

**Inspection report**

**January 2004**

# **Comprehensive performance assessment**

**Havant Borough Council**

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**Audit Commission**

1 Vincent Square London SW1P 2PN  
Telephone 020 7828 1212 Fax 020 7976 6187  
[www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)

## Introduction

- 1 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is part of the wider agenda set out in the Local Government White Paper *Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services*. The White Paper encourages greater focus on improved services for local people by freeing good councils from central government controls and restrictions, and providing poorer councils with more, and better focused, support for improvement. CPA is the first step in this process, that of making an overall judgement of where each council stands.
- 2 This report presents an analysis of the council's overall performance as well as two short diagnostic assessments which cover important areas of responsibility. It also includes an assessment of the council's benefit service by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate, and the appointed auditor's assessment of performance on each of the main elements of the code of audit practice. The appendices to this report set out further details on the findings of these assessments and the framework for CPA.
- 3 The official version of this report is also available on the Audit Commission's website at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk) . The Audit Commission cannot verify the accuracy of and is not responsible for material contained in this report which has been reproduced by another organisation or individual.

## Summary of Comprehensive Performance Assessment judgements

- 4 Havant Borough Council is a good and improving council in the middle of a change programme. The council is providing a strong drive in seeking to make the borough cleaner, safer and more prosperous. It is using its wide powers in economic regeneration by working with businesses and public sector partners to make improvements to poor areas. The priorities set by the council are based on a wide range of consultations with the community, partners and government and achieve a good balance between national and local priorities. However, its approach to diversity is patchy, with some successes with hard-to-reach groups like young people, but not fully engaging the small black and minority ethnic population. It knows what are not priorities. Resources are increasingly targeted to priority areas and it continues to test the validity of its priorities with residents. Spend allocations between the corporate and community strategies are currently being recast to make these links clearer.
- 5 Councillors, managers and staff are generally skilled, enthusiastic, confident and work effectively together. They display mutual respect and have a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities and are proud to serve Havant. Councillors of all parties focus on long-term community gain and are willing to work on priorities like crime and disorder that are vital yet politically sensitive. However, councillors are taking time to re-adjust from a balanced council to one with a majority party in power, and they have yet to come to terms with the fact that challenge will be able to be delivered without having to become confrontational. The council is developing an organisational culture that focuses on delivering tangible results through work with staff on vision and values. The current restructuring is causing a level of anxiety among staff.
- 6 The council has established effective links between its ambitions, its learning processes and its future plans. The current community strategy priorities inform the best value performance plan and progress in achieving these priorities is effectively communicated internally and externally. The local strategic partnership (LSP) is reviewing whether the community strategy is still relevant though will not report until the middle of 2004. The council has designed an improvement plan based on the three corporate themes linked to the community strategy, plus strategies to improve corporate effectiveness. The plan covers wider regeneration of poorer areas, reducing the fear of crime, and continuing the phased introduction of wheeled recycling bins to all households in the borough. It also deals with internal issues like improving the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny boards, building ownership of change and addressing capacity, and ensuring that the performance management system is used to drive service improvement.
- 7 The council has an inconsistent performance management process. Service, rather than corporate, priorities are cascaded through directorates and the council monitors achievement against these priorities and takes action when there is a decline in standards. Staff appraisals are currently inconsistent in their coverage.

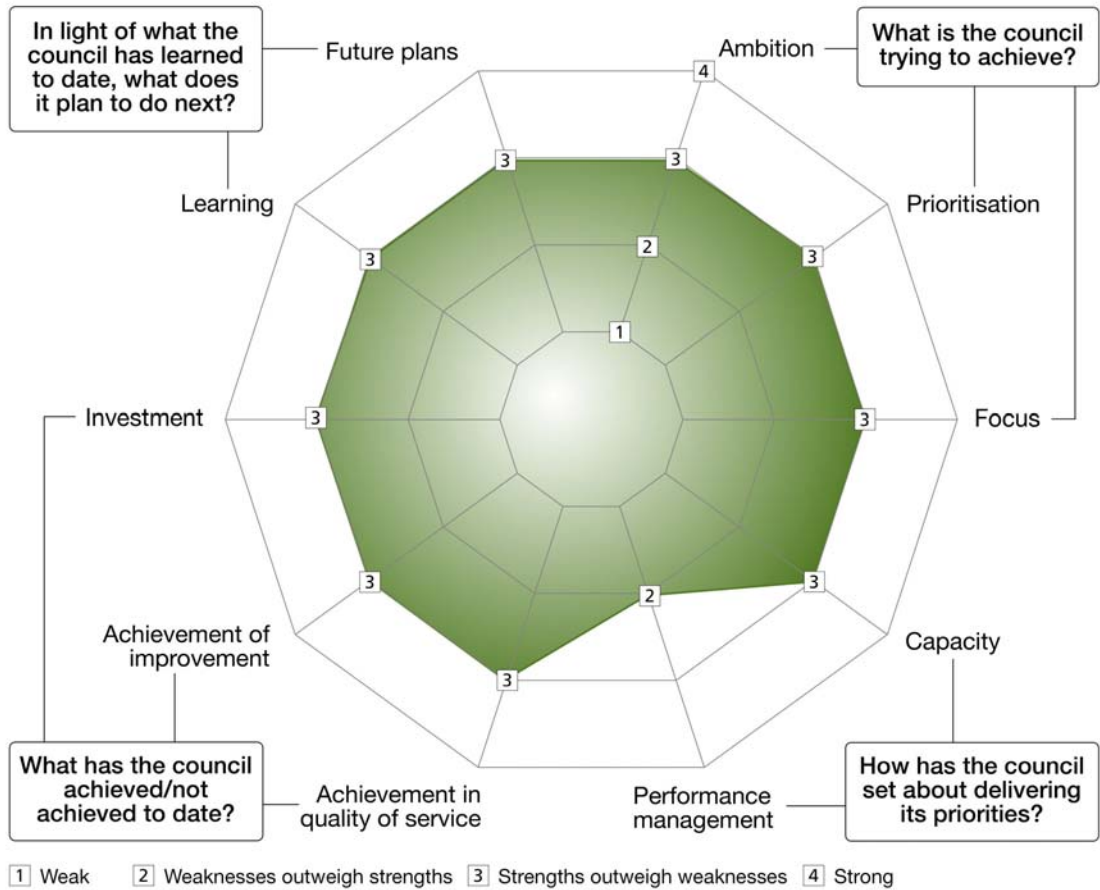
- 8 The council has a number of effective strategies and policies that have been developed to drive future improvements to service delivery, including consultation strategies. However, a number of strategies such as communications and the corporate procurement strategy are relatively new and have yet to bed in. Risk management is strong.
- 9 The council is aware of its successes and what remains to be achieved. It consults external partners such as businesses well, though it has yet to assess the value of the 139 partners it currently has. It is outward-looking and uses benchmarking and constructive links with other councils to influence its strategies. Scrutiny is in the process of being strengthened, using learning from councillors about how to make the most of their contribution, particularly the role of backbenchers in policy development. The council has the building blocks in place to maintain improvement.

## Summary of assessment scores

Top level question	Theme	Grade	Weighted score
What is the council trying to achieve?	Ambition	3	3
	Prioritisation	3	3
	Focus	3	3
How has the council set about delivering its priorities?	Capacity	3	3
	Performance management	2	2
What has the council achieved/not achieved to date?	Achievement in quality of service	3	9
	Achievement of improvement	3	9
	Investment	3	6
In light of what the council has learned to date, what does it plan to do next?	Learning	3	3
	Future plans	3	3
<b>Weighted score</b>			<b>44</b>
<b>Corporate assessment category</b>			<b>Good</b>

Diagram illustrating the themes and scores for Havant Borough Council

### Havant Borough Council



## Recommendations

10 It is recommended that the council:

- ◆ actively and promptly shares the findings of this assessment with the public, partner organisations, councillors and staff; and
- ◆ uses the strengths and weaknesses identified in this report as the basis for its improvement planning.

## Context

### The locality

- 11 Havant lies on the south coast, within the south-east corner of Hampshire adjoining the boundary with West Sussex and is within a largely urban area based around the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth. The borough does not have a single dominant urban centre, being made of Havant, Waterlooville, Emsworth, Hayling Island, and Leigh Park. The borough has excellent communications by rail and road to London and along the south coast. The communications network is dominated by private car travel for leisure, shopping and work-related activity. The current population of the borough is 116,800.
- 12 The number of people from non-white ethnic groups (3.06 per cent) is low compared to the national average (13.01 per cent). Havant has a relatively old population, with 45 per cent of residents aged 45 years and over (compared to a national average of 40 per cent). The under-representation of residents in the core 24-44 year age group gives cause for concern in the light of their enterprise and skills contributions to the local economy, and their role in new family and household formation.
- 13 Havant has a high level of deprivation relative to the region and nationally, giving it a rank of 248<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of 354 English councils (62<sup>nd</sup> most deprived out of the 67 councils in the South East). The four wards that make up Leigh Park are among the 35 most deprived in the South East, and only Thanet and Hastings have more wards in this category.
- 14 The average total annual income of Havant residents falls below the national average. The borough is ranked 173<sup>rd</sup> in the national league table of local annual income. More positively, house prices and multiple car ownership are above the national average. Overall, Havant is relatively prosperous by national standards, but it compares unfavourably with the South East and Hampshire and Isle of Wight averages.
- 15 Havant suffers less from crime than the national average on all indicators, and it is the 192<sup>nd</sup> 'safest' council in England and Wales. Havant recorded 31 crimes per 1,000 inhabitants between October 2001 and September 2002, fewer than the national average but above the figure for the sub-region. It performed best on the measure of burglaries, with only 3.5 burglaries per 1,000 households. More negatively, the borough has relatively high rates of both vehicle crime and violent crime with rates well above those of the region and the sub-region.

### The council

- 16 The borough has a Conservative administration and political makeup of the council following elections in May 2002 is: 23 Conservative councillors, 8 Labour councillors, and 7 Liberal Democrat councillors. The election resulted in a shift from a balanced council to Conservative control.

- 17 The council adopted a leader, executive and scrutiny model in June 2001. Individual executive councillors have, during the current year, begun to exercise delegated decision making under an agreed delegation scheme. The Executive has 7 councillors including the leader and meets on a three-weekly cycle. All of the portfolio councillors on the Executive are from the Conservative Group.
- 18 The council employs 460 staff. The council's net revenue budget for 2003/04 is £15.343 million and the capital expenditure for the same period will be £5.3 million. The band D council tax for 2003/04 for the council is £1,085.40 and represents an increase of 15.3 per cent over the previous year. The council has been debt-free since 1995, when it outsourced its housing stock, and it has cash reserves of nearly £5 million.
- 19 The peer challenge exercise for this inspection was undertaken by the IDeA and took place between 28 and 30 July 2003. It judged the council's strengths to be: building blocks of progress being delivered, stronger managerial and political leadership, increasing capacity of the organisation and a clear vision that enjoys a good level of awareness among staff, councillors and partners. Areas for improvement were: consulting hard-to-reach groups, clarifying roles of executive, overview scrutiny, and ward roles, and performance management.

## What is the council trying to achieve?

### Ambition

- 20 The council works well with partners to develop priorities, but its approach to social inclusion is not yet fully developed and not all higher-level ambitions have robust targets set. Strengths outweigh weaknesses in this area.
- 21 The council has a good record in engaging with stakeholders. Havant has had a community strategy since 2001, and the borough council was the key driver in producing it. The council also formed the LSP with community strategy partners, which has split into eight groups covering the eight current themes, and the LSP is due to publish a revised community strategy in 2004. From the community strategy, the council has derived clear, realistic priorities that partners recognise and support.
- 22 The eight community strategy priorities are:
- 'Strengthening our economy;
  - Enhancing our environment;
  - Making a safer community;
  - Enabling better housing;
  - Improving educational attainment and lifelong learning;
  - Promoting a healthier community;
  - Promoting social well-being; and
  - Working to engage young people.'
- 23 The council's corporate strategy is clearly derived from the community strategy and comprises sub-sets of three types of strategies: foundation strategies, local strategies, and organisational strategies. The overarching corporate priorities are for a 'Cleaner, safer, more prosperous' borough.
- 24 The council's corporate strategy is well supported by the council's medium-term capital and revenue plans, with agreed targets that are specific, measurable and backed by resources, with dates by which to measure success. The council is therefore making clear connections between its own and partners' priorities as a way of stating what is important for the residents of the borough.

- 25 The council gives clear leadership to strategies to build cohesive and sustainable communities. For example, it targets a range of activities, such as sports development, to work with socially excluded groups such as younger people and single parents in deprived wards. In line with national and local priorities, the council has set out a clear ambition to cut crime including the increased use of CCTV and antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs). However, on diversity, its strategy document contains a range of targets, but with broad explanations rather than specific, measurable, achievable, resourced and time-based (SMART) targets. Partners think that the disparity between the communities in the borough – from £1million properties to challenged social housing – makes it difficult to understand how the vision for local strategies relates to all those communities. Leadership to build cohesive and sustainable communities is not therefore fully effective.
- 26 Councillors, managers and staff offer strong leadership to the community and its own services. They are enthusiastic about, and have a good understanding of, the main council priorities and their respective roles in achieving them. Observation of meetings and discussions with these groups showed a consistent level of pride in council-provided services and a commitment to serve the people of Havant. Through work on recycling, the council has identified the potential for new small waste processing industries in Havant, which it is pursuing with the county council and others. Staff have produced a revised set of values for the council, based on the initials of the council:

Have respect for the individual

Be better and better

Commit to the community.

## Prioritisation

- 27 The council's approach to prioritisation is well considered though there is not a full appreciation of how the community and corporate strategies relate in terms of resource allocation. Strengths outweigh weaknesses.
- 28 Current corporate priorities are clearly stated and well researched. These priorities determine capital and revenue spend through a cascade process of filtering spending. The council is also clear about what are not its priorities. Reducing funding for concessionary travel, reducing highway maintenance and stopping certain out-of-hours services are examples of issues that have been designated non-priorities. The council uses a good range of consultation mechanisms such as 'Citizens Pulse' citizens' panels, a youth council, annual regular community partnership forums and a series of focus groups. These consultations have helped to shape what are and are not corporate priorities. The council responds well to issues raised by these forums. For example, the siting of a skate area, instigated at the request of the community, was changed expressly after consulting young people. Citizen complaints about bad behaviour among local groups in the Botley Drive area led to a range of responses, including the erection of CCTV within three months of the complaints. The council listens and acts on what residents say is important to improve.

- 29 Priorities are effectively communicated internally and externally. This process includes regular strategic meetings between officers and councillors and regular briefs to all employees including articles on the intranet. Priorities are published in a section in the council's *Serving You* newsletter, through the well-constructed website, the best value performance plan (BVPP) summary, and through the range of community forums.
- 30 The council has a clear method to rank bids for new capital spend against strategic priorities. But as yet it has not extended this scheme to revenue spend. It uses a project proposal form and the current revision of the form relates to the new corporate strategy. Each bid is scored in order to rank them against available funds.
- 31 The council moves resources to priorities. Through the council's medium-term financial strategy, annual 2 per cent efficiency savings have been reallocated to council priorities like crime prevention and increased recycling and away from spending on matters like funding for concessionary travel. Over £600,000 has been directed in the current financial year from lower to higher priorities. Funds gained externally have also to match policy priorities before they are sought; for example, the Liveability bid, related to the corporate priorities. Spend is therefore targeted to priorities.
- 32 National and local priorities are well balanced such as community safety strategy and environmental strategy. For example, burglaries are not high in Havant, but the public is concerned about vehicle crime in their communities, so the council is working with the community safety partnership and the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) to target hotspots, including the increased use of CCTV. Corporate priorities are reflected in service plans and there is a range of specific strategies to complement the over-arching priorities.
- 33 The overarching corporate priorities of 'cleaner, safer, more prosperous' are attributed to 100 per cent of both the capital and revenue spend. However, some of the spend, such as on housing and museums, could equally be attributable to other community strategy targets such as enabling better housing and lifelong learning. The council is recasting its spend profile to reconsider whether it should show spend based on corporate and community strategy targets. Citizens will then be better able to understand how the council's spend relates to more of the community strategy targets than it currently does.

## Focus

- 34 The council uses a number of effective methods to ensure it maintains a focus on delivering its priorities, though this is hampered by underdeveloped overview and scrutiny. Strengths outweigh weaknesses.
- 35 The council maintains its drive to deliver corporate priorities. The council has a history of concentrating on community safety, as residents have continually indicated its importance. With key partners, such as the police, the council is spending progressively more on this priority and achieving a substantial reduction of crime, especially in areas that are regarded as hotspots. In 2000, their persistence resulted in the Hampshire Police Authority's award for an Outstanding Contribution to Crime Prevention. Further work on hotspots has occurred each year since, including the growing use of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs).

- 36 Similarly, regenerating poorer areas like Leigh Park is seen as a way of improving the overall skills and income levels of the borough, and it is part of a long-term approach to economic development. Again, the council has used government and other partnerships to concentrate on this priority; for example, with Surestart, a newly opened family facility that trains people to work in pre-school education, thereby reducing unemployment.
- 37 The council has effective tools to sustain its focus on priority areas. These include heeding the results of regular consultations with the public; for example, through Community Pulse surveys of 1,500 residents. Also, there is a schedule for revising business plans, regular team meetings and away days to focus on particular issues that need a whole-organisation response. Agendas for formal meetings cover corporate as well as departmental business and action notes show decisions and progress and contribute to forward planning.
- 38 The council's new Change Development Programme (CDP) is a key driver for a more focused approach to its activities. The CDP features widely in communications with staff and is a focal point to engage staff on how best to deliver corporate priorities. The aims of the CDP include developing an improved focus on the customer, generating capacity to make significant improvements in service delivery and more effective use of resources.
- 39 Councillors maintain a generally strong focus. They are actively involved in partnerships and this has assisted them in understanding what matters most to local people and partners. For example, decisions taken thus far on decriminalised parking have been informed by the experiences of other councils that have already implemented such schemes. Portfolio holders maintain focus by being regularly briefed on progress against targets. This uses the risk management system where the traffic light system highlights areas of particularly good and particularly bad performance. But at this moment, portfolio holders' responsibilities are still based on departments' outputs, rather than cross-cutting strategic priorities, so their focus is not fully developed.

## How has the council set about delivering its priorities?

### Capacity

- 40 The council's capacity is boosted by good financial control, the CDP, and many good examples of partnership working. But new democratic arrangements have yet to become fully effective. Strengths outweigh weaknesses.
- 41 There is an enabling corporate centre especially over the last year. The council's senior management of officers and portfolio holders are capable, work well together and display mutual respect. Other councillors have yet to be developed to assume strategic roles. The council's core management systems are increasingly effective because there is good financial control and asset management. There is a clear drive to improve staff development and training and visible leadership and commitment to customer services. The council is debt free allowing freer use of resources. Its cash reserves are carefully maintained though the council has limited land holdings so raising capital through sales is a diminishing option. Procurement skills are reasonably well developed. Systems therefore enhance capacity.
- 42 The CDP is well led, executed and has clear objectives. The programme involves councillors effectively through the member issues group (MIG) and other working parties that are action-orientated, practical, and help councillors to develop their roles. However, staff are unable to see the end point of the CDP, with restructuring and related strategies yet to be finalised and this is causing some uncertainty. The council is managing this uncertainty effectively by undertaking to complete the staffing restructuring by the end of 2003.
- 43 The capacity of councillors is variable. Councillors are committed, open to learning and willing to get involved with staff and have been building sound relationships with neighbouring councils. Support for councillors is good and focused on increasing the capacity of the individual; for example, IT, induction, training and the mentoring system for new councillors. However, apart from portfolio holders, councillors are not yet fully operating in a strategic manner on direction, policies and budgets to deliver the council's key aims and objectives. The policy development role of overview and scrutiny is starting to be explored through the MIG and working parties; for example, producing recommendations to executive on the policy on bus and taxi tokens policies. But decision making can be slow, and councillors are not all comfortable with strategy, leaving this to portfolio holders. Also, communication with ward councillors is not yet satisfactory. This means that councillors are not yet operating to the maximum benefit to residents.
- 44 The council is improving its capacity through successful working with external agencies to explore ways to deliver priorities. For example, it works effectively with South East England Development Agency and Government Office for the South East on improved business opportunities for the area. It is also working with neighbouring local councils to explore alternative methods of service delivery – for example, procurement and partnering including in audit, payroll, building control, working with Portsmouth, Gosport, Fareham councils; and through Project Integra on waste management with the county council and other Hampshire councils. This means that the council does not needlessly replicate what are already successful practices of partners.

- 45 There are many good examples of partnership working to extend capacity though the council is currently unclear of the value of each partner. The council works with 139 business, voluntary, community sectors and other public partners. These include projects on accommodation for homeless people, the Broadmarsh Regeneration Project, SNAP active and discos, the review of the community strategy by the LSP, and the new Community Hospital in Havant. The council has good working relationships with neighbouring councils; for example, in delivering through the antisocial behaviour unit. The relationship with Unison is effective and the existence of structured meetings with both officers and councillors, the lack of grievances and complaints from staff indicate a positive working partnership. The council has not reviewed its many partnerships to ensure that it is achieving full value from all of them so it is unclear whether the activities that the partnerships undertake consistently lead to measurable outcomes for citizens.
- 46 Through the standards committee there is a good understanding by councillors of the importance of the Government's new ethical framework for councillors and officers. There is a code of conduct for councillors as well as staff although as yet there has been no training in standards for councillors. Officer delegations have been increased and are being used more in some cases; for example, increased financial limits for property transactions.
- 47 However, the council's capacity is reduced by a range of factors. There are some recruitment hotspots, for example in development control. The council has yet to develop a comprehensive people strategy to support the CDP. There are also low numbers of disabled staff and female managers. Targets to improve the skills set and capacity of the council in these areas are modest particularly for staff with disabilities where the target is well below the working age population in the community. All of the above issues are currently being tackled effectively but had not shown the desired improvements at the time of the inspection.

## Performance management

- 48 There are some strong features of performance management, including monitoring data by services and portfolio holders' areas of responsibilities, but the council has yet to deal strategically with data and to ensure that individuals are able to relate to the overall priorities of the council. Weaknesses outweigh strengths.
- 49 The performance management system is effective at a service level. Service priorities are derived from the overarching corporate priorities of 'cleaner, safer, more prosperous'. Regular reports are presented to councillors in order that progress against programmed work can be monitored and mechanisms for collecting performance indicators are greatly improved from last year. Work programmes are agreed by the boards and councillors and senior officers are aware of what has to be done, their role within the programmes and how these link to the agreed priorities. Specialist performance posts are currently being created to assist managers to engage more fully on performance management. The inclusion of SMART targets in some action and service plans enables the measurement of performance and assessment of progress as well as ensuring effective re-assessment of priorities; for example, crime and disorder strategies. This allows portfolio holders and managers to monitor progress against priorities.

- 50 However, monitoring by portfolio holder is insufficient to engage councillors widely on the performance of the organisation. There is a history of strong departmental rather than corporate working underpinned by monitoring at a service rather than corporate level. There is little performance information on services set against the strategic targets of 'cleaner, safer, more prosperous' and limited success measures built into the performance management cycle. External partners told us that outcomes of the community strategy are not used to measure performance. Quality of life outcomes are not yet part of performance management. The 2003/04 spend is still being monitored by portfolio holder rather than by corporate priorities. The council has recognised this and is developing and linking strategies together to enable more joined up working, for example on planning. At the moment however, corporate ambitions and priorities are not adequately translated into targets that are easy to monitor.
- 51 Appraisal is applied inconsistently. On the whole, staff are aware of the importance of their service to the council and the community but appraisal is inconsistently applied and hampers the understanding of the contribution that their service makes to the council's overall priorities. Performance agreements for directors are a recent innovation; these are currently being put in place for senior management, and they have been open to comments by staff.
- 52 Councillors in overview and scrutiny boards do not deal adequately with performance data. They work on broadly consensual basis by getting pre-decision agreement but no scrutiny of performance. For example, they do not routinely use the complaints system to monitor and improve services, although there are ad hoc examples of where this does happen. Service standards allow the public to understand who to go to in the event of a complaint; managers deal with the complaints and report these cases to councillors. But until recently, the council has not been collecting information on corporate complaints and therefore has not been able to analyse information and feed this in to future service improvements.
- 53 The council's approach to risk management is comprehensive and effective. Risks are assessed via a scoring system using a traffic light system, and a standing group reviews risks quarterly with one-off meetings in between if a risk needs to be added or reviewed. Risk management in health and safety is thorough.
- 54 The council's external auditor has commended the council's financial management in pursuit of value for money. For example, since May 2002, the assessment of contractors and suppliers is via a form that measures time, cost and performance. This enables the council to take a wide view of the appropriateness of a company to deal with the council.

## What has the council achieved / not achieved to date?

### Achievement in quality of service

- 55 The council has more strengths than weaknesses in the quality of its services.
- 56 The council performs well in comparison to other councils. Based on national performance indicators its 2001/02 figures show 39 per cent in the best quartile (best 25 per cent); 35 per cent in the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest quartile (above average); 15 per cent in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile (below average); and 11 per cent in the worst quartile (worst 25 per cent). Overall citizen satisfaction with services is at 72 per cent and is in the best quartile in comparison with other councils and higher than would be predicted when the level of local deprivation is taken into account. Also performing in the best quartile is citizen satisfaction with dealing with complaints, which is at 54 per cent, compared to an expected 39 per cent when the level of local deprivation is taken into account.
- 57 Council properties are among the best in the country for disabled access and this focus is continuing as is access to services electronically. The council issued its Race Equality Scheme on time.
- 58 The council achieves well against those services that are related to the council's three key priorities – 'cleaner, safer, and more prosperous'. Examples are set out below:

#### Cleaner

- 59 Satisfaction rates are:
- ◆ 77 per cent for citizen satisfaction with recycling facilities (best quartile);
  - ◆ 90 per cent citizen satisfaction with refuse collection (close to best quartile);
  - ◆ 70 per cent citizen satisfaction with street cleanliness (close to best quartile);
  - ◆ 67 per cent of residents satisfied with the council's parks and open spaces (2<sup>nd</sup> highest quartile); and
  - ◆ 70 per cent citizen satisfaction with sports and leisure (best quartile);
- 60 Recycling rates are currently in the best quartile and for kilograms of household waste collected, are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest quartile. On the other hand, recycling rates are lower than the Government's target for the council and planning costs are high.

#### Safer

- 61 The council has a history of successfully addressing, together with the police, its priority of a safer community. Examples include installing CCTV in the Botley Drive hotspot, use of antisocial behaviour orders, and part-funding Project Carclear, which shifts abandoned cars within 24 hours. It also provides neighbourhood watch and burglary packs, contributing towards a reduction in burglary of 20 per cent. In terms of overall performance of best value performance indicators (BVPIs), one is in the best quartile, two are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest quartile and three are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile.

- 62 The developments at Wecock Farm and Leigh Park are good examples of how priorities are being addressed in a cross-cutting way covering both prosperity and safer communities in their design and mixed housing provision.
- 63 All planning applications are seen by the community safety officer and police crime reduction officer in order that safety and crime related issues are considered at the earliest opportunity.

### **More prosperous**

- 64 The council is working well with partners and is part of a jointly commissioned south-east Hampshire housing needs survey in 2002. This piece of work has been used to develop the *Havant Borough Wide Local Development Plan*. The south-east Hampshire housing needs survey has looked at the needs of key workers in the area and has been utilised to attract funding for key worker homes. There is a major development area (MDA) west of Waterlooville, where as many as 3,000 homes are being planned. A common housing register is operated by the council and information is shared between landlords to progress towards meeting the decent homes standard.
- 65 The council's capital and asset management strategies have both received a 'good' rating from GOSE.
- 66 The council is delivering modern business developments that are attracting business to the borough, for example the Broadmarsh business park. The council's website is seen by partners as a major contributor to increasing tourism and therefore prosperity. The website has been commended by the Society for IT Managers (SOCITM) as a leading example in a district council.
- 67 On the other hand, speed of homelessness decisions is a priority and performs poorly.

### **Audit Commission inspections**

- 68 Three services have been inspected by the audit commission over a two-year period prior to CPA. These were: Housing Services, Waste Management, and Car Parks, Markets and Street Trading. All three services were only graded 'Fair'.

### **Achievement of improvement**

- 69 Improvements are occurring in most of the priority services. Strengths outweigh weaknesses.
- 70 For the period 2000/01 to 2002/03, 14 key PIs have now improved and 8 have not. Improving services include community housing services, burglaries, violence against the person, missed bins, planning searches and planning best practice, e-interaction with the public, accessibility to people with disabilities and several staffing indicators. These are all important priorities for local citizens.
- 71 Of those that are not improving some are priorities, including the percentage of household waste recycled, although this remains in the best quartile of performance nationally. However, the cost of planning remains high. Vehicle theft and sexual offences, which are important priorities to the council, are rising and are now in the worst 25 per cent of performance, though both are reflecting national trends.

72 Achievements relating to the three key council priorities are as follows:

### **Cleaner**

- 73 The costs of waste collection have decreased; availability of recycling sites remains in the best quartile and the number of missed bins is improving. Waste collection and street cleansing frequencies have improved as a result of significant investment in vehicles, plant and staff.
- 74 In partnership with the county council, environmental improvement schemes have been carried out – for example, North Street, Emsworth and Langstone High Street – which have improved key locations in the public realm. Levels of recycling have declined from 18 per cent to 17 per cent, although they remain best quartile performance. This decline is attributed to a change in Project Integra metrics.
- 75 The council has introduced a ban on green waste, is promoting home composting and introduced a charge for the removal of bulky waste as well as promoting household waste recycling centres in an attempt to reduce the amount of waste generated. Despite these efforts and the increasing quantity of waste being recycled through the bring sites, the amount of waste entering the waste stream is increasing although this is lower than the national average growth.

### **Safer**

- 76 The council has taken a significant role in the community safety partnership, where improved performance and public appreciation of improvements can be clearly demonstrated. Through partnership working with the Police and Neighbourhood Watch, domestic burglary rates have been reduced from 11.8 per 1,000 households in 2000/01 to 6.5 in 2002/03. Support for neighbourhood watch has resulted in 40 being established across the borough. Numbers of robberies are reducing.
- 77 The introduction of recreational facilities for young people, an extensive CCTV programme and special projects that engage young people in deciding how their environment can be improved, is improving the quality of life for all communities. The Stakes Lodge Estates Project resulted in a 60 per cent reduction in nuisance over a two-year period. A more rigorous approach to juvenile nuisance in Leigh Park has resulted in the securing of 7 antisocial behaviour orders this year.
- 78 The introduction of multi-use games areas (MUGAs), skateboard parks and shelters in public open spaces has reduced nuisance, vandalism, including graffiti and general tidiness resulting in an improved quality of life for those living near these facilities.

### **More prosperous**

- 79 The council is achieving new housing development in line with target allocations. Improving figures are shown for private sector dwellings returned to occupation and made fit. The percentages of new homes built on previously developed land increased from 72 per cent in 2001/02 to 99 per cent in 2002/03, close to maximum capacity and 33 per cent higher than the government target.

- 80 Partnership working with SEEDA, Hampshire County Council and private sector interests has brought brownfield land forward for industrial development in the Broadmarsh area. This has resulted in the development of a Business and Innovation Centre operating a 'one-stop' shop, supported by a range of sub-regional partners such as adjoining local councils and the Chamber of Commerce with space for start-up businesses.
- 81 The council has used its influence to encourage inward investment and to prevent the loss of key employment sites to inappropriate use. It also worked in partnership with a local property company, assisting in securing key relocations of companies such as Lockheed Martin and Hitachi. The first phase of construction on ex-IBM land (acquired by SEEDA) is underway with space fully pre-let or sold, mainly to existing local manufacturing companies with expansion and job creation plans.
- 82 The borough has performed well in terms of business formation and survival when compared with national and sub-regional averages. This is reflected in the efforts that the council has made in establishing public private sector partnerships for Enterprise Centres, encouraging small business start-ups in modern premises with flexible tenure arrangements.
- 83 In order to reduce the local skills deficit the council, working with partners and using external funds, has converted a redundant ambulance station into a construction skills training centre and has helped an engineering sector training body to relocate into the borough and expand its training offer.

#### **Other areas**

- 84 Areas that have improved significantly between 2000/01 and 2002/03 include percentages of invoices paid within 30 days – from 91 per cent to 96.6 per cent; council tax collected – from 96.0 per cent to 96.6 per cent; buildings suitable for and accessible by people with disabilities – from 46 per cent to 62 per cent; major planning applications determined in 13 weeks – 27 per cent (2001/02) to 56 per cent; minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks – 47 per cent (2001/02) to 56 per cent.
- 85 On best value inspections, the council has responded positively to the recommendations made over the last three years. Prospects for improvement were rated: Car Parks – Fair; Markets and Street Trading – Poor; Waste Management and Housing Services – Uncertain. For example, the council has invested in the waste management fleet and in recycling. The key PIs for housing are all improving; on waste management, two key PIs are improving or static while two have deteriorated.

#### **BFI findings**

- 86 The time taken to process housing benefit renewal claims has improved to best quartile performance. The time in which to process new housing benefit claims has also improved. The percentage of claims processed correctly is static at 99 per cent, which is still best 25 per cent performance.
- 87 On the other hand, the cost of dealing with claims is rising and is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile.

## Investment

- 88 The council has recognised the need to invest in securing the anticipated benefits from the change programme, councillor capacity, and improving the performance management regime. Strengths outweigh weaknesses.
- 89 The council is dealing adequately with embedding change. There have been many improvements over last year, including the appointment of the managing director, a simplified management structure and better communication with staff. The structural changes are being completed as a matter of urgency. The lack of an HR strategy is an opportunity missed to co-ordinate all policies to maximise staff development and motivation.
- 90 Councillor capacity is being tackled thoroughly. This includes the MIG, councillor mentoring for new councillors, and assessing councillor performance in a similar way to the staff appraisal scheme. A review of the working of the executive has already been undertaken by the MIG, and its findings have been accepted by the executive. A further review of the working of overview and scrutiny is now underway. As yet no plan to implement the changes is available.
- 91 Performance management is being tackled well. Special performance support posts are being created to advise managers on how to use data better. Councillors are now receiving exception reporting rather than on all figures. A relaunched performance and development scheme is designed to have full coverage by March 2004. Directors' annual performance agreements have been set out, objectives linked to corporate priority areas, and with key milestones and success measurements. The Prince 2 project management tool is now used. Cross-departmental working arrangements are improving. For example, where a planning application involves elements of regeneration and waste disposal management, there is a single lead to consult relevant service units for their views.
- 92 The council has established a call centre, demonstrating a substantial investment to customer service and addressing priorities in a cross-cutting way. Complaints are now being co-ordinated and software is now in place to manage and analyse complaints. This is designed to enable a better understanding of complaints and improvements in service delivery.
- 93 Recruitment difficulties are being tackled well; for example, fostering existing staff talents by designing career grades for junior planning and building control staff. Environmental health student training is undertaken jointly with Rushmoor Council, East Hants District Council and Gosport Council, using locally recruited students. A previous modest rise in sickness levels has been tackled by return to work interviews and closer working with occupational health.
- 94 Engaging young people and the positive approach to their input is a positive investment for the future to encourage more interest in local community issues. For example, the inclusion of a representative of the youth council as a member of the local strategic partnership demonstrates the council's willingness to listen and respond positively to young people.

- 95 The council is receptive to internal and external challenge. Examples include action following the best value inspection of the waste service when the council replaced its ageing vehicle fleet, securing service improvements through reduced trips to the disposal site. On voluntary challenge the council engaged in a voluntary peer review with three other neighbouring councils in 2002 sharing approaches to issues such as recycling, progressing LSPs and Community Strategies, tackling affordable housing and decriminalised parking. Following the peer review of their CPA self-assessment, the council expanded the document to give more practical examples of success, set against the key priorities of the council.

## In the light of what the council has learned to date, what does it plan to do next?

### Learning

- 96 The council uses a good range of methods to learn from its successes and tackle its areas for improvement though has yet to evaluate outcomes from its multitude of partners. Strengths outweigh weaknesses.
- 97 The council is open to external challenge. It has learned from the Audit Commission's inspections in housing and planning that improvement in services stems from clear and more focused corporate direction and has made the best value review programme more strategic and cross-cutting. It is part of a voluntary peer review with Chichester, Arun and East Hampshire, where each council is reviewed by the others. This arrangement also shares best practice benchmarking and co-operates on joint policy initiatives, such as tackling affordable housing.
- 98 Learning is shared across the council. CDP is based on extensive staff involvement and involves learning from their past experiences and being prepared to experiment with new ideas. The council learns from regular staff satisfaction surveys. Officers in different services liaise to share good practice, such as the E-government Steering Group, although these examples are not extensive. Directors and heads of service meet to deal with corporate issues such as dealing effectively with consultation with residents on corporate priorities. However, the current lack of learning from corporate complaints data means it is losing the opportunity to use complaints as a major driver for cross-cutting development.
- 99 The council has learnt from projects and experiences that are producing favourable outcomes. It has learnt effectively from private sector partners about the nature of information needed to assist inward investment and relocation decisions for local businesses; for example, the development of a high quality and well respected property register providing the most comprehensive range of information about premises and land availability in south-east Hampshire. In the regeneration of the Wecock estate, it learnt that sustainable solutions take time. That work on tackling deprivation has also informed and broadened the council's understanding of the wideranging, underlying causes of deprivation in these communities. The lessons of the Wecock experience are now transferring to the work emerging in Leigh Park on the 'Creating Quality Places' Initiative.
- 100 It has also learnt from experiences where there has been an element of failure. An example of the latter is the Havant Borough Partnership. This was a company set up by the council and business partners with the objective of fostering business growth and improved town centre management. The business plan for the company had not been well developed and the financial position and prospects proved to be based on shaky foundations. The council decided to withdraw funding, and the company ceased trading. The council learned to take a more active part in analysing business cases before committing to involvement.

- 101 The council's learning with the Government and voluntary sectors is innovative and strong. It has taken advantage of a joint SEEDA/Prince's Foundation 'Creating Quality Places' Initiative to help improve and regenerate suburban estates, by involving Leigh Park as an exemplar pilot project. This initiative used a process of community engagement called 'Enquiry by Design', with a series of workshops on the estate. Another workshop event with SEEDA, private and voluntary partners was a 'visioning' event for the whole borough, bringing together a wide range of leading consultants and partners to offer their insights on the key issues affecting the borough. The output from this event is a vision report, *Towards a Vision for Havant*, which will now be used to inform the council's future regeneration and related strategies.
- 102 On the other hand, as already mentioned, the council has yet to learn from the wide range of partnerships how to assess the worth of the council's input. It now deals with over 139 partners and this involves a considerable input of officer time and other resources. It has yet to evaluate the outputs and outcomes of this investment so is missing an opportunity to rationalise involvement in these partnerships, and focus effort in the more productive partnerships.

## Future plans

- 103 The council's future plans are extensive and cover most areas of development required, but plans are not all SMART. Strengths outweigh weaknesses.
- 104 The council has a good record of putting statutory plans and policies in place. For example, it started work on a community strategy in 1999 and in April 2001 were one of the first councils in Hampshire to have an adopted community strategy. The council's capital and asset management strategies have both received a 'good' rating from GOSE. Another example of timely work was the publication of its race equality scheme by the due date of 31 May 2002. It was also quick to develop and implement a community safety strategy. In the case of the community and corporate strategies, these also were based on wide community consultation and partner involvement.
- 105 The council has established strong links between its ambitions, its learning processes, and its future plans. Its improvement plan is based on the three corporate themes – a 'cleaner, safer, more prosperous' borough and links to strengthening corporate effectiveness. The improvement plan in the self-assessment identifies mainly SMART targets and outcomes to be delivered within five years, though some targets are not specific; for example, under the 'cleaner' heading. It also does not identify all the resources required so it is unclear how deliverable all the targets will be.
- 106 The council plans to refresh the community strategy. As the community strategy is now two years old, the LSP has agreed to the council's request to a fundamental review of it. The council acknowledges that changes to its corporate strategy could then be required and is committed to making such changes as are recommended by the LSP's work, and the target is to have all changes in place by July 2004. This will ensure that any changes of policy by the council will be based on the most current understanding of community needs.

- 107 Plans to improve corporate effectiveness are strong. Targets include reviewing its e-government strategy and programming co-ordination to ensure 100 per cent e-enablement by the end of 2005, leading to improved customer access and service delivery. Another example is to review its people strategy and associated policies and to have an integrated people strategy in place by end of 2003. This is an integral part of CDP, which has been successful so far, indicating that this plan will be achieved. Another target is for councillor development programmes to be in place by March 2004.
- 108 Weaknesses in overview and scrutiny are being addressed through a thorough and fundamental review of the process by the MIG. The council is aware of the view from backbenchers that they are not fully involved in policy development. Improvements in councillor capacity will ensure that the strategic focus of the council is owned and delivered more widely.
- 109 Planned improvements to the performance management system are strong. They are intended to produce fewer local performance indicators and more clarity for citizens on what the council plans to do through cross-cutting indicators. There are also plans to set up a database to report on progress by project and on a ward basis. This will better enable the council to focus resources to priorities.
- 110 Plans to boost recycling are inadequate. In order to boost the existing performance in recycling, the council will continue the phased introduction of wheeled recycling bins to all households in the borough to meet or exceed statutory recycling targets by 2008. It is not clear when the coverage will be total or whether the council believes that this alone will achieve a sufficient recycling rate to meet the government target set.

## Summary of theme scores and strengths / weaknesses

Theme	Grade	Strengths	Weaknesses
Ambition	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong history of devising community strategy in advance of the legislation</li> <li>• Plans derive from thorough stakeholder consultation</li> <li>• Council encourages other agencies to lead on priorities when appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership to build cohesive and sustainable communities not fully effective</li> </ul>
Prioritisation	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough research and consultation on priorities</li> <li>• 'Cleaner, safer, more prosperous' guides resource spend</li> <li>• Stakeholders identify with priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council spend focuses on service priorities rather than cross-cutting ones</li> </ul>
Focus	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained use of 'Cleaner, safer, more prosperous' priorities determines long-term spending</li> <li>• Change Development Programme is a key driver for a more focused approach to activities</li> <li>• Members issues groups tackle strategic priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ineffective overview and scrutiny</li> </ul>
Capacity	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good partnership working</li> <li>• Good use of alternatives to in-house provision</li> <li>• Capable officers and staff</li> <li>• Strong financial controls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restructuring not yet fully completed</li> <li>• Councillors not all engaged strategically</li> </ul>
Performance management	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong performance information at service level</li> <li>• Risk management recent but effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links between strategies, service delivery and outcomes for citizens are not clear</li> <li>• Inconsistent individual appraisal</li> <li>• Council unable to review its strategic priorities based on measurement of effectiveness of performance</li> </ul>

Theme	Grade	Strengths	Weaknesses
Achievement in quality of service	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall customer satisfaction is best quartile</li> <li>• Satisfaction rates for services high; for example, household waste</li> <li>• Good use of brownfield sites</li> <li>• Work with youth reduces crime</li> <li>• Regeneration initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycling not meeting government targets</li> <li>• Speed of dealing with benefits claims and rent allowances significantly below top quartile</li> </ul>
Achievement of improvement	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements in line with strategic priorities; for example, cleansing services, regeneration.</li> <li>• Housing benefits performance improving</li> <li>• Juvenile crime figures improving in Stakes Lodge due to council action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of planning remains high</li> <li>• Some decline in 'safer' priorities</li> </ul>
Investment	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDP speeding up change process</li> <li>• Members issues groups</li> <li>• Performance management systems</li> <li>• Key building blocks in place; for example, risk management strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little progress on changes to overview and scrutiny</li> <li>• Lack of an HR strategy to underpin CDP</li> </ul>
Learning	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council is open to external challenge</li> <li>• Learning is shared across the council</li> <li>• Has learnt from failure as well as success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yet to learn of the value of the wide range of partnerships</li> </ul>
Future plans	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to performance management</li> <li>• Strong links between ambitions, learning processes and future plans</li> <li>• Stakeholders in LSP engaged in future planning</li> <li>• CPA improvement plan tackling essential building blocks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some improvement plan targets are not SMART</li> <li>• Plans to improve recycling are inadequate</li> </ul>

**Scoring key:**

- 1 - Weak
- 2 - Weaknesses outweigh strengths
- 3 - Strengths outweigh weaknesses
- 4 - Strong

## Appendix 1 - Balancing housing markets (BHM) diagnostic assessment

### How well does the council understand its housing market and from its understanding has the council developed the right proposals to help balance its housing markets?

- 111 The council has a good understanding of the elements of a balanced housing market but some key areas are not currently up-to-date, such as a private sector stock condition survey which is currently being carried out and due to report in December 2003.
- 112 Trends in the local housing market are monitored on an ongoing basis by gathering data on house prices, rental costs and earnings. The council is particularly interested in the resale value of ex-council properties which produce a pool of stock for sale and is often a more accessible route for first time buyers.
- 113 A common housing register is operated by Hermitage Housing Association (the LSVT) on the council's behalf. The council uses the register to contribute to the assessment of housing need in the area. In addition the council's two major social landlords are sharing information on their progress towards meeting the decent homes standard by 2010 in their respective stock.
- 114 Despite being based on good housing needs information GOSE believe that the council's housing strategy is consistently average or below.
- 115 The council was part of a jointly commissioned south-east Hampshire housing needs survey 2002. From this the council is able to show that it is aware of the issues faced in terms of affordable housing and how the sub-regional housing market is working. Although this survey forecast a higher demand for affordable housing than that identified in the *Hampshire Structure Plan*, this piece of work has been used to develop the *Havant Borough Wide Local Development Plan*.
- 116 The south-east Hampshire housing needs survey also looked at the needs of key workers in the area and has been utilised to attract funding for key worker homes.
- 117 The council has a major development area (MDA) west of Waterlooville where as many as 3,000 homes are being planned. The MDA lies within the boundaries of Winchester Council but will have a significant impact on the area. Consequently the council commissioned a separate but parallel study to examine the impact of the MDA. The results have been widely shared with all stakeholders and have formed the basis of discussion and co-operation between councils in the sub region.
- 118 The council's capital and asset management strategies have both received a 'good' rating from GOSE. However, the council currently has little capital with which to work, and this highlights the vital role of the LSP in securing inward investment.

- 119 The council has completed an Urban Capacity Study which identifies all land with the potential for development for housing and other uses. The Urban Capacity Study has undertaken an analysis of the housing market and provides a key contribution to the local plan for the area. The market is assessed as being strong within the locality and this is reflected in the low proportion of vacant dwellings. The borough has one of the lowest vacancy rates nationally.
- 120 The council has a good understanding of local demographics and salary scales as linked to house prices and to some degree rent levels. As a result it has been able to demonstrate the importance of affordability as a key issue especially as the area has been identified as a 'travel to work' zone. This knowledge has informed the council's housing strategies and policies.
- 121 Limited work has been carried out to identify and address any housing needs of black and minority ethnic groups. Although this group forms a small and dispersed group in the area their particular housing needs have not been fully assessed and could therefore be overlooked. In addition the area has a growing elderly population and while there has been some re-development of sheltered housing blocks there has been no significant research on the needs of this increasing element of the population.

**What are the council's actions and what outcomes has it achieved in helping to balance housing markets?**

- 122 The council's community strategy identified 'enabling better housing' as a key aim. The aspirations of the community strategy are reflected in the housing strategy 'Building Communities – Meeting Needs'. The strategy is based on a range of consultation with stakeholders including stakeholder forums, the citizen's panel combined with an analysis of the housing market. The strategy makes links through to national priorities and a local focus on regeneration.
- 123 A separate strategy to prevent and reduce homelessness was published in July 2003. The key objectives of this are to reduce homelessness, focusing on preventative work and improve access to better quality temporary housing as well as alternative permanent solutions. Priorities identified in the homelessness strategy are based on detailed independent research and consultation with partners involved in the provision of homelessness services.
- 124 In addition the council has introduced a supported tenancy scheme for tenants in the private sector. This scheme assists tenants and landlords in terms of the management of the tenancy.
- 125 There are a number of examples of the council's homelessness services working in partnership with voluntary and statutory partners to reduce homelessness within the borough. Examples include Portsmouth Housing association Private Sector leasing scheme, Southern Focus Trust Floating support service, aimed at supporting across tenures to reduce repeat homelessness.

- 126 The local plan has recently completed its public inquiry stage and sets out the council's priorities to promote higher density development. The council has agreed to increase the threshold of 25 per cent affordability on new developments of 0.5 hectares or 15 homes, which will assist the council to deliver the requirements of the local plan. There is a strong emphasis on the use of brownfield sites to produce affordable housing, and the council is proactively targeting owners of land identified within the local plan. The phasing of sites as well as the provision of reserve allocations also helps to provide flexibility and help to meet any shortfall, while ensuring that brownfield sites are utilised before greenfield sites are released. In 2002/03, 99 per cent of development took place on brownfield sites.
- 127 The emerging local plan is expected to produce a change in emphasis to affordability, including the need for low-cost home ownership and key worker provision. Previously the council negotiated with housing associations for this to be rented accommodation. The emerging local plan also acknowledges the importance of neighbourhood renewal when areas are to be redeveloped, such as the work currently taking place at Leigh Park which is being promoted by SEEDA.
- 128 The council has well-established mechanisms for engaging with partners and stakeholders and this is reflected in its approach to balancing housing markets. The LSP has a housing task group comprising of a wide range of external partners representing both the public and private sectors. The council also facilitates a private sector housing forum and a forum for local registered social landlords.
- 129 Currently the council has no formal partnership agreements with preferred housing associations. To date the council has relied on individual housing associations to approach them with development proposals. While this approach has been successful in delivering a programme that meets the county's structure plan this method of working does not guarantee that the most efficient and effective development opportunities are always achieved.
- 130 Development briefs are provided for larger schemes, particularly for greenfield allocations under the local plan. Development control staff work closely and contribute to regeneration schemes in the area providing pre-planning advice and participate in schemes such as at Wecock Farm.
- 131 There is a close working partnership with Portsmouth City Council (PCC) which owns over 11 per cent of all homes within the area. Consequently PCC is an important strategic partner with whom the council carries out a range of research and local initiatives. Such partnerships include a 'planning for real' exercise prior to a substantial regeneration programme within a deprived area.

- 132 The council is currently discussing with partners a one-stop shop service. Through customer consultation the council has established that there is some confusion over how to access services. This is partly caused by the fragmentation of the existing service where the housing register sits within the LSVT association, the presence of PCC within the borough and the housing advice and homelessness team within the council's civic offices.
- 133 The council regularly surveys customers and engages with stakeholders and customers through its programme of best value reviews, regular publications and independently conducted surveys.
- 134 The council has taken the strategic decision to close its large hostels and replace them with more appropriate accommodation for homeless applicants. Hostels are less popular with users of the service and provide a lower standard of accommodation. This has been a difficult decision to take as levels of homelessness are significant. To retain homelessness provision the council has successfully increased the number of landlords participating in a private sector leasing scheme and the introduced a scheme for private landlords which provides eight weeks rent in advance (reclaimed back through housing benefit).
- 135 The council does not have a private sector housing strategy and its empty property strategy has not been reviewed since 1997. However, market conditions in the district have meant that empty properties are not a serious problem. The council has published its response to the Regulatory Reform Order. The policy outlines its plans to provide assistance to owners of properties who are unable to maintain their properties independently. In recognition of the high value of properties in the area the council is shifting its emphasis away from grant-based funding work towards equity release and loan schemes. Although the private sector stock is generally viewed to be in good condition, a number of households (mainly elderly) are unable to heat their homes economically. The council is targeting its resources in this area.
- 136 The urban capacity study is one tool that the council has used to identify and pursue opportunities to promote mixed residential provision in existing urban centres. The council has been successful in regenerating a number of empty commercial properties in town centres to residential premises, some of which have been let as supported tenancies to homeless households.
- 137 The council have also had success in negotiating with absentee landlords to grant seven-year leases to a housing association that has modernised the accommodation and let them at affordable rents.
- 138 In conjunction with three neighbouring councils, Havant Borough Council supports a local care and repair service run by a housing association. The service provides assistance to vulnerable households who need assistance in arranging adaptations and improvements to their home.
- 139 The council has made use of reduced car parking requirements to make more effective use of development opportunities, such as a regeneration of a town centre site in Waterlooville. The council has a range of initiatives within Leigh Park town centre, such as converting a former library into a basic skills learning centre, including a shop mobility scheme and the formation of new and refurbished flats above shopping units.

- 140 The council does not operate a Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) registration scheme but the area does not have significant numbers of HMOs. To date the council has not had to make use of compulsory purchase orders but it is currently identifying properties where it can make use of the compulsory leasing powers that will be made available to councils under the forthcoming Housing Bill.
- 141 In the area of tackling fuel poverty the council has successfully promoted the 'Warm Front' Scheme. The council has an established partnership with a local housing association working on energy conservation. Through this partnership, the council has secured partnership funding across a range of Hampshire authorities. This has been invested in the private sector for thermal insulation.
- 142 Until recently the council's financial strategy was based on its debt free status which enables it to re-invest 100 per cent of capital receipts in local authority social housing grant (LASHG). In the past three years, the council has delivered over £10 million in grant. However, it is unclear how the council will be able to continue this level of spending with changes to funding mechanisms.
- 143 To date the council has been successful in enabling the building of new affordable homes in the borough and there are currently a number of schemes being developed. This has been achieved through corporate commitment and cross-department working and effective partnership working to create opportunities where land for development is in short supply and the council's finances are finely balanced.
- 144 There is a track record of the council securing external funding and successfully bringing investment in to the area. In partnership with housing associations, as part of LASHG funded scheme in excess of £3 million was achieved in 2002/03. In addition through partnership services which are often in tandem with LASHG funding £628,000 revenue was achieved for a range of schemes, including supported tenancies and schemes linked to the council's home energy conservation strategy.
- 145 The council has worked closely with the county council on the Government's 'Supporting People' programme and a supporting people strategy is in place. The council has representation on the Hampshire supporting people cross-county group and the county council funds a part-time post to carry out related work in the area. In the past three years, there has been new provision for mental health, learning disabilities, care leavers and the relocation of the local women's refuge.
- 146 As part of the CDP, a new staffing structure has been introduced in July 2003. The new arrangements have placed housing strategy within the Regeneration Group which includes planning services and other strategic and enabling functions. This new structure recognises the relationship between housing and planning to contribute to housing strategy.

**How well does the council monitor its progress and impact in helping to balance housing markets and how effectively does this feed into future strategies and plans?**

- 147 The council collects a wide range of performance information which is recorded through the corporate performance management system. Housing targets are subject to regular scrutiny by the council.

- 148 In terms of best value performance indicators there are some areas where performance has not improved. Planning costs have continued to increase, although this is attributed to the related cost of the local plan inquiry.
- 149 Although there are some clear outcome-focused targets associated with housing strategies, they are not fully SMART targets.
- 150 There is evidence that the council learns through best value reviews, from national best practice and benchmarking forums with other councils. The audit commission inspection of housing aid and advice reported that the strategy and enabling function within the council was under resourced. As a result of the improvement plan additional resources have been allocated to fund an extra post.
- 151 The area has been identified as a homeless hotspot. The recently adopted homelessness strategy places a stronger emphasis on prevention, earlier intervention and a more robust interpretation of the homelessness legislation. The council has reduced the number of homeless households and is reducing the length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 152 There is a target to reduce the use of bed and breakfast over 42 days to zero. For August there was one applicant that exceeded their stay over this time, but the council hoped to achieve its target by the end of 2003. Progress against this target is monitored and reported weekly to senior managers. The council has used the new homelessness strategy to deliver on this target.
- 153 The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) return reports that overall energy efficiency since 1996 has improved by 8.5 per cent. The council has learnt from previous Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) feedback on the HECA return and recruited an external consultant (jointly with neighbouring councils) to assist in carrying out research on energy efficiency.
- 154 The council has tended to work with a small number of locally based housing associations which have an effective track record as a developer of new housing in the area. However, there is no formal monitoring of housing associations as landlords to inform the future choice of partner. Although the council is confident that its partners have good credentials as developers it does not know how well it performs in comparison with other housing associations.
- 155 Historically the council has tended to be reactive to housing association proposals rather than identifying the housing needs it wishes to be met and seeking the best housing association to deliver this. A more proactive approach would enable the council to demonstrate that schemes that it supports are the ones that make the greatest contribution towards meeting its objectives.
- 156 The importance of affordable housing for the areas as identified in the sub regional housing needs study prompted the council to lower the threshold to 15 units for the provision of affordable housing. This reflects the fact that to date much of the new development in the areas has taken place on smaller sites.
- 157 The council is meeting its requirements under Hampshire's structure plan targets for new house building and it works closely with the county to monitor progress which is reported to councillors on an annual basis. Progress in providing affordable housing is reported to councillors as part of a standard work programme item and to the relevant scrutiny committee.

- 158 The council has recently introduced a new corporate complaints procedure and call centre. Although there are plans to collate and analyse data collected to improve the housing service it is too early to say that any contribution has been made so far.
- 159 The council has exceeded the targets set for it in the county structure plan in terms of house building overall by 22 per cent and in terms of affordable housing it has enabled the construction of a further 1,000 homes. Rates of building have fallen away in the last 18 months, but the council has provided sufficient land in the local plan to continue to meet targets.
- 160 The council subscribes to the Housing Quality Network's Housing Strategy Centre for Excellence service and have taken part in peer reviews of housing in 2001. The council also works closely with neighbouring councils, particularly PCC in order to learn from their research and work in balancing the housing market.
- 161 Where the council has been successful in delivering projects at a local level such as Wecock Farm regeneration scheme it has taken the model and tried to replicate it in other parts of the area such as the work in Leigh Park through 'Creating quality Places'.

### Summary of balancing housing markets diagnostic judgements and strengths / weaknesses

Area of focus	Grade	Strengths	Weaknesses
How well does the council understand its housing market and from its understanding has the council developed the right proposals to help balance its housing markets?	b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive and timely research</li> <li>Effective networking with partners and stakeholders to develop strategies</li> <li>Housing strategies that reflect local and national priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LSP not yet engaging on housing element</li> <li>No detailed research to identify some key groups and their needs</li> </ul>
What are the council's actions and what outcomes has it achieved in helping to balance housing markets?	b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear affordable housing requirements</li> <li>Representation of key stakeholders on the housing task group (LSP)</li> <li>High percentage of brownfield sites</li> <li>Meeting structure plan development rates and achieving targets for affordable housing</li> <li>Numbers of statutorily homeless are reducing</li> <li>Empty property strategy</li> <li>Supported tenancy scheme</li> <li>Number of effective partnerships in place which have generated additional sources of funding.</li> <li>Involved in a number of joint projects with neighbouring councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No private sector housing strategy</li> <li>Aspirations to establish a common housing register have not yet been progressed</li> <li>Limited consideration of regularity Reform Order</li> </ul>
How well does the council monitor its progress and impact in helping to balance housing markets and how effectively does this feed into future strategies and plans?	b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of learning from and benchmarking with other councils</li> <li>Learning through best value reviews – in some instances has resulted in increased capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing and Homelessness Strategies do not contain fully SMART action plans.</li> <li>No preferred RSL partnership agreement</li> </ul>
<b>Balancing housing markets diagnostic assessment judgement</b>	<b>B</b>		

#### Scoring key:

For each of the key areas looked at within the diagnostic assessments **the need for improvement**, based on the risk of service failure and poor outcomes, is identified using the following scale.

- a = very low
- b = low
- c = high
- d = very high

## Appendix 2 - Public space diagnostic assessment

### How well does the council contribute to the management of the physical environment?

- 162 The council is making good efforts to manage the physical environment. Strengths outweigh weaknesses and consequently there is a low need for service improvement.
- 163 The council is clear about what is trying to achieve in managing the physical environment and how its aims, objectives and strategies are linked to service delivery and improvement. The council has developed a set of ambitions for its regeneration strategies based on extensive research and consultation which link directly with local, sub-regional, regional and national strategies and policies and is also using the planning process to work with the community and other partners to ensure that local needs are balanced with these strategies and policies.
- 164 The council is using its development control powers to maximise and enhance sustainability in the borough and uses supplementary planning guidance to good effect. The emerging borough-wide local plan is well developed. It includes an environmental and sustainability re-appraisal, deals with economic and social issues, and links these to regional and national agendas. There have been extensive consultations and a recently completed local plan inquiry. The council expects the inspector's report early in 2004. The borough-wide local plan will be crucial in informing the council's discussions with Winchester District Council about the West Waterlooville MDA.
- 165 The council is delivering modern business developments that are attracting both new as well as existing businesses wishing to relocate. These are aimed at improving employment potential. For example, the Southmoor Park development is completely committed in advance of completion.
- 166 The council recognises the importance of tourism to the local area and that the natural environment is an important aspect of the area's appeal. It has worked hard with partners to improve businesses that attract visitors. Examples include:
- ◆ the Hayling Island Sailing Club, a successful joint Sports Lottery Fund bid;
  - ◆ improving the physical amenities of the Island – for example, Beachlands, West Town, and the Hayling Billy Trail, a pedestrian and cycle path between south Hayling and Havant town centre; and
  - ◆ the restoration of the Hayling Oyster Beds, which has won awards from the Engineering Council and the Design Council.
- 167 The determination of planning applications has been improving with performance being in the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest quartile in all but two areas. The council is in the best quartile for BVPI 112 and the worst quartile for BVPI 108. Satisfaction with the service is good at 86 per cent, and the introduction of a new computerised document management system next year is intended to further improve service delivery.

- 168 The council is proactive in supporting sustainable development and actively seeks pre-application discussions with developers and publishes advice notes for potential applicants. It promotes, wherever possible, the use of sustainable and local materials. A development at New Lane by Parchment Housing Association is a good example of an Eco Housing Scheme designed as a wholly sustainable scheme.
- 169 The council's adopted planning policies aim to retain employment developments wherever possible, yet are flexible enough to take account of community and changing local needs. For example, the redevelopment of the Proctor and Gamble site, the largest brownfield site in the borough, will encourage mixed redevelopment and will involve extensive community input, including that of young people.
- 170 While not regarded as a rural area, the council has worked well with partners to protect some important natural and countryside areas. Sinah common is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the council is working with English Nature to manage the area. A new reserve had been established at West Hayling, working with four partners including the RSPB and Hampshire County Council, to secure 50 per cent match-funding from the European Union.
- 171 The council uses partnerships to maximise benefits and improvements to local communities and ensures that an individual approach is adopted, based on local needs identified by using neighbourhood panels. Examples are Creating Quality Places in Leigh Park, Planning for Real in Wecock, Langstone Technology Park and Southmoor Park.
- 172 The council uses planning gain constructively and up until 2001 had succeeded in securing 160 social housing units and £480,000 which is put into a special fund that is used for small local environmental enhancements and improvements.
- 173 As part of the programme of attracting visitors to the area, the council has encouraged and supported local themed events, working with local communities to promote local festivals; for example, the Emsworth Food Festival, the Bedhampton Show, and the Leigh Park Carnival.
- 174 The council is aware that that pollution and climate change impact on the quality of life of its community and has a regular programme of monitoring air quality as well as seawater quality and radiation but makes limited use of collected data. However, it recognises that it does need to strengthen its capability to identify and respond to climate change.
- 175 The council does not have a planned work programme for delivering its statutory environmental health functions being reactive, rather than proactive in its service provision. The council has developed a new recruitment and retention package to attract new professional staff and is currently reviewing the way in which it delivers services. This will result in an improved service based on a proactive work programme.
- 176 There has been an extensive programme of providing facilities for young people as part of the crime and disorder strategy. The council has a comprehensive programme for maintaining these facilities but has yet to make provision for their longer-term renewal and replacement, which could impact on the continuing success of the strategy.

### Does the council help keep the locality clean?

- 177 The council efforts to keep the area clean are good. Strengths outweigh weaknesses and consequently there is a low need for service improvement.
- 178 The council is part of the Project Integra partnership which aims to provide a long-term solution to waste management in Hampshire. The partnership includes all the district councils as well as the county council and two unitary councils. Waste collection arrangements vary locally.
- 179 The council has a comprehensive waste management strategy that has recently been revised and new targets are currently subject to a joint councillor/officer review. There are clearly identified links to the council's aims and objectives and links to other services are identified. It contains a detailed action plan with objectives, actions and targets but has no identified milestones and not all actions have measurements of success or effectiveness. The plan is not outcome focused and the waste management strategy does not yet identify how the council will deliver improvement.
- 180 The council will not meet its statutory recycling targets of 33 per cent in 2003/04 and 36 per cent by 2005/06 and has not planned to do so. The council currently recycles 17 per cent of its waste and the service has historically achieved performance that puts it among the best 25 per cent of councils. Plans outlined in the council's performance plan set a target of 18 per cent for recycled waste for 2003/04. The council has identified its waste hierarchy but it does not identify priorities within the hierarchy or how these will contribute to either waste minimisation or improved recycling levels.
- 181 The council's waste minimisation efforts are not working. The council has introduced a ban on green waste, is promoting home composting and introduced a charge for the removal of bulky waste as well as promoting household waste recycling centres in an attempt to reduce the amount of waste generated. Despite these efforts and the increasing quantity of waste being recycled through the bring sites, the amount of waste entering the waste stream is increasing although this is lower than the national average growth.
- 182 As part of its plans to improve performance, the council's Refuse Collection and Recycling Member Working Party is to evaluate options available to meet government targets, including alternate weekly collections and a green composting scheme. Investment has already been made in securing wheeled bins for 90 per cent of households to be able to move to a fortnightly collection and recycling service but the council has not yet agreed to implement this.
- 183 There have been improvements to some services. Following the best value inspection of the waste service the council replaced its aging vehicle fleet. It also took the opportunity to introduce service improvements and enhancements – for example, larger vehicles, which has reduced trips to the disposal site. Kerbside recycling has also been extended.
- 184 The council has improved its street cleansing and litter clearance services across the borough and targeted known problem areas. It has ensured that old demarcation practices were replaced by more appropriate cross-cutting services; for example, street scene teams.

- 185 Focus is maintained on improvement by use of customer surveys/feedback, regular performance monitoring against national targets and partnership benchmarking. The community states that these services are generally improving but are disappointed by the council's failure to target greater improvements at improving recycling levels, one of its major priorities.
- 186 Service failures can be reported by the council's recently introduced Customer Centre and response times to carry out remedial action are monitored against service standards, as is service performance.
- 187 The council carries out regular satisfaction surveys and uses the results of these to inform service improvements. There are some local performance indicators in place and the council plans to introduce a new grading programme to measure the effectiveness of its of street cleansing service (BVPI 199). As part of the crime and disorder partnership action plan, abandoned vehicle removal has been improved by use of a local partnership with a charitable trust.
- 188 The council has begun to promote litter awareness, especially in schools.

#### **Does the council work with partners to improve community safety?**

- 189 The council's work on community safety is highly effective. Strengths significantly outweigh weaknesses and consequently there is a very low need for service improvement.
- 190 Making a safer community is a priority aim in both the council's community and corporate strategies and the Havant Community Safety Partnership was established in 1998 to provide clear community leadership and vision for improving community safety. In 2000, the partnership was awarded the Hampshire Police Authority's award for an Outstanding Contribution to Crime Prevention.
- 191 The council provides leadership to the partnership as well as funding and providing administrative support for surveys, audits, consultation and performance monitoring. The council's Community Safety Panel includes elected councillors representing local focus group areas and local councillors of the Police Authority, Hampshire Fire and Rescue and county council. It promotes regular policy development, communication, learning, monitoring and evaluation at strategic and operational levels.
- 192 The community safety partnership has published a thorough audit of crime and disorder in the borough of Havant 2001 and a crime and disorder strategy for the borough 2002-2005 (CDS), which addresses key national issues. The audit was thorough and detailed, explaining in detail successes and failures, and the impacts on the community. It is easy to understand even though it contains much statistical detail. The audit was honest about what can and cannot be achieved and demonstrates an understanding about perception, reality and local concerns and was used effectively to revise and amend the crime and disorder strategy.
- 193 The strategy and priorities have been developed as the result of extensive consultation with the community and the council's partners. The strategy sets out a range of key priorities and these reflect community concerns. The council can also demonstrate that the actions taken to date have proved effective and with the exception of vehicle crime, crime is reducing. The crime and disorder strategy has been well managed by the partnership and the council has contributed positively to the improvements delivered.

- 194 The council monitors its community safety actions to make sure they are working. In April 2003, the council published, on behalf of the partnership, the review of the strategy for reducing crime and disorder for the period 2002-2005. The 2003 review checked progress to date against the individual actions and targets and milestones using the 'traffic lights' system to evaluate performance. The review confirms that the council is performing well against the agreed key priorities with improvements in 67 per cent of the individual targets. It also sets out a revised action plan that reflects the priorities that were developed through the consultation programme. As a consequence of concerns raised, the council has developed a number of proactive schemes such as secondary car locking in high crime areas and rigorously pursues antisocial behaviour orders. These have been developed to tackle and reduce crime. Progress is monitored quarterly by the council.
- 195 The council works in partnership with East Hampshire and Winchester to support victims of domestic violence and hate crime with shared resources and a combined point of contact.
- 196 The council has actively involved young people in tackling crime and disorder. An example of this is a community-based project in the Stakes ward, which had the highest incidence of youth crime and nuisance. The project aimed to reduce crime by enforcement, community development and including young people, especially hard-to-reach groups. The project has successfully delivered reduced crime levels, raised community expectations and empowered the local community to influence decision making in the area.
- 197 Crime and disorder issues are successfully considered by many services across the council. For example, the planning service consults the community safety officer and police crime reduction officer on planning applications. However, the council has not yet carried out a formal audit of how services are delivering crime and disorder issues, so it cannot be sure it is being consistent.
- 198 The council, working with its partners, is prepared to make full use of the legislative framework available and has introduced an antisocial behaviour panel. It has so far achieved 7 antisocial behaviour orders (4 of which are post conviction) and agreed 40 acceptable behaviour contracts.
- 199 Residents believe that the borough is safe, apart some isolated hotspots, which supports the view that the partnership has achieved notable success in reducing both actual crime and the fear of crime. The council has expanded its use of CCTV cameras. These are valued by the police and retailers who believe that the cameras reduce both crime and the fear of crime.

**Does the council contribute to activities to positively engage children and young people?**

- 200 The council's provision of activities for young people is highly effective. Strengths significantly outweigh weaknesses and consequently there is a very low need for service improvement.
- 201 Engaging young people is one of the council's priority aims in both its community and corporate strategies. The council has achieved considerable success in meeting the challenge of engaging young people in the decision making progress, and it has demonstrated to the community its commitment to consult and listen.

- 202 The Havant Youth Council is an excellent example of the council's commitment to young people in the borough and is aimed at directly engaging young people in influencing council strategy and decision making. The Youth Council receives financial support from the council and has its own office with support in the Civic Centre. It is satisfied that the borough council does listen and does understand what young people in the borough want. The Children's Society and the council also jointly fund a full-time worker to provide direct support to young people in the borough as well as the youth council. Having successfully engaged young people in the borough, the council has listened to their views and acted on them. Examples include meeting shelters in open spaces, and multi-use games areas (MUGAs).
- 203 The engagement of young people has made a positive contribution to reducing crime and disorder in the borough. Effective partnership working has been an essential element in delivering the council's priorities. The council has an excellent record on meeting the needs of young people and in addressing community safety issues in deprived estates. It is fully engaged with community and youth issues and sports development and arts development is excellent.
- 204 The community has recognised the success of the youth programmes and the positive impact this has had. Young people are becoming increasingly involved in engaging with the council and are making a positive contribution to the determination of priorities.
- 205 The council has been able to demonstrate that young people's views are shared throughout its services and their interests are taken into account in many of the decisions taken; for example, planning briefs for large developments, and open space design.
- 206 The Stakes Lodge Estate Project has made a positive contribution to improving the quality of life of many residents. It was introduced to reduce historically high levels of juvenile crime and nuisance by involving the community and particularly young people in what improvements were appropriate. Enabling young people to improve their own environment through positive engagement ensured that young people recognised that their ideas can contribute positively to improving services in their own community.
- 207 The council has a child protection policy in place and requires users/occupiers of its buildings to demonstrate that they also have their own policy in place. Training sessions for staff have started and sports coaches have been supplied with child protection policy information packs and this is now being implemented across the council.

### Summary of public space diagnostic assessment judgements and strengths / weaknesses

Area of focus	Grade	Strengths	Weaknesses
How well does the council contribute to the management of the physical environment?	b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership approach to sustainable development and attract funds for community projects</li> <li>High levels of community satisfaction</li> <li>Joint working to deal with street scene issues</li> <li>Economic development and planning service identified as a key drivers to aid environmental stewardship</li> <li>Well structured local plan</li> <li>S106 monies used effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slow decisions on major planning applications</li> <li>Reactive environmental health services.</li> </ul>
Does the council help keep the locality clean?	b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents recognise improving services</li> <li>Significant extra funding committed for cleansing and recycling services</li> <li>Effective partnership working</li> <li>Recycling in best quartile</li> <li>Waste management strategy in place</li> <li>2 Blue Flag awards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will not meet statutory recycling targets</li> <li>Waste minimisation efforts although applied are not working</li> </ul>
Does the council work with partners to improve community safety?	a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low, and falling, crime levels</li> <li>Strong leadership in crime and disorder partnership</li> <li>Crime and disorder issues embedded in service delivery</li> <li>Excellent crime and disorder action plan with SMART targets</li> <li>Community generally feels safe</li> <li>Effective use of ASBOs</li> </ul>	
Does the council contribute to activities to positively engage children and young people?	a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully constituted Youth Council</li> <li>Youth Council member of LSP</li> <li>Young peoples citizens panel</li> <li>Effective partnership working</li> <li>Child Protection policy introduced 30/07/03</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gap for 5-11 year olds</li> </ul>
<b>Public space diagnostic assessment judgement</b>		<b>A</b>	

#### Scoring key:

For each of the key areas looked at within the diagnostic assessments **the need for improvement**, based on the risk of service failure and poor outcomes, is identified using the following scale.

- a = very low
- b = low
- c = high
- d = very high

### Appendix 3 - Appointed auditor assessment

208 Appointed auditors are asked to score five areas which relate to the statutory code of audit practice. When scoring each area a range of issues are taken into account. These issues and the score that has been given in each area are set out in the table below.

Area for auditor judgement	Grade	Issues included in this area
Financial standing	4	Setting a balanced budget Setting a capital programme Financial monitoring and reporting Meeting financial targets Financial reserves
Systems of internal financial control	4	Monitoring of financial systems An adequate internal audit function is maintained Risk identification and management
Standards of financial conduct and the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption	3	Ethical framework Governance arrangements Treasury management Prevention and detection of fraud and corruption
Financial statements	4	Timeliness Quality Supporting records
Legality of significant financial transactions	3	Roles and responsibilities Consideration of legality of significant financial transactions New legislation

**Scoring key:**

- 1 = inadequate
- 2 = adequate overall, but some weaknesses that need to be addressed
- 3 = adequate
- 4 = good

## Appendix 4 - Benefit Fraud Inspectorate assessment

209 The Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) has undertaken the assessment in this appendix as part of the CPA process. The assessment covers two aspects, the current level of performance and the council's proven capacity to improve. Each assessment is measured on a five-point scale (poor, fair, fair to good, good and excellent).

### Current performance

210 Overall, Havant Borough Council's HB and CTB service is providing a **fair towards good** performance. Havant Borough Council's current performance demonstrates a number of strengths. These include:

- ◆ the Benefits service *Vision and Strategy*, approved by Members on 28 May 2003 made links to the government's objectives as well as those of the council;
- ◆ the council's Strategy and Regeneration Board receives information about performance against Best Value Performance Indicators several times a year;
- ◆ Benefits service targets in relation to dealing with customer enquiries are set out in its *Customer Services Policy*;
- ◆ performance in relation to the average time for processing changes of circumstances and for accuracy meet the Performance Standards targets;
- ◆ recruitment vetting procedures are in accordance with Audit Commission recommendations; and
- ◆ strategy for combating fraud and error approved by Members.

211 However there are some areas where Havant Borough Council needs to develop further to fully meet the BFI and Department for Work and Pensions' (the Department's) Performance Standards framework. These include:

- ◆ reviews of benefit policies and procedures under the council's Race Equality Scheme, planned to take place in the period June 2002 to May 2003, had not been concluded;
- ◆ not Verification Framework compliant;
- ◆ performance in relation to the percentage of new claims decided and new rent allowance claims paid within 14 days, declined from 2001/02 to 2002/03 and was significantly below top quartile performance ;
- ◆ post opening procedures not fully reviewed; and
- ◆ declarations of interest not kept up to date.

### **Proven capacity to improve**

212 Havant Borough Council's proven capacity to improve is **fair towards good**. Havant Borough Council was able to demonstrate the following positive aspects:

- ◆ corporate Change Development Programme;
- ◆ the council has sought a variety of alternative means for the provision of services;
- ◆ the Benefits service clearly links its service to the council's objective of becoming a more prosperous borough; and
- ◆ successful bids to the Department for additional funding.

213 However, the following areas led us to question the extent to which Havant Borough Council was able to prove its capacity to improve:

- ◆ neither the council's foundation strategies nor its Community Strategy identify the role effective benefits administration can play in relation to enabling better housing;
- ◆ the deterioration in performance in relation to new claims; and
- ◆ due to costs associated with variations to the contract the existence of the outsourcing contract could reduce the speed with which changes to the service, such as adoption of the Verification Framework can be achieved.

## Appendix 5 - Framework for Comprehensive Performance Assessment

- 214 This comprehensive performance assessment was carried out under the Local Government Act 1999. Local councils have a general duty under Section 3 of this Act to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. Section 10 gives the Audit Commission the power to inspect councils' performance of the general duty of improvement.
- 215 The main elements of the assessment were:
- ◆ a self-assessment completed by the council;
  - ◆ accredited peer challenge to inform the council's self-assessment;
  - ◆ a corporate assessment of the council's overall effectiveness in supporting services to deliver improvements;
  - ◆ an assessment of the council's service delivery performance through two diagnostic assessments on:
    - ◆ management of public space;
    - ◆ contribution to developing a balanced housing market;
  - ◆ Benefit Fraud Inspectorate's (BFI) assessment of benefit services;
  - ◆ appointed auditor assessments of performance on each of the main elements of the code of audit practice; and
  - ◆ audited performance indicators, inspection reports and plan assessments.
- 216 The assessment for Havant Borough Council was undertaken by a team from the Audit Commission and took place over the period from 29 September to 3 October 2003.
- 217 This report has been discussed with the council, which has been given the opportunity to examine the Audit Commission's assessment. This report will be used as the basis for improvement planning by the council.