

We have met our targets for council tax and business rates collection and increased the number of direct payers, helping to keep the cost of collection down.



## Chapter 14 Resources

### Introduction

We have identified key challenges, tasks and performance improvements which are crucial to delivering the authority's corporate objectives. We have also set out our cross-cutting approach to balancing priorities, allocating and effectively managing limited resources to best ensure success. Our strategic aims and key objectives reflect and address our dual role as a provider of both essential frontline public services and specialist professional support, which we provide and develop within the context of the Council's core values: put service to the public first; respect all people and all communities; invest in employees; be open, honest and fair in all we do.

### Strategic objectives

#### Resources

Our vision is 'to promote modern governance, innovative service design, active citizenship and effective resource allocation by the best possible stewardship of the Council's people, finances and assets'. The strategic aims, set out below, help to support and deliver both the *Community Strategy* and the Council's corporate priorities:

- optimise our assets, resources and use of technology to deliver improved organisational performance and efficiency
- provide a clear strategic direction for aligning financial and management planning processes to support continuous service improvement
- maximise our potential for developing a flexible and responsive workforce to deliver modern, high quality services
- support colleagues across the authority and partner organisations to enhance our collective capacity, share knowledge and use best practice
- increase citizen participation in democratic processes, support elected members and enhance our communication with citizens, service users, partners and key stakeholders.

#### Public Services

As a result of 'Fast Forward', Public Services became one half of the newly created Customer Services Directorate, whose vision is 'delivering high quality, user focused services and driving improved customer service across the Council'. Their work links directly to the achievement of the new directorate's strategic aims:

- deliver excellent services for the people of Lewisham
- focus on significantly improving performance across our services
- work together across service boundaries to provide excellent support to the organisation through a range of specialist services
- working collaboratively, lead our efforts to refocus customer services around the needs of all sections of the community.

## Performance against 2005/06 top level commitments

### Use of resources

We are involved in a range of improvement processes, initiatives, development projects and programmes which have helped the Council achieve an overall comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) score of 3 out of 4 for 'use of resources'.

These improvements have had an impact across the scope of our strategic and operational services and as part of this we:

- continued to develop our asset management strategy, designed to achieve strategic and operational efficiency
- provided proactive project management for the Efficiency Programme – bringing together a number of support and organisation-wide service improvements to deliver current and future efficiencies
- built on our work to ensure financial plans and budget decisions are consistent with policy objectives
- improved objective financial advice across the Council
- improved the quality of budget-holder financial management skills and compliance with systems and controls

- supported the modernisation of Council services through the exploitation of information and communication technologies and the re-engineering of business processes
- supported initiatives aimed at bridging the 'digital divide' and connecting the people and businesses of Lewisham with the information age
- developed and supported staff through a range of learning and development opportunities
- continued to enable and encourage flexible working to integrate effective people and asset management
- undertook significant work through the implementation of the customer services review to achieve a generic, consistent 'One Council' approach
- introduced active council-wide complaints management to influence and enhance service development and delivery
- made improvements to the overall performance and cost-effectiveness of the Council's customer services.

## Other key achievements in 2005/06

### People management

'Fast Forward 2005' resulted in a new organisational structure based around five directorates, allowing the Council to become more flexible and adaptive and putting local communities and service users at the centre of service design.

We established new organisational arrangements to:

- group services so they realise positive synergies
- have a few simple and clear management layers
- deliver a relentless focus on improving service performance and motivate people towards change for improvement.

We forged ahead with the modernisation of our recruitment processes, helping to strengthen Lewisham's position as 'an employer of choice'. A programme of employer branding through the 'Wish' campaign improved consistency and quality across our recruitment advertisements. This was integrated with greater use of the internet as a media source and mechanism for online job applications. We also developed a partnership arrangement with Job Centre Plus to encourage and promote access to employment opportunities for local people.

We have remained in the London top quartile for the number of black and minority ethnic staff in the top 5% of senior posts and moved from third to first in the London top quartile for the number of staff across the Council from black and ethnic minorities.

We wanted to increase leadership capacity and strengthen our practical approach to succession planning, so we provided places on our managerial leadership programme for 120 senior managers while 50 junior and middle managers completed management development courses. We also undertook a review of acting up, deputising and secondment practices to ensure equal access to development opportunities.

It is crucial that we have an enthusiastic, motivated and committed workforce if we are to continuously improve the services we deliver. We undertook 'Talkback 2006', our staff survey, so we know as an employer the areas in which we're doing well and where we need to make improvements.

### Public Services

Public Services deliver the Council's customer services through Call Point and Access Points, pay housing and council tax benefits and collect revenues. They are also responsible for Registration Services, corporate complaints, internal communications, the Front Line Academy and emergency planning. As a result of 'Fast Forward', Public Services have a key role in the drivers for organisational change: acting as 'One Council', meeting customer needs and being performance focused.

This enhanced corporate position has enabled Public Services to build on an already well-established base with significant and nationally recognised achievements. The internal communications team have played and will continue to play a vital role in supporting the Council through the 'Fast Forward' changes.



Our Benefits Service is still regarded as one of the best in London and has government pathfinder status. It achieved and continues to maintain a comprehensive performance assessment rating of 4, the highest score. Funding from the Department of Work and Pensions enabled us to implement a campaign which not only improved benefits take-up but also allowed us to maximise the use of benefit subsidy awarded to us.

The division gained some new services during 2005/06. Registration Services joined Customer Services from Regeneration, while Access Point now offers additional services like travel pass applications and the purchase of controlled parking zone permits. The Registration Service established the provision of new civil partnership ceremonies.

We have worked collaboratively to help others improve their services. Our review of adult social care telephone services resulted in a host of recommendations designed to improve the quality and efficiency of this vital service for vulnerable people. More effective management of comments, compliments and complaints has positively contributed to improved satisfaction levels with many aspects of the way we deliver services.

The Emergency Planning Service implemented the civil contingencies legislation, working across the Council to help with its business continuity arrangements. They ran a successful campaign to raise awareness for those living and working in the borough, so they know how to remain safe and get help if things go wrong.

A full business process re-engineering programme led to the upgrade of our document imaging and workflow system ahead of our plan to replace the council tax and housing benefits mainframe systems. This ICT improvement programme will continue to result in improved customer services at reduced costs.

In addition we also:

- met our targets for council tax and business rates collection and increased the number of direct debit payers, helping to keep the costs of collection down
- improved the quality of our Call Point service by implementing 'queue buster'
- implemented a housing benefit 'e-claim' process and introduced a 'while you wait' benefits claims service as part of the Access Point range of services
- led the development of an A-Z of council services, enabling more generic, joined-up working through knowledge management for frontline staff.

#### **Electronic service delivery**

We maintained a sharp focus on helping to deliver Lewisham's priorities by responding to established business cases, exploiting the knowledge we have gained through our involvement in national projects and fully utilising all the products which make up the national e-government programme. Some of our key achievements included:

- leading and coordinating e-government and ICT activities across local authorities and partner organisations, establishing e-government and ICT strategies and an e-investment programme
- continuing our involvement in national/regional projects, partnerships and initiatives but with a sharper focus on Lewisham's needs and benefits
- completing the ICT desktop infrastructure roll out, equipping all staff to optimise the potential for efficiency, flexibility and effective working

- initiating the re-procurement process for the Council's ICT contracts
- a relaunch of the Council's website based on a sound content management system
- establishing robust information management across the Council, including policies and processes for compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Data Protection Act (1998)
- helping the Mayor to achieve his priorities around a 'wireless borough', with support for London Connects, the London Portal and other Local Strategic Partnership priorities for connecting the community.

#### **Key commitments for 2006/07**

##### **Use of resources**

We have developed a clear action plan to address a number of areas highlighted for improvement through the 2005 comprehensive performance assessment and audit process for 'use of resources'. The auditors concluded that:

- the Council's financial position is strong
- it has sound arrangements for the preparation of its revenue budget, capital programme and Financial Survey
- the commitment to achieving its efficiency, effectiveness and equity agenda has seen a 10% increase (2003 to 2004) in residents' views that the Council provides good value for money.

We want to ensure that we are able to consolidate our score of 3 and establish a solid platform to move us from 3 to 4 by concentrating on a number of key tasks like:

- greater scrutiny and challenge of the accounts
- ensuring that the internal audit function is fully compliant with CIPFA standards
- fully embedding risk management.



### People management

We will continue our work in developing the flexible and responsive workforce needed to deliver modern, high quality services. Building on our success over the past year in modernising recruitment, we plan to exploit the options for shared recruitment arrangements with some of the borough's other public sector employers to create greater efficiencies and help promote best practice. We are also keen to explore how joint procurement for the commissioning and delivery of training might maximise efficiencies for the Council and its partners. This work has already started and we are working in partnership with Lewisham College to deliver shared recruitment and e-learning.

We will continue to build capacity in the workforce, so staff have the opportunity to realise their potential and apply for senior positions through wider promotion of the management and leadership development programmes. We plan to develop and implement an action plan as a result of the views expressed through the staff survey 'Talkback 2006'. Absence management remains a priority for 2006/07 and the new programme of actions launched in 2005 will continue.

We face a number of challenges for 2006/07 in common with other support services which will reshape the way we provide human resources services. The impact of the Decent Homes agenda, along with the review of the Housing Revenue Account, could substantially impact on our ability to provide traditional HR services. We recognise that we need to provide greater efficiency in transactions with swifter, less resource-intensive ways of working. We are aiming to create the right balance in terms of regulation versus flexibility, and further work will be carried out to explore how managers can assume greater responsibilities for their people management duties.

### Public Services

We will continue driving forward the vision for 'excellent' customer services across the borough, setting out a clear strategy for action, working collaboratively to deliver joined-up services, seeking out new opportunities to improve service access for local people, while all the time improving cost effectiveness and efficiency. We know customers are beginning to notice a consistent look and feel to Lewisham's services regardless of provider and location, and we want to continue to foster and implement that 'One Council' approach for services.

We intend to maintain our maximum CPA score, aiming to secure top quartile performance in all Best Value performance indicators (BVPIs) relating to benefits processing. Our continuing objective is to provide an effective and secure housing benefit and council tax benefit service that is:

- customer-focused, modern and efficient
- speedy and accurate
- secure, reducing the risks of fraud and error
- supporting claimants to live in decent housing.

A priority for 2006/07 will be the replacement of the council tax and housing benefits mainframe systems, which will lead to both improved services for customers and improved efficiencies for the Council.

We want to continue driving forward 'knowledge management' on behalf of the Council, and we will continue to prepare for the 2007 opening of Service Point, a mini-Access Point in the new Downham Centre. An upgrade of the Telly Talk service will enable the division to work with even more partners across the public and private sectors. Building on the popularity and success of our citizenship ceremonies, the Registration Service hopes to begin delivering a nationality checking service, working in partnership with the Home Office.

We will concentrate on reducing absence across frontline services and pilot flexible working for some of our key back office functions.

### Electronic service delivery

We want to continue to focus on Lewisham's priorities, building on established business cases and strengthening information management across the Council. We will continue to maintain strong links in support of SEaLEGS and London Connects.

2006/07 will see the transition into new ICT contracts and a further rationalisation of IT applications. SharePoint, combined with the e-change programme, will form a major and ground-breaking mechanism to further facilitate joined-up working and we will explore 'extranet' facilities to widen the potential user base.

We are developing a corporate workflow tool which will allow electronic work to be automatically routed and processed and work queues and management data to be generated. The use of *Local Land and Property Gazetteer* and a corporate Geographical Information System in key service areas will enable the creation of a master property address list that dynamically updates back office systems and a mapping tool to present geographical locations as web-based maps.

We plan to implement a corporate e-payments solution supported by online account enquiry and an online booking facility for meeting rooms, leisure, registration and similar services. We will roll out the Starters, Movers and Leavers tool to provide a single point of contact for notifying staff changes and provide support to Learning and Development around e-learning.



## Resources

Best value ref no.	Indicator	Lewisham performance			Comparative performance in other areas					Lewisham targets				Performance against target
		Actual 2003/04	Actual 2004/05	Actual 2005/06	Best England quartile 04/05	Best London quartile 04/05	Greenwich 04/05	Southwark 04/05	Bromley 04/05	Target 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	
<b>The Council as an employer</b>														
BV12	working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per FTE employee	10.03	11.11	9.96	8.4	7.92	11.1	9.17	7.8	9.85	8.9	8.4 (8)	8	on target
BV14	early retirements (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce	0.49%	0.46%	1.10%	0.16%	0.17%	0.49%	0.61%	0%	0.45%	1% (0.44%)	1% (0.40%)	1%	way off target
BV15	ill-health retirements as a percentage of the total workforce	0.49%	0.33%	0.15%	0.12%	0.20%	0.49%	0.18%	0.40%	0.35%	0.2% (0.30%)	0.2% (0.27%)	0.2%	well exceeds target
BV16a	percentage of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act disability definition	9.63%	8.46%	7.64%	3.73%	3.96%	1.80%	1.28%	7.20%	10.2%	8% (10.4%)	9% (10.6%)	10%	way off target
BV11a	percentage of top 5% of earners that are women	52.40%	51.09%	54.90%	40.23%	46.75%	46.70%	35.82%	32%	51%	50%	50%	50%	exceeds target
BV11b	percentage of staff in top 5% of earners from black and ethnic minorities	13.37%	17.67%	15.28%	3.48%	16.30%	14.90%	17.16%	6.50%	18%	18.30%	18.30% (18.60%)	18.30%	way off target
BV17a	percentage of staff from ethnic minorities	26.83%	27.54%	29.13%	4.60%	35.30%	16.80%	37.30%	6.90%	30%	31% (28%)	32%	33%	on target
local	proportion of BEM staff (standard equality categories) who leave the organisation compared with the overall proportion in the workforce (PO6 and above)	new for 2004/05	6.90%	10%						10%	8% (10%)	8% (10%)	8%	on target
local	proportion of BEM staff (standard equality categories) who obtain internal promotion compared with the overall proportion in the workforce (PO6 and above)	new for 2004/05	15.79%	22.20%						17%	21% (19%)	21%	21%	well exceeds target
BV11c	percentage of staff in top 5% of earners with a disability		new for 2005/06	9.27%						9%	9.5%	10%	10%	on target

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local	proportion of Disabled staff (standard equality categories) who obtain internal promotion compared with the overall proportion in the workforce (PO6 and above)	new for 2004/05	5.26%	6.17%										10%	10.5%	11%	11%	way off target	
local	proportion of Disabled staff (standard equality categories) who leave the organisation compared with the overall proportion in the workforce (PO6 and above)	new for 2004/05	9.70%	14.81%										10%	8% (10%)	8% (10%)	8%	way off target	
local	council jobs gained by young people under 25 as a percentage of junior level appointments (scales 6 - S01)	new for 2004/05	18.42%	11.90%										18.50%	14% (19%)	15% (19.5%)	16%	way off target	
local	council jobs gained by young people under 25 as a percentage of junior level appointments (scales 1 - 5)	32%	32.98%	31.03%										33.50%	31% (34%)	31% (35%)	31%	off target	
<b>Housing and Council Tax benefits</b>																			
BV76a	number of claimants visited per 1,000 caseload	363	221	224	282.16	264.82	211	473.05	245.01	343	228 (360)	232 (378)	236						
BV76b	number of fraud Investigators employed per 1,000 caseload	0.27	0.28	0.24			0.3	0.24	0.16	0.28	0.24 (0.28)	0.24 (0.28)	0.24						
BV76c	number of fraud investigations, per 1,000 caseload	45	34.28	25.25	53.4	33.02	27.91	12.1	18.04	37	20 (37)	20 (37)	20						
BV76d	number of prosecutions and sanctions, per 1,000 caseload	2.8	2.25	4.94	5.31	3.25	2.91	1.2	2.17	2.7	4.60 (3)	4.60 (3.3)	4.60						
BV78a	average time for processing new benefits claims (days)	40	35.98	31.37	29.38	38.5	38	39	42	34	33	32	30						exceeds target

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BV78b	average days for processing notifications of changes of circumstance (benefits)	7	10.79	8.58	7.4	11.1	14	12	21	9	8.5	8	7.5	on target
BV79a	percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct on the basis of the information available to the determination, for a sample of cases checked post-determination	98.4%	98%	98%	99%	98%	97.2%	94.8%	98%	98.6%	98.7%	98.8%	98.9%	on target
BV79b (i)	Housing Benefit overpayments recovered during the year as a percentage of the Housing Benefit overpayments during the year		amended for 2005/06	78.03%						21%	55% (22%)	60% (23%)	65%	well exceeds target
BV79b (ii)	Housing Benefit overpayments recovered during the year as a percentage of the total amount of Housing Benefit overpayment debt at the start of the year plus then Housing Benefit overpayments identified during the year		amended for 2005/06	29.18%						6.50%	15% (7%)	17% (7.5%)	20%	well exceeds target
BV79b (iii)	Housing Benefit overpayments written off during the year as a percentage of the total amount of Housing Benefit overpayment debt at the start of the year plus then Housing Benefit overpayments identified during the year		amended for 2005/06	4.85%						1.50%	4% (2%)	4.5% (2.5%)	5%	

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<b>Council tax and revenues</b>														
BV8	percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days	66%	85.7%	88.47%	96%	90.2%	87.5%	90.5%	85.4%	92%	92%	92%	92%	on target
BV9	proportion of Council Tax collected	93.7%	93.7%	94%	98.3%	95.9%	93.7%	93.2%	97.2%	95%	95%	95.9%	95.9%	on target
BV10	percentage of business rates which should have been received during the year that were received	98.9%	98.5%	98.92%	99.1%	98.8%	96.7%	98%	98.7%	99.1%	99.2%	99.2%	99.3%	on target
<b>Contacting the Council</b>														
local	calls answered within 15 seconds - Call Centre	88%	90.3%	86.50%						91%	91%	91%	91%	on target
local	visitors to AccessPoint seen within 30 minutes	89%	90.6%	89.90%						90.6%	91%	91% (90.6%)	91%	on target
local	average waiting time at AccessPoint (minutes)	12.1	11.15	11.59						11.15	11 (11.15)	11	11	on target
BV157	percentage of interactions with the public that are capable of electronic service delivery that are being delivered via the internet or other paperless methods	98.60%	99.70%	98.30%	88%	92%	96%	88%	100%	100%	deleted			on target
<b>Resident satisfaction. The best value user satisfaction survey takes place every three years.</b>														
BV80a	percentage overall satisfied with facilities to get in touch with the benefits office - all claimants (based on 418 respondents, confidence interval +/-4.5%)	68%			83%	72.75%	68%	69%	60%		70%			
BV80b	percentage overall satisfied with the service in the actual benefits office - all claimants (based on 595 respondents, confidence interval +/-4%)	68%			85%	77%	72%	72%	68%		70%			

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BV80c	percentage overall satisfied with the telephone service at the benefits office - all claimants (based on 218 respondents, confidence interval +/-7%)	47%			77%	55%	55%	43%	46%		49%			
BV80d	percentage overall satisfied with the staff in the benefits office - all claimants (based on 626 respondents, confidence interval +/-4%)	68%			76%	68.75%	68%	67%	52%		70%			
BV80e	percentage overall satisfied with the clarity and understandability of forms, leaflets and letters used by the benefits service - all claimants (based on 621 respondents, confidence interval +/-4%)	64%			67%	67.75%	65%	66%	51%		66%			
BV80f	percentage overall satisfied with the time it took to tell them whether their claim was successful - all claimants (based on 623 respondents, confidence interval +/-3.7%)	64%			76%	68.75%	68%	67%	52%		66%			
BV80g	percentage overall satisfied with the benefits service - all claimants (based on 627 respondents, confidence interval +/-3.5%)	73%			83%	75.75%	76%	74%	62%		75%			
local	percentage of people who feel they are kept informed by the Council	61%	65%	67%						67%	70%	71%	72%	

note: figures in brackets denote previous years targets