

Six cases of localised flooding have been dealt

with successfully, with two remaining to be resolved. This is ongoing work with new cases being investigated as they are reported. By working in partnership with LCC, landowners, Environment Agency and developers it is hoped to achieve fast resolution of flooding incidents. Watercourse and flood defence surveys have been completed and annual reports submitted to the Environment Agency.

Deliver a programme of awareness of the Lutterworth Air Quality Management Area, and air pollution levels

A public display unit was installed in Lutterworth Service Shop which is linked to the real time pollution monitor situated in the town. This displays the current air quality and highlights when the local air quality is poor, enabling residents who are susceptible to breathing problems to take appropriate precautions

Complete redesign of the Station Road Car Park, Lutterworth, incorporating public realms work, to Park Mark standards

This project has been delayed to achieve a wider public realm project with other partners. The wider project will deliver additional town centre improvements for Lutterworth, and achieve part of the Town Centre Masterplan and Vision.

Leisure

Develop and deliver a new management arrangement for the leisure/sports centres

Harborough District Leisure Trust was formed and the Board of Trustees took over the management responsibility for Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre in May 2008. With support from HDC this has been a successful transition.

Install a new play area at Ashley Way

This project was completed successfully, achieving the outcome that was determined through extensive consultation with the community. Climbing rocks and rope play were the focus of this area, with additional landscaping.

Carry out major renovations and replacements at the play area at Welland Park

The major refurbishment works at Welland Park play area were completed successfully. Having created a now nationally recognised destination park the play area has proved to be a major success with residents and visitors alike. The project was delivered through partnership working with Welland Procurement Unit, allowing district councils and others in the East Midlands to use the newly developed framework agreement to deliver large play projects more efficiently and effectively.

Carry out major renovations and replacements at the play area in Little Bowden Recreation Ground

This play area refurbishment and wider improvements for Little Bowden Recreation Ground has been greeted with appreciation from the community. The improvements include new paths, lighting and tree planting, all highlighted as requirements for the site during extensive consultation with the community.

Renovate closed churchyard and cemetery walls

This project involves the renovation of boundary walls at 16 closed churchyards and two council-owned cemeteries. Some work has already been commissioned where Diocesan Faculties are not required; at other sites tender documents and specifications are being agreed with the PCC and Diocese. Some faculties have been received and work is scheduled for completion by the end of October 2009.

Undertake a renovation of the Manor Field play area

This section 106-funded play area renovation was approved in December 2008. Tenders have been received from suitably qualified play companies, and after further consultation with the users and Thurnby & Bushby Parish Council, work will commence in July 2009.

Tourism

Stimulate the local economy through tourism, incorporating the new Harborough Tourism blueprint through ensuring decision on investment in resources is made

Decision on investment affected by Business Priorities and Efficiency Review which suspended non-essential spending in 2008/09 and did not identify tourism/economic development as a service priority.

Waste and recycling

Introduce a Broughton Astley food waste collection trial for one year

The food waste trial at Broughton Astley is ongoing and has achieved a high participancy rate with good outputs. The LCC- funded trial is

to be superseded by the eventual roll-out of a full food waste service.

Expand the placement of mini bring-sites across the district to new locations

All on-street recycling banks are being well

used by the community, with little contamination. The original funding for this project was by LCC and is a good example of partnership working delivering a successful and popular service.

Extend the Lutterworth food waste collection trial to 31 March 2009

This LCC-funded trial is to be superseded by eventual roll out of a full food waste service. The trial has proved popular with the

community and has achieved high participancy rates.

Continue a rolling programme of litter bin renewal to ensure a district-wide uniformity standard

This project has allowed most of the litterbins to be replaced in town centres. The replacement litterbins are chosen to compliment the style of our market towns.



TV cameras at the opening of Welland Park, Market Harborough

Cllr. Michael Rook (right) welcomes John Harris of Focsa Services (UK) Ltd., after being awarded the new contract for waste management and other environmental services as from April 2009

Resources

Efficient use of resources

Draw up a corporate business process re-engineering project to improve efficiencies

An overall strategy has been approved. Reviews have taken place for democratic services and corporate administration, over-payments of housing benefit and development control, focusing on the needs of the customers and implementing efficiencies. These reviews have reduced costs and improved turnaround times.

Develop and implement a new 24-hour internet and telephone payments option

Unforeseen problems were encountered

following specification of the Voice Recognition 24 hour payments system and replacement e-payment methods. This has resulted in the necessity to rewrite and amend current software interfaces to accommodate these changes. Due to a lack of in-house expertise in this area, this work is having to be undertaken by an external IT consultant. The base systems have been exhaustively tested and progress is being made on the outstanding interfacing issues. It is intended to go live on these products in the first half of 2009/10. The implementation is 90% complete.

Introduction of electronic procurement, to allow purchasing in a more efficient, paper-free manner

Went live on 1 July 2008. Pilot for Customer Services only. Roll out to other service areas to follow. Test system now available after recent problems and roll out can continue.

Continue a rolling programme of maintenance and management for protection of the council's facilities

A successful programme of planned maintenance has been undertaken to ensure safe council premises for both the community and employees. The facilities team has also been successful in reacting to issues that have occurred throughout the year.

Redesign www.harborough.gov.uk to represent a fit-for-purpose website, satisfying best practice

A tendering process was undertaken where four companies applied for the contract to supply the council's website. As a result of this tendering process a website supplier was appointed in January 2009. Work on developing the new fit-for-purpose website began in February, which also included staff training. The launch of the new website will be in July 2009. The new website was initiated following feedback from customers on the limitations of the previous website.

Using mobile technologies for residential and commercial property inspections

Mobile technology has been implemented for domestic property inspections resulting in a more efficient use of staff time.

Remote working: ensuring that staff based away from the office can access corporate systems

Staff based at remote offices can access all corporate systems.

Support for the voluntary sector: increased funding for South Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau

HDC work closely with South Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau in order that citizens have access to free independent and impartial

advice. A rise in the demand for debt advice services was highlighted prior to April 2008 and as a result additional resources allocated to the provision of these services. The increased funding has enabled more people to access debt advice, in more locations throughout the district.

Support for the voluntary sector: increased funding for Lutterworth One-Stop Shop for additional support for eleven voluntary organisations

Lutterworth One Stop Shop provides a wide range of voluntary sector services to the people of Lutterworth and the surrounding villages. Rising insurance, utility costs and other overheads were identified as a potential risk for the One Stop Shop and as a result the council awarded funding in order to support the centre and the organisations within it.

Support for the voluntary sector: increased funding for community transport

An additional budget of £7,000 was made available to the South Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau and £7,000 was made available for community transport.

Asset management and reviews - continue to work on De Verdon Road allotment site

Work on this is ongoing. Planning applications for the De Verdon Road site and the Moorbarns Lane site have been submitted with a decision expected in July 2009. An extension to the Option to Purchase Moorbarns Lane site has been agreed with the landowner.

Progress on council offices, market hall and other sites owned by the council

We are working with Leicestershire County Council with regard to the respective office accommodation requirements of the two authorities and to jointly explore a viable solution to meeting those requirements. Currently the work is at an early stage and this project is of a medium to long term nature. A number of discussions have taken place in respect of the future use of the market hall. Again we are working with LCC to explore viable options.

Our performance

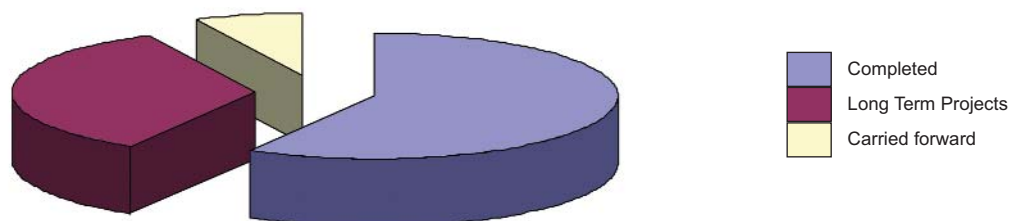
At the start of the financial year we decide on our priorities for that year, and produce our Business Plan. Our performance is

measured against a number of indicators set nationally (NIs) and those we set ourselves (LPIs).

Results

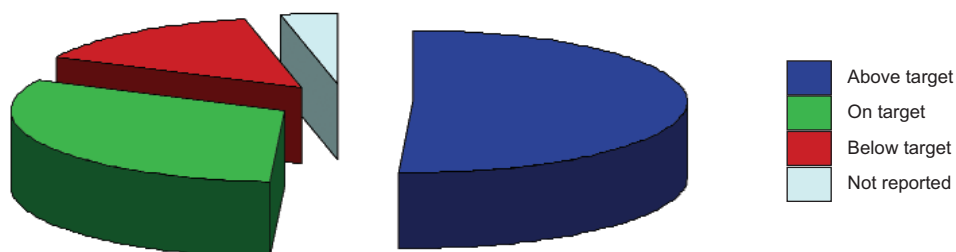
We set ourselves 65 projects at the start of the year, of these we completed 41 with the remaining 24 being carried forward to 2009/10. Of these, five are long term

projects and the remaining 19 are planned to be completed in 2009/10. Some of our successes are detailed in the portfolio pages.



Local Performance Indicators (LPIs)

Our local set of performance indicators cover all service areas and are detailed in the portfolio pages. In summary, at the end of 2008/09, 97 (82.2%) of our local performance indicators were on or above the target we set ourselves. Data on four indicators is supplied by outside agencies and had not been received when this report was written. These will be reported in the next edition of TalkBack and on our website. This means that 17 (14.4%) were below target. During the year, Performance Clinics were introduced to identify improvements to under-performing indicators and these are expected to improve in 2009/10.



Best Value Performance Indicators were replaced at the start of 2008/09 with a set of new National Indicators (NIs) many of which are reported annually and in the majority of cases the data being supplied by other agencies to a national database (the hub). Our year end performance against the national indicators is not yet available and will, like the local indicators, be published on the council's website as soon as they become available.

Place Survey

During the year a national survey was undertaken by every council in the country. This 'Place Survey' asked questions on satisfaction with public services, the local environment etc. 2,500 questionnaires were sent to a random sample across the Harborough district. We would like to thank the 1,111 people who returned the questionnaire.

Our results were submitted to the Audit Commission who, as yet, have not published the results, and so they cannot be included here.

The next edition of TalkBack, our residents newsletter, will include the full results of this survey.

Working with partners



State of the District event 2008

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Local Area Agreements (LAA)

The Local Strategic Partnership has made progress this year in developing itself as a body which adds value to service delivery in Harborough. The LSP represents the coming together of the major service providers in order to ensure services work better together and towards a common aim, which are set out in the Harborough Community Strategy. The LSP is an overall partnership that works with and supports a number of strategy focused groups, these include the Harborough Housing Partnership, the Crime and Disorder Partnership, and the Children and Young Peoples Partnership. It has recently launched a Social Inclusion and Equalities Network, the aim of which is to bring agencies together to ensure that we are offering a comprehensive

service to those individuals or communities that are more vulnerable.

The LSP partnership also has a geographical focus, the purpose of the geographically focused partnerships is to engage and support local people in improving their quality of life. This work is undertaken through community partnerships in Market Harborough (HIT) and Broughton Astley (BAIT). A priority for 2009/10 is to ensure that Lutterworth also has a community-led partnership in place. For more information on the work of HIT and BAIT, please see page 25.

Looking forward, the LSP has developed a new Community Strategy (2009-2014) and has identified four areas of work that do not fall

neatly into any of the other existing partnerships and that will need a concerted effort from the LSP to make a difference, these are;

- Enhanced access to services and facilities
- Better services and facilities for teenagers
- Building strong communities
- Improving outcomes for vulnerable people

One of the most important pieces of work the Harborough LSP has been responsible for in the last year is working in the Priority Neighbourhood.

Priority neighbourhood

Harborough has one 'priority neighbourhood',

This means that, compared with other neighbourhoods in Leicestershire, the people in those neighbourhoods experience a poorer standard of living. A partnership approach led by the LSP is working to put in place activities and services that will improve the circumstances for people who live in this area. With the backdrop of the worst recession in decades, work in 2008/09 has focused on providing advice to residents, aimed at dealing with debt and also where appropriate, increasing Welfare Benefit. Overall in a three-month period 77 people were supported which resulted in £245k of debt being re-negotiated and £73k increase in benefit uptake.

Harborough Improvement Team

HIT in its current form has been established for a couple of years and as a response to the economic downturn Harborough Improvement Team, Lutterworth Improvement Partnership and Broughton Astley Improvement Team joined forces with the council and the Welland Strategic Partnership to offer local businesses £30,000 worth of specialist retail training and small improvement grants. The grants were aimed at helping businesses through the current economic downturn.

HIT produced an action plan which highlighted

the importance of environmental sustainability and support for the local Market Harborough economy. HIT has supported local environment campaigners with a successful campaign to persuade shoppers to use less plastic carrier bags and continued to support volunteers with a town litter pick.

HIT worked with Leicestershire County Council and local retailers to organise a summer event called Leicester by the Sea, which attracted families and visitors to a fun day's shopping in Market Harborough.

Broughton Astley Improvement Team (BAIT)

BAIT was launched in 2008, with the appointment of a Partnership Support Officer being made in September 2008. Already the community are benefiting from this resource. Outcomes include a development plan for BAIT setting out its key objectives and based on the public consultation conducted in the summer of 2007. Significant progress in relation to BAIT's three key focus areas of enhanced provision of services and facilities, increased activities for young people and improved support for local

businesses has been made. Local Community Actions Teams, working in partnership with various public bodies and volunteers from the community have successfully launched a new programme of adult learning opportunities together with a series of events for young people. Additionally local businesses have been supported through a local retail improvement scheme implemented to help retailers retain and attract new customers.

Working with the Voluntary Sector

The council recognises the contribution made by voluntary sector organisations to our thriving communities. In support of their valuable work in the community we provide annual funding to a number of organisations. Two examples of work are given below:

Whilst looking at the public service priorities for 2008/09 the council and South Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau (SLCAB) recognised the need to enhance the support provided to people/families in need of advice, information and guidance. A number of trends were identified, particularly around rising personal debt and the problems associated with this. We increased our funding to SLCAB to provide additional services and this helped the organisation to assist over 6,000 people

during 2008/09. Advisors helped people to claim nearly £200,000 in state benefits to which they were entitled and assisted people with debts of over £2.6 million. As difficult economic conditions continue, the council, with SLCAB, will continue to monitor the effect in the district and provide services in order to help people.

Harborough is a rural district covering many miles of beautiful countryside. There are many villages, hamlets and sparsely populated areas. In recognition of this we work closely with Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council. Working together we engage with communities in rural areas to develop Parish Plans. During 2008/09 we worked with 93 members of rural communities on 14 Parish Plans.

Harborough District Sports and Activity Alliance

The aim of the HDSAA is to make sport and physical activity accessible for all people throughout the Harborough district, enabling them to fulfil their potential through sport and physical activity. The alliance is a partnership between HDC, Primary Care Trust, School Sports Partnership, voluntary sports clubs/organisations, Harborough District Leisure Trust and the voluntary sector. Some of the key outcomes of the 2008/09 action plan are:-

- Improved communication to the community – average 2,300 website visits per month.
- Club network event, attracting over 30 representative from local sports organisations.
- Supporting the Sport Unlimited Programme. 25 different sessions were organised throughout the district during the first year, with 715 young people participating in the activities regularly over the ten week programme. This included working with a host of partners such as parish councils and extended schools co-

ordinators to deliver a variety of non traditional activities.

- MEND - Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do it! programme - 24 children (and 24 parents) took part in the programme. All participants recorded significant health improvements – and a graduate club has been established for the participants to continue exercising which is being co-ordinated by some of the parents.
- Supporting the Street games project in Welland Park, Market Harborough. An average of 30 young people attending each week in this priority neighbourhood, providing organised yet informal diversionary activities.
- Step Out dance project delivered in seven venues across the district with 300 people taking part, attending an average of six sessions each. This has resulted in three dance sessions continuing, being co-ordinated by community groups in local settings.
- Supporting seven clubs across the district with facility and external funding applications.

- Providing support for three new sports clubs to achieve governing body accreditation, ensuring a quality sports experience for club members.
- 16 bursaries allocated to individuals undertaking national governing body coaching qualifications.
- 18 grants allocated to individuals/sports organisations to promote the development

and achievement in sport.

- Community sports days, attracting 200 people in Market Harborough and 30 people in Lutterworth.
- Tennis for Free - 60 people regularly attending the free coaching sessions in Welland Park, Market Harborough, this leading to a community tennis club being formed and constituted.

Seven Locks Housing

HDC transferred its landlord responsibilities to Seven Locks Housing Limited in December 2007. Seven Locks Housing are committed to spending £35million by December 2012 on achieving the 'Seven Locks Standard' to ensure that all homes are of a higher standard than the Decent Homes Standard. This is a standard required for all homes owned by

councils and Registered Social Landlords. Substantial progress has been made towards achievement of the 'Seven Locks Standard' with more than £8 million in improvements by 31 March 2009, including new bathrooms and kitchens, new higher efficiency heating systems and adaptations for disabled people.

Welland Partnership

We continue to be involved in the Welland Partnership, which in particular brings the

benefits of increased resilience and increased buying power.

Home Improvement Agency

Staying Put - Harborough and Melton is a not-for-profit home improvement agency and is a partnership between Anchor Trust, Melton Borough Council and HDC. The agency also receives funding from Leicestershire Adult Social Care, and Supporting People in Leicestershire. The aim of the agency is to help disabled and older people gain and maintain their independence, by repairing and adapting their homes. In support of this objective the agency provides a range of services depending

on needs and circumstances ranging from minor repairs to major adaptations. Through the year the agency has dealt with over 200 enquiries and has helped 43 customers adapt their homes to enable them to continue to live independently. In addition 68 people have received help with repairing their homes. The majority of the work has been provided through grant schemes and the total value of the work carried out was almost £400,000 of which almost half was directly funded by HDC.

Harborough District Community Safety Partnership

Crime data and community feedback helped to determine a series of priorities for the year that were judged as causing communities the most problems. Violence, anti-social behaviour, drugs, alcohol and thefts from cars received

attention from the statutory Harborough District Community Safety Partnership throughout the year. We provided support for the partnership and a full-time partnership manager. Positive outcomes have been achieved.

Corporate themes

Our business is governed by many influences. Most of those influences are enshrined in legislation, so as well as identifying what our community wants, we also have to plan to deliver actions against a number of these. These include:

- Equality and Fairness
- Hear by Right (working with children/young people)
- Social Inclusion
- Change Management
- Community Safety
- Emergency Planning and Business Continuity
- Local Area Management
- Environmental Issues
- Data Quality

Detailed actions that support these themes were within HDC team Service Plans. Below we show our actions (highlighted in green) followed by whether we achieved what we said:

Equality and Fairness

Publish a new Corporate Equality Plan

The development of our new Corporate Equality Plan was postponed until 2009/10 to allow for the new Equality Framework for Local Government, and the associated guidance, to be published. The Equality Framework came into effect on 1 April 2009.

Publish a revised Race Equality Scheme

An interim one-year Race Equality Scheme action plan was developed during 2008/09. An interim plan was developed as it is likely that during 2009/10 a new statutory requirement will come into effect which will require all Local Authorities to develop a Single Equality Scheme.

Introduce a new equality monitoring system across the council

A standardised equality monitoring framework has been developed for the council that utilises equality categories which reflect the new recognised seven equality groupings. This framework has been implemented initially in Human Resources, both for job applicants and also for monitoring of the existing workforce.

Work also started to implement the framework in a new on-line complaints system.

Undertaking a program of retrospective Equality Impact Assessments in each service area

Many service areas made good progress in completing the retrospective Equality Impact Assessments that were scheduled for 2008/09. EIAs scheduled but not completed have been carried over into the 2009/10 schedule.

Embedding equality issues in the Business Planning cycle

Although outcomes of Equality Impact Assessments were already fed into the business planning process via Service Plans, further work was undertaken during 2008/09 to build on this existing good work. This includes work on developing the new Portfolio Development Plans for 2009/10, which contain expanded equality considerations and objectives, as well as EIA schedules. These will be monitored using our TEN performance management system and performance clinics.

The Equality Impact Assessment system at HDC has identified a number of equality considerations across the council during the 2008/09 period. Many of these considerations have been incorporated into council services or policies and strategies which have, or will, improve how we deliver our services and priorities.

A prime example of this is the full EIA undertaken on the Harborough District Housing Strategy 2009/2014. This EIA, which involved consultation with a number of stakeholders, helped identify a number of actions which we adopted within the Strategy's Action Plan. These include:

- Assisting in implementing recommendations of report on refuge provision in Leicestershire for victims of domestic violence.
- Focussing on improving life chances of people in areas with higher than average levels of deprivation to increase social inclusion.
- Targeting resources on vulnerable households living in homes with low energy efficiency rating.
- Provision for transit accommodation for Gypsy and traveller accommodation needs.

Hear by Right (working with children/young people)

These are the National Youth Agency's standards for the active involvement of children and young people.

The Hear by Right participation standards framework allows Local Authorities to map and plan what they currently do in order to increase children and young people's active involvement with local authorities and their participation in local democracy. The Standards encourage councils to look seriously at how they currently involve and engage children and young people in local democratic processes and to improve this. Hear by Right is based around the Seven S

model for organisational change: Shared values; Strategy; Structure; Systems; Staff; Skills and knowledge and Style of leadership. For each of these seven standards, there are seven indicators. The standards are split into three levels of performance; emerging, established and advanced, with each building upon the previous one.

We have now reached Emerging level of this standard.

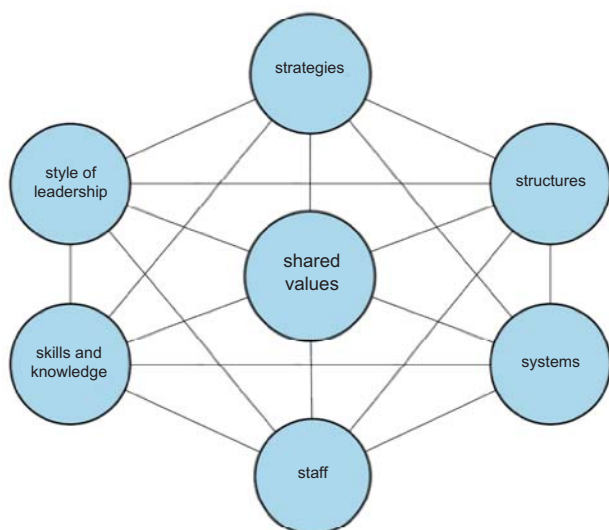
Part of the work involved has been the development of an inclusive Youth Council in partnership with the County Youth Service. The 'Jitty' website (www.thejitty.com), co-ordinated countywide through the Youth Service and managed with young people, is being used to promote the voice of young people and share information on plans and activities.

Additionally, local young people have elected Cllr. Dr. Paul Bremner as the Young Persons Champion council member.

Annually, a Youth Conference is held in the district. In 2008/09 over 60 young people attended

Links with the Voluntary Sector have been strengthened through partnership with Voluntary Action South Leicestershire.

Through this partnership a youth led group,



'Enable Youth' was given support to get established. The group was launched in October 2008 with a successful fun event attended by over 80 local young people. Further investment has been made through an application to the Big Lottery Fund Young People's Fund 2, for funds to support the groups' development and help it fulfil its' mission of improving facilities for young people across the district. The outcome will be known in June 2009.

Community Support – We have also created a partnership with local young people to develop a new Action Sports Bowl in Little

Bowden, Market Harborough. A community group called The Harborough Wheels Project has been supported and a partnership between them and the council will develop the facility. £100,000 of Section 106 funding has already been assigned to this project work, with plans to fundraise for the remaining project costs in partnership with the young people in the group. The development of the Fleckney Skatepark is another example of successful partnership working with a youth-led group. £30,000 of funding acquired through the Big Lottery Fund Children's Play Programme allowed completion of a new skatebowl in the village recreation ground.

Social inclusion - Working to support vulnerable people and communities

Working for children

HDC, working in partnership with other local organisations, has begun to provide enhanced support to children and their families under the Children's Centre programme. Improved relationships have been forged with service providers, and services implemented, to improve the development of children and support their families. The services will be instrumental in helping children achieve the aims of the Every Child Matters Framework; Be

Healthy, Be Safe; Enjoy and Achieve; Make a Positive Contribution, and Achieve Economic Well-Being.

The biggest achievement during 2008/09 was the completion of the Market Harborough Children's Centre, in March. Events are planned at the new centre for 2009/10, which include a Fun Day in early May 2009, when over 100 families are expected to visit.

The two outreach workers, now based at the Children's Centre, work closely with health



Families enjoying the Market Harborough Children's Centre

visitors and are an important component in identifying families in need of support.

Working with and for young people

On page 27 we outlined where we have worked with groups of young people to provide new facilities or to help them access funding for something they want to do. As well as that work, we are working with other partners to develop more responsive services. The need for a Supported Lodgings scheme for homeless young people (predominantly 16/17 year-olds) - was identified through the countywide Homelessness Officers Group. Homeless young people benefit from being in a family environment and the proposal is to develop a countywide network of host families willing to provide accommodation and support for a short period. A bid has been made to the Supporting People budget which has been agreed. The tendering process is currently under way and the target is to appoint a contractor in the summer of 2009.

The Homelessness Officers group also identified that young people are staying in supported housing longer than they need to. The problem has been a lack of movement on providing accommodation. Councils within Leicestershire are working together on a MOPP (Move On Plan protocol), the aim being to work with those who are ready for independent living to help them access suitable accommodation. Although MOPP is at a very early stage, we are committed to working with all homeless people we refer to supported housing projects to help them find a long term solution to their housing needs. As the supported housing projects are located outside of the district it is important in helping young people move back closer to their family and support network.

Working with and for older people

- Maintaining independence of older people through the lifeline service that supports 4,258 people, including 1,602 registered social landlord tenants within the district and 720 private customers.
- Enabling older people to play an active

part in community life by encouraging take-up of benefits, providing housing advice through Harborough Homesearch. In the last three years there has been an increase of 14.6% in the number of people aged sixty and over receiving Council Tax Benefit and a 7.9% increase in awards of Housing Benefit to the over-sixties as a result of the benefit take-up campaign (based on figures from LCC up to November 2008).

We have participated in the national scheme to provide free swimming for people over sixty, provided by Harborough District Leisure Trust with support and funding from HDC, Leicestershire County Council, and Serco.

Working and for the Gypsy and travelling community

We recognised that Gypsy and travelling families are potentially excluded from mainstream society. There has been an increased effort during this year to make contact with these communities and understand their needs.

Local practitioners working with the members of the Gypsy and travelling community met on a number of occasions during the process of understanding what services were available to children under five in the district.

This has led to a greater understanding of the barriers faced by this community in relation to getting family support. In order to more fully understand how services could be developed to meet their needs, Children's Centre Outreach Workers have 'assertively outreached' into this community to engage under five's in pre-school play and learning activity. This culminated in a well attended Christmas activity party involving a partnership between Travellers Education, Children's Centre, Play Rangers, and Father Christmas.

In recognition that attendance at primary school has huge integration impact, the Harborough Children & Young People Steering Group agreed to focus a large proportion of the

budget on the small group of 5 -19 year-olds to fund transport to and from the Greenacres Gypsy and traveller site to a number of Harborough town primary schools. This work has benefited between 15 - 22 primary school children. The school can demonstrate improved outcomes in terms of increased numbers of traveller children attending, the regularity of attendance and improved punctuality. The project has been further developed to include a teacher travelling on the bus to the site, which has a calming effect on behaviour and improves school/home relations through regular conversations about class issues, homework and attendance.

Working with and for victims of domestic violence

Along with our partners, we know that families need support to cope with the effects of domestic abuse. In partnership with Melton Borough Council, the Children's Centre commissioned a project to provide high quality specialist family support. The competitive process was won by a partnership between Women's Aid (experts in the effects of domestic violence) and Family Action (experts in

therapeutic post traumatic support to children). This has resulted in the DAFS (Domestic Abuse Family Support) project which has recruited two family support workers and is beginning to take referrals.

We also recognised that it is more difficult to access services and to raise awareness in relation to some social issues. In order to combat some of the issues in relation to domestic violence, along with partners in Crete, Spain and Sweden we were awarded €240,000 from the European Commission to fund a project aimed at raising awareness of the issues that surround domestic violence and what it means for rural communities. The project is called SPIRE (Supporting People In Rural Europe) and will work with voluntary and community sector organisations across the four partner areas.

As well as developing new areas of work we continue to work in partnership through the Crime and Disorder Reduction partnership to support victims of domestic abuse. Women's Aid Leicestershire Limited, with funding from the CDRP has provided outreach support for 48 women and 85 children within the district over the year. The HOW (Harborough and Oadby & Wigston) Safe scheme was launched providing security measures to the homes of domestic abuse victims, allowing the homes of three Harborough district victims to be made more secure. 29 CC-AV (Cracking Conflict-Alternatives to Violence) sessions were undertaken in local schools, which brought awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence issues to 658 young people. Funding was secured for a joint Domestic Violence Co-ordinators post with Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

Working with and for people with disabilities

We have recognised that people with learning difficulties often do not get the same access to opportunities as others. Seven people with learning difficulties have joined in on a weekly basis with the Healthy Walking Scheme, two



Domestic violence advertising vehicle in the district

people in Market Harborough and five in Lutterworth. The Health Promotion Officer also ran a course over five weeks (five hourly sessions) and two walkers with learning difficulties are now trained as walk leader helpers.

The Health Promotion Officer co-ordinated a Health Awareness Day in February, for those with learning difficulties living in the Lutterworth and Broughton Astley area. This included information on hearing, eye tests, healthy eating, physical activity, personal hygiene, dental hygiene and provided basic health checks. Approximately 20 people attended the whole day.

We have also administered 42 grants and approved a further 12 grants for disabled adaptations with a total value of around £250,000.

As a result of identifying a gap in provision of accessible activities for young people with disabilities, HDC, in partnership with the Harborough District Sport & Activity Alliance, Blaby & Harborough School Sports Partnership, and Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport, launched a new Inclusive Sports Club in February 2008. This has provided attendees and their families with an opportunity to learn new skills through sport and physical activity and have been very well attended. A positive outcome from the Inclusive Sports Club is the

improved health and well-being of participants. The club is now regularly attracting 15 young people, and the parents have become established as a constituted group and the community is leading on future delivery of inclusive sports opportunities.

Social inclusion and housing

We have a Social Inclusion Policy which identifies those people/communities most likely to be at risk of exclusion. Access to housing is clearly a fundamental need, and we recognise that the provision of housing and access to a job for the means to pay for accommodation is important. Working with the Citizens Advice Bureau, we were successful in bidding for Enhanced Housing Options funding. Through the scheme it is our intention to develop a wider range of affordable housing options, to make affordable accommodation easier to access and link our housing advice service with specialist employment, training, skills and benefits advice. Addressing the issue of social exclusion will help more households find secure, affordable accommodation.

In 2008/9 the Housing Needs Team assisted 606 households in urgent housing need, this marked a 50% increase on the previous year. We helped 82 households move into affordable private rented accommodation, 62 of whom benefited from the financial assistance we are able to offer under our Rent Deposit Scheme.



The Wednesday Healthy Walking Group - before the walk and after the walk - in the café!

Change Management

Designing services around the citizen or business

Reviews have taken place for democratic services and corporate administration, over-payments of housing benefit and development control, focusing on the needs of the customers and implementing efficiencies. These reviews have reduced costs and improved turnaround times. Mobile technology has been implemented for domestic property inspections resulting in a more efficient use of staff time.

Releasing efficiencies by standardisation, simplification and sharing

A council-wide Business Priorities and Efficiencies review has taken place with re-allocation of resources within the council and a reduction in the overall budget and a reduction in the number of staff. All back office administration has been centralised into one team, increasing standardisation and sharing of resources between service areas.

Procure goods and services electronically, via the internet to promote streamlining and efficiency

Electronic procurement of goods and services has been piloted in one major area of the council and is now being rolled out to other service areas.

Develop and implement e-payments and a voice recognition system

Unforeseen problems were encountered following specification of the voice recognition 24 hour payments system and replacement e-payment methods. The functionality of these products was fundamentally different to the existing products and additional modules needed to be acquired, which unfortunately was not highlighted by the software supplier at time of sale. This has resulted in the necessity to rewrite and amend current software interfaces to accommodate these changes. This work is being undertaken by an external IT consultant. The base systems have been exhaustively tested and progress is being made on the outstanding interfacing issues. It is intended to go live on these products in the first half of 2009/10. The implementation is 90% complete.

Community Safety

Develop knowledge of, and adherence to, the principles of community safety - as outlined in Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act

The police alone cannot deal with crime and anti-social behaviour, the council has a statutory duty to consider the impact of everything it does on crime and the prevention of crime. Making this a core responsibility the duty is now well embedded. No formal training took place in the year but planning has started to implement a refresher programme during 2009/10.

Produce and develop a local Alcohol Harm Reduction Action Plan in association with

the Harborough District Community Safety Partnership based in South Leicestershire

As part of the county-wide Safe and Sensible initiative, the council, along with the police, PCT and Pubwatch has rolled out safer drinking messages. Leaflets, wall banners and handing out free drinking water to prevent binge drinking.

Produce and develop a Violent Crime Reduction Plan, encouraging increased education around violent crime in general, and domestic violence reporting system that includes all CSP partners

Operation Christmas Presence rolled out in Lutterworth and Market Harborough town

centres aimed at reducing violent crime. Additional policing, CCTV coverage, free bottled water and other initiatives helped to

reduce the number of assaults in both towns substantially.

Emergency Planning and Business Continuity

Wide-scale flooding, threat of terrorism, foot and mouth outbreaks and the potential for a flu pandemic all show the need for public services to work together and have plans in place to respond to such eventualities. We are an active partner in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Resilience Forum which brings together all the key

services. Within this forum we continue to work closely with the partnership to put joint plans in place and also validate these through exercises.

We have our own business continuity plans in place to ensure that critical services can still be provided when there is disruption through building loss or severe staff shortages.

Local Area Management

Harborough Improvement Team (HIT) in its current form has been established for a couple of years. During 2008 HIT produced its latest Action Plan for the town. The Plan will see the delivery of many community focused projects ranging from environmental improvements to cycling and walking. Broughton Astley Improvement Team (BAIT)

was only launched in 2008, with the appointment of a Partnership Support Officer also being made in that year. The team have delivered a number of events focused on providing facilities for teenagers and are currently producing an Action Plan for Broughton Astley which will enhance the village.

Environmental Issues

Identify and undertake remedial action on areas of contaminated land

The council's Contaminated Land Strategy was reviewed in 2008/09 and potential sites of land contamination were priorities for further investigation. We were successful in obtaining funding from the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to commence an intrusive investigation of the highest priority site. We commissioned a firm of environmental consultants to commence work to establish the presence of any contamination on the site and

assess the risk this poses both to the area and any adjacent land. This work is ongoing and the initial results are expected in 2009/10.

Investigate complaints relating to nuisance, such as noise, smell or accumulations of rubbish that could harbour vermin etc.

We investigate complaints to determine the existence of a Statutory Nuisance. During 2008/09 we received almost 350 requests for service covering a range of issues including domestic and commercial noise, barking dogs, bonfires and smoke nuisance etc.

Monitor the air quality, and issue permits to certain industrial processes to limit their emissions

We undertake real time air quality monitoring of nitrogen dioxide and particulates within the Air Quality Management Area in Lutterworth. In 2008/09 we were successful in obtaining funding for the installation of a public display unit which is linked to the air quality monitoring station and can be used to highlight periods of poor air quality. This enables the public, who are susceptible to respiratory problems, to take additional precautions.

Throughout the district there is a network of passive monitoring tubes which measure the average monthly levels of nitrogen dioxide. There are currently 17 diffusion tubes in both rural and town locations.

Certain industrial processes require a permit from the council to control their emissions. 28 premises currently have a permit to operate and during 2008/09 three permits were surrendered by operators and we received one new application for consideration.

Keep public highways clear and free from litter. The swift removal of fly tipping and abandoned vehicles ensures that land does not become contaminated

Street cleansing services continued to be efficient, but is expected to improve even more through the new integrated contract in 2009/10, with increased tonnages of detritus from highways being collected. Reporting and removal of abandoned vehicles has remained a

priority, with excellent results delivering a cleaner and safer environment for residents.

Aim to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere from our own activities

A baseline assessment was undertaken to assess the council's impact on greenhouse gas emission and it was found that during 2007/08 the council emitted 1,415 tonnes of CO₂. This baseline assessment will be used to track improvements towards our target of a 20% reduction in CO₂e (equivalent) emissions by 2014.

Continue to increase recycling rates, and reduce the amount of waste taken to landfill sites whilst developing alternative, more sustainable methods for dealing with waste

Through the introduction of food waste collection and the continuing expansion of local recycling sites across the district, we have increased recycling/composting rates beyond our anticipated outturn rate of 54%. Further waste minimisation projects will ensure that HDC will prematurely achieve LAA targets and increase our standing as one of the top twenty recycling authorities in the country.

The Street Scene Services team has seen several achievements, in particular the mobilisation and procurement of the refuse, recycling, street cleaning and grounds maintenance contract, with the end result being a success for the authority and it is anticipated that the public will receive a more enhanced service.

Data Quality

As a public organisation we have a responsibility to ensure that the data we hold and use is accurate, relevant and up to date. This is important for many things, including good customer service, good contract management and performance management.

To help ensure the quality of our data we have produced a data quality strategy which is available to all staff, and manages data quality through the performance and risk management system.

Glossary

Audit Commission	An independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively
BAIT	Broughton Astley Improvement Team
Best Value	A challenging framework to improve local services. Councils are required to assess their own performance and put in place measures to ensure continual improvement in these services
BPER	Business Priorities and Efficiency Review
CC-AV	Cracking Conflict-Alternatives to Violence
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government (formerly ODPM)
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
Equality Standard for Local Govt.	A tool designed to make sure that local authorities consider equality issues at all levels of council policy and practice
FPN	Fixed Penalty Notice
FTE	Full time equivalent
HART/Pubwatch	Harborough Against Retail Theft - co-operation between retailers, licensees, the police and HDC directed at combating criminal activity within Market Harborough. Pubwatch - An extension of HART, centred around licensed premises and late-night retail units
Have Your Say	Meetings for the community to discuss local services and wider community issues
HB	Housing Benefit
HDCSP	Harborough District Community Safety Partnership
HDSAA	Harborough District Sports and Activity Alliance
HDC	Harborough District Council
HIT	Harborough Improvement Team
HOW Safe Scheme	Harborough and Oadby & Wigston
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
IDeA	Information and Development Agency
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LABGI	Local Authority Business Growth Incentive
LCC	Leicestershire County Council
LDF	Local Development Framework
LDS	Local Development Scheme
LGPS	Local Government Pension Scheme
LIP	Lutterworth Improvement Partnership
LRP	Leicestershire Rural Partnership - organisations who work together to improve the quality of life of those living and working in rural Leicestershire
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MOPP	Move on Plan protocol
NNDR	National Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates)
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now DCLG)
PCC	Parochial Church Council
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PI	Performance Indicator
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
Precepts	The amount each non-billing authority (county council, police authority or parish council) asks the billing authority (district and borough councils) to collect every year to meet their spending
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RHB	Regional Housing Board
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995
SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure. Used to determine energy ratings in domestic dwellings
Section 106	A Planning Act section which authorises a legal agreement to secure 'public benefit' either as a financial sum or as a development in kind in order to mitigate the negative planning impact of a proposal
SLCAB	South Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau
TEN	Software used for performance management
VASL	Voluntary Action South Leicestershire
VAT	Value Added Tax
Welland Partnership	A partnership of five local authorities: Harborough District Council, Melton Borough Council, East Northamptonshire District Council, Rutland County Council and South Kesteven District Council

Information sources/websites

www.audit-commission.gov.uk	View national reports, performance indicators etc.
www.cipfa.org.uk	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
www.communities.gov.uk	Department for Communities and Local Government
www.doh.gov.uk	Department of Health
www.dss.gov.uk	Department of Social Security
www.dwp.gov.uk	Department of Work and Pensions
www.english-heritage.org.uk	English Heritage
www.foodstandards.gov.uk	Food Standards Agency
www.harborough.gov.uk	Harborough District Council website
www.harboroughchamber.co.uk	Market Harborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce
www.harboroughhomes.org.uk	Harborough Homeseach website
www.harboroughwaste.co.uk	Commercial waste services
www.hmce.gov.uk	HM Customs and Excise Information service
www.homeoffice.gov.uk	Home Office
www.hse.gov.uk	Health and Safety Executive
www.idea.gov.uk	Information and Development Agency
www.info4local.gov.uk	Website run by 5 central government departments. Latest government publications and has a useful 'email alert' feature
www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk	Inland Revenue
www.iwm.co.uk	Institute of Waste Management - represents 4,000 waste management professionals
www.jrf.org.uk	Joseph Rowntree Foundation - UK's largest independent social policy research and development charity
www.leics.gov.uk	Leicestershire County Council
www.leicestershiretogether.org	Leicestershire Together is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Leicestershire This is the website of the LSP and also contains information on the Leicestershire LAA
www.lganet.gov.uk	Provides access to all Local Government Association websites
www.official-documents.co.uk	Locates official documents easily. Provides access to material published by The Stationery Office and other authoritative bodies
www.open.gov.uk	First entry point to UK public sector information. Has links to all government departments and other public sector websites
www.ukstate.com	Information about current events in Parliament. Includes a feature that enables you to find out about your local MP

Statement on Contracts

The Local Government Act 1999 requires councils to state and certify that all individual contracts involving transfers of staff comply, where applicable, with the requirements in the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.

The council hereby certifies that there has been one contract awarded during the financial year 2008/09 which involved staff originally transferred out from Harborough District Council as a result of outsourcing being TUPE transferred to a new provider under a retender of the contract.

The contract complied with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Contracts.

National Indicators

Community Cohesion and Wellbeing Portfolio

Performance Indicator	What we measured	What we said we would achieve	What we achieved	
LPI 104	Harborough Home Search - Percentage of home seeker registration forms input on register within three working days of receipt	97%	95.87%	
LPI 110 (formerly BV214)	Repeat homelessness	0%	0%	
LPI 204 (Serco)	Leisure & Sports centre patronage	1,077,048	1,054,632	
LPI 205 (Serco)	Net cost per visit	£0.15	£0.12	
LPI 206a (Serco)	Annual patronage (wetside)	428,265	434,762	
LPI 206b (Serco)	Annual patronage (dryside)	300,649	269,925	
LPI 206c (Serco)	Annual patronage (health and fitness)	348,179	354,778	
LPI 206e (Serco)	Conversion rate from GP Referral to member	26	29	
LPI 208 (Serco)	Number of complaints	128	121	
LPI 209 (Serco)	Number of compliments	60	46	
LPI 210 (Serco)	Secondary spend per head	£0.30	£0.29	
LPI 212a (Serco)	Number of reported accidents (RIDDOR)	10	2	
LPI 212b (Serco)	Number of reported accidents (Non -RIDDOR)	411	384	
LPI 219	Active together	650	760	
LPI 220a	Centre Stage Scheme: voluntary promoters	10	21	
LPI 220c	Centre Stage Scheme: performances	20	23	
LPI 221	HDSAA	6,200	34,212	
LPI 223	Open Studios	20	29	
LPI 224	Arts Display Boards Loan Scheme	15	17	
LPI 225	Park events	8	9	
LPI 226	Work experience opportunities	3	3	
LPI 227 (formerly BV170a)	Visits to museum	7,000	6,771	
LPI 228a 9	Youth Games: coaching sessions	100	21	
LPI 228b	Youth Games: no of teams entered	100	27	
LPI 228c	Youth Games: number participating	100	892	
LPI 229	Tennis for Free	50	48	
LPI 230a	Healthy walks: people participating	94	135	
LPI 230b	Increase Healthy Walks by 2	14	14	
LPI 605	Decent Homes	50	62	

	On target		Above target		Below target
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Community Engagement and Customer Services Portfolio

Performance Indicator	What we measured	What we said we would achieve	What we achieved	
	Customer Satisfaction by Channel - face to face (LPI)	70%	89.27%	
	Customer Satisfaction by Channel - telephone (LPI)	70%	93.66%	
	Customer Satisfaction by Channel - web (LPI)	70%	58.51%	
	Customer Satisfaction by Service - Benefits (LPI)	70%	94.67%	
	Customer Satisfaction by Service - Council Tax (LPI)	70%	93.97%	
	Customer Satisfaction by Service - Environmental Services (LPI)	70%	87.74%	
	Customer Satisfaction by Service - Housing (LPI)	70%	84.95%	
	Customer Satisfaction by Service - other devices (LPI)	70%	72.49%	
	Customer Satisfaction by Service - Planning and Building Control (LPI)	70%	63.65%	
	Customer Satisfaction by Service - Streets and Parking (LPI)	70%	75.48%	
	Customer Satisfaction by Service - Waste Collection and Recycling (LPI)	70%	87.88%	
LPI 403	Lifeline - percentage of calls answered within 60 seconds	70%	96.43%	
LPI 405	Percentage of visits to non council Lifeline users carried out this month	95%	97.09%	
LPI 406	Customer satisfaction	70%	87.35%	
LPI 407a	Percentage of customers using GovMetric Face to Face (Panel)	20%	4.64%	
LPI 407b	Percentage of customers using GovMetric (from the Call Centre)	20%	6.63%	
LPI 408	Percentage satisfaction with website (GovMetric)	70%	58.51%	
LPI 409	Percentage satisfaction with telephone (GovMetric)	70%	93.66%	
LPI 410	Percentage satisfaction with face-to-face (GovMetric)	70%	89.27%	
LPI 411	Percentage of calls to be answered by the Call Centre within 13 seconds	90%	81.19%	
LPI 412	Percentage of enquiries dealt with on a 'one stop' basis - telephone	90%	85.56%	
LPI 413	Percentage of enquiries dealt with on a 'one stop' basis - face-to-face	85%	97.82%	
LPI 414	Percentage of calls answered council-wide within 13 seconds	90%	89.46%	
LPI 415	Percentage of calls abandoned on the call centre	2%	11.50%	
LPI 416	Percentage of calls abandoned council-wide on the Primary Service Area contact numbers	5%	3.77%	
LPI 417	Replying to letters and faxes within 10 working days	60%	43%	

	On target		Above target		Below target
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Community Engagement and Customer Services Portfolio (cont'd)

Performance Indicator	What we measured	What we said we would achieve	What we achieved	
LPI 418	Responding to emails within five days	95%	100%	
LPI 419	Percentage of voicemails responded to within one day	95%	92.91%	
LPI 420	Percentage of all back office telephone calls diverted to voicemail	17%	11.50%	
LPI 421	Percentage of customers transferred to GovMetric from the Call Centre	20%	10%	
LPI 422	Lifeline - Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds	95%	91.73%	
LPI 102	Percentage of householder applications determined in eight weeks	85%	88.89%	

Community Safety and Enforcement Services Portfolio

Performance Indicator	What we measured	What we said we would achieve	What we achieved	
LPI 202 (formerly BV175)	Racial incidents resulting in further action	100%	100%	
LPI 203	Number of businesses that belong to the HART scheme	105	95	
LPI 217 (formerly BV225)	Actions Against Domestic Violence	63.64%	63.64%	
LPI 218a	Percentage of CCTV requests by police that were responded to	99.99%	100%	
LPI 218c	CCTV Live monitoring per month.	18.00%	22.13%	
LPI 601	Environmental Health - complaints responded to within five days	95.00%	94%	
LPI 602	Proportion of complaint investigations completed within 30 days	50.00%	74.35%	
LPI 603	Education Initiatives	35	39	
LPI 604	Pollution prevention and control	99.99%	103%	
LPI 606	Food premise inspections	99.99%	101%	
LPI 607	Health and Safety	3	4	
LPI 609	Vehicle application for a private hire/hackney carriage	99.99%	100%	
LPI 610	Drivers licence for a private hire/hackney carriage	99.99%	92.96%	
LPI 611	Health promotion	12	16	
LPI 612	Fixed Penalty Notices	99.99%	100%	

	On target		Above target		Below target
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Corporate Service Portfolio

Performance Indicator	What we measured	What we said we would achieve	What we achieved	
LPI 207(Serco)	Energy Consumption per square metre	4.91	4.87	
LPI 301 (formerly 17)	Executive minutes produced within seven days of meeting	84%	85%	
LPI 302 (formerly 18)	Scrutiny Panel notes produced within seven days of meeting	80%	85.29%	
LPI 303 (formerly 19)	Development Control minutes produced within seven days of meeting	80%	94%	
LPI 304	Percentage of Standards Committee minutes produced within 18 days of the meeting	99.99%	100%	
LPI 305	Percentage of Full Council minutes produced within 18 days of the meeting	80%	84.62%	
LPI 315	Percentage of articles in the media relating to the Council which are either positive or neutral	75%	85.54%	
LPI 316	The number of press releases produced per quarter	46	51	
LPI 317	The number of service areas producing a press release per quarter	32	68	
LPI 318	The number of teams featured in in the Monthly Focus of Harborough News	8	10	
LPI 320a (formerly BV2a)	Equality Standard for Local Government	2	2	
LPI 320b (formerly BV2b)	Race Equality Scheme score	63	63	
LPI 401 i	Standard Searches within ten days	97.50%	100%	
LPI 401 ii	Standard Searches within five days	95%	98.60%	
LPI 401 iii	Standard Searches within three days	90%	91.97%	
LPI 402 (formerly 46)	The average number of days to turnaround a non-standard search request	5	2.47	
LPI 608	Premises licence application	99.99%	100%	
LPI 701	Percentage of appraisals completed	95%	89%	
LPI 702 (formerly BV12)	Working days lost due to sickness absence	8.33	8.3	
LPI 703	ICT system availability	96%	99.89%	
LPI 704	Response to helpdesk calls within one hour	90%	93.05%	

	On target	Above target	Below target
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Development and Future Opportunities Service Portfolio

Performance Indicator	What we measured	What we said we would achieve	What we achieved	
LPI 101	Housing Strategy - No. of units for which funding is secured	80	23	
LPI 103	Advertised departures from statutory plan approved	0%	0%	
LPI 107	Satisfaction with planning service	60%	90%	
LPI 108 (formally BV204)	Planning appeals	30%	28.57%	
LPI 109 (formally BV213)	Housing advice service: preventing homelessness	3.86	2	

Environmental Delivery Portfolio

Performance Indicator	What we measured	What we said we would achieve	What we achieved	
LPI 804a (formerly BV082a (i))	Percentage of household waste management (recycling)	18%	20.90%	
LPI 804b (formerly BV082a(ii))	Tonnage of household waste management (recycling)	7,000	7,238.71	
LPI 805a (formerly BV082b(i))	Percentage of household waste management (composting)	18%	34.46%	
LPI 805b (formerly BV082b(ii))	Tonnage of household waste management (composting)	10,355	11,934.52	
LPI 806 (formerly BV082)	Combined (recycling & composting)	36	55	
LPI 807a (formerly BV084a)	Household waste collection (kilograms per head)	480	425.9	
LPI 810a (formerly BV218a)	Abandoned vehicles	97%	100%	
LPI 810b (formerly BV218b)	Abandoned vehicles - removal	97%	94.74%	

Finance Portfolio

Performance Indicator	What we measured	What we said we would achieve	What we achieved	
LPI 503 (formerly BV008)	Percentage of invoices paid on time	97.50%	95.82%	
LPI 504a (formerly BV009)	Percentage of council tax collected	96.53%	98.33%	
LPI 505a (formerly BV010)	Percentage of non-domestic rates collected	99%	98.48%	
LPI 517	Fraud investigations	15	41	

	On target	Above target	Below target
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Contact details for Harborough District Council



Visit us: **Lutterworth Service Shop**
19-21 Market Street, Lutterworth

Wed: 1pm - 4.45pm
Thu/Fri: 8.45am - 4.45pm

Write to us or visit us: **Harborough District Council**
Council Offices
Adam & Eve Street
Market Harborough
Leicestershire LE16 7AG

Mon/Tues/Thu/Fri: 8.45am - 4.45pm
Wed: 9.30am - 4.45pm

Telephone us: **01858 82 82 82**

Fax us: **01858 82 10 00**

Text us: **07797 87 82 82**

Email us: **customer.services@harborough.gov.uk**

Access our services online:
www.harborough.gov.uk

This Annual Report is also available on request in large print, other languages and formats or on compact disc

Please contact us on **01858 82 82 82**

The Annual Report, Business Plan and all local and national performance indicators can also be viewed on www.harborough.gov.uk

All enquiries 01858 82 82 82