

## **East Cambridgeshire Service Delivery Plans 2014 – 2015**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this Service Delivery Plan is to describe what we will be doing to deliver on our duty to secure continuous improvement. It sets out the areas of improvement we will be focussing on during the coming year and explains our rationale for doing so.

The Plan is the public facing expression of our approach to performance management. Our performance management framework describes the annual cycle we follow in planning, monitoring and reviewing everything we do. Broadly speaking, there are four steps in our framework. Each year we focus on **identifying objectives** for improvement. We finalise our objectives and set out our **plans for delivery** during the forthcoming year. We **monitor performance** throughout the whole year and seek to identify what impact our service delivery has had on the community. Finally we begin to review our progress so that we are in a position to refine our objectives for the following year.

### **Our principles**

In our quest to promote East Cambridgeshire as a great place to live, work, invest and visit we have adopted three cross cutting principles:

#### **CUSTOMER FOCUS**

#### **VALUE FOR MONEY**

#### **ONE TEAM**

Treating customers courteously and fairly is a principle that is fundamental to our service. We will continue to take note of and monitor the basics; issues such as how quickly phone calls and letters are responded to, as well as a robust complaints policy which considers how complaints are handled and what lessons might be learned.

We aim to administer simple and straightforward opportunities for customers to access our services. As information technology has developed, we have been able to broaden the channels through which customers are able to contact us. For example, we offer a range of opportunities for customers to access services and information via the internet. We will be developing work in this area further over the coming year which will include the introduction of a super fast broadband to the District by 2015.

Achieving good value for money has always been important to us and will continue to be so. As a result of prudent budgetary control we have been able to keep Council Tax for the Council at the same rate as last year. However we are not immune to the pressures on public expenditure and will therefore continue to adopt savings where possible to deliver the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. We know that achieving value does not always mean limiting our expenditure. There are occasions when investing in services will help us to deliver savings in the longer term.

Our final principle is that of working as one team for the benefit of all people in East Cambridgeshire. Local authorities are large and complicated organisations and we will therefore try to minimise internal divisions for the benefit of our customers. We will structure the governance of our services in such a way that it cuts across departmental boundaries. This will enable Elected Councillors to look beyond parochial issues and retain a broad strategic perspective.

## Our vision, priorities and outcomes

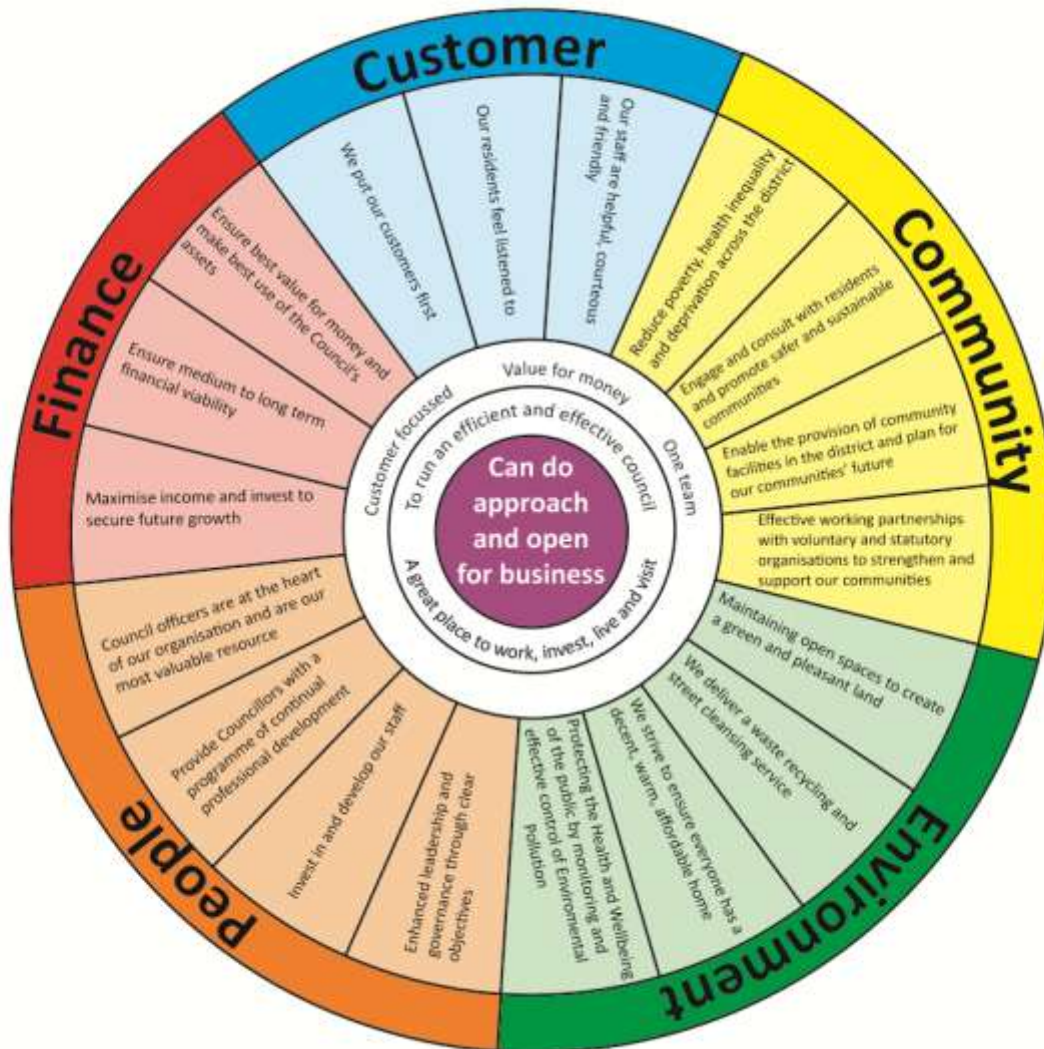
We share a vision with our partners that East Cambridgeshire is a thriving, successful and sustainable District in which all forms of deprivation and inequality are reduced. We want East Cambridgeshire to be a District that benefits every individual and community. Furthermore we want to develop community capacity. That means giving local people, voluntary organisations and businesses greater scope to work together to find local solutions to local problems.

We will be innovative in our approach by improving processes, making better use of technology, improving how we buy goods and services and providing the right support to managers and front line services. To do this we must work in partnership with others to deliver this plan and provide more cost effective services that deliver better outcomes. We have identified **five strategic outcomes** outlined in the diagram below which reflect the priorities across all our services and will deliver on the Council's priorities to:

- Facilitate the commencement of the Southern Link road by 2015
- Use Community Land Trusts as a preferred mechanism to enable people to live and work locally
- Facilitate the opening of a cinema at Downham Road/A10 by 2015
- Deliver a new District Leisure facility
- Keep council tax as low as possible through prudent budgetary control
- Develop an exceptional Station Gateway for Ely
- Develop an Eastern Gateway for Soham
- Facilitate the re-opening of Soham Railway Station, including the Newmarket link
- Facilitate economic growth within the District, including jobs growth and Apprenticeships and the introduction of super fast broadband
- Develop the opportunities for infrastructure improvement to encourage alternative means of transport
- Adopt a “can do” attitude in everything we do
- Ensure appropriate development throughout the District by planning well for infrastructure, employment and high quality design
- Embrace Localism throughout the district



Within each theme there are specific criteria which we will focus on to ensure that we deliver our outcomes.



## Levels and progress of reporting

We are improving our planning arrangements to focus on the delivery of outcomes and key priorities. The Service Delivery Plans will be the single most important documents to define the purpose and ambitions of the Council and establish the accountability of elected Members and Officers to the local community. They will help to prioritise services and refine the future vision and direction for the Council and protect and invest in priority services.

The role of elected councillors, as part of the governing body of a council, is spelt out in section 59 of the Local Government Act. It is to:

- Take an active part in reviewing matters before their council and debating issues and in councils' decision making processes;
- Review councils' objectives and policies to ensure that they are appropriate for the local area; and to
- Review councils' resource allocation, expenditure and activities, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery.

Councillors play a very important policy-making role, requiring the identification of community needs, setting objectives to meet those needs, establishing priorities between competing demands and allocating resources. They are responsible for making key decisions that will determine the Council's priorities, goals and achievements. The policy framework and the strategic management plans endorsed by councils provide the direction for the ongoing management and operation of council activities.

The Council has recently adopted smaller Committees to ensure closer alignment with departments. Consequently Principal Officers will report to Committee Members on **key corporate priorities** for their consideration. It has been agreed that other decisions are delegated to officers so that they can deal with the day-to-day running of the service without the need to constantly refer matters back to councillors. Delegations to officers are defined for this service in the relevant sections of the Council's Constitution, specifically:-

*Part 3 Responsibility for Functions Section 1 "Council Committees and other Member bodies, Objectives, Terms of Reference and Delegation to Officers."*

The Council now has a number of Service Delivery Champions who specialise in a particular service area. Their role is to encourage communication and positive action and periodically report to the Council on their activities and respond to questions and enquiries.

Each Service Delivery Champion keeps a focus on their area of responsibility by:

- Raising the profile of the service area and showing the communities of East Cambridgeshire the Council's commitment to the provision of a high quality service that meets their needs.
- Fostering the engagement of a wider range of Members in the review and development of the service area.

- Promoting effective communication and positive working relationships both within the Council and amongst partners, stakeholders and community groups.
- Promoting the positive work that is being undertaken within the District, both at a regional and national level.
- Providing positive support, and on occasions constructive challenge, to officers in driving forward the Council's agenda on the issue.

Once the Service Delivery Plans are drafted, the Manager will meet with the Assistant Director and Service Delivery Champion quarterly to review the indicators and targets and consider whether:

- The indicator should be changed to become “SMARTER”
- New indicators could be usefully introduced
- Existing indicators should be deleted as their usefulness has passed

Managers will be required to produce a Quarterly Performance Report showing performance against targets. The relevant Assistant Director will receive a report of all indicators for their service.

Progress against the Corporate Priorities will be reported to Committee on a quarterly basis at which time any risks will be considered, together with any identified remedial action required to manage areas of high risk to ensure activities or targets are achieved.

Performance reporting will enable the Committee and Assistant Director to plan ahead to consider those high risk activities or measures where targets are not being achieved, or to agree revised targets, or set up action plans to address poor performance.

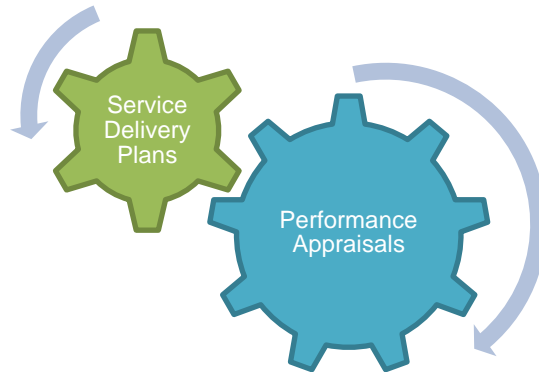
### **Forward Planning for Councillors**

The Service Delivery Plan will identify key issues over the forthcoming year that requires Committee approval and/or Councillor involvement. An example is listed below:

<b>Proposed date of decision</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Service Delivery Champion</b>	<b>Committee</b>
January 2015	Update on existing rent deposit scheme and cost effectiveness of recruiting an Income Recovery Officer	Housing	Cllr Rouse	Regulatory and Support Services Committee
November 2014	Agree to lease 2 Sanctuary properties for young people	Housing	Cllr Rouse	Regulatory and Support Services Committee
January 2015	Agree amendments to Homelessness Strategy	Housing	Cllr Rouse	Regulatory and Support Services Committee

## How our plans fit together

This Service Delivery Plan fits within a hierarchy of plans, all of which play a significant role in our service delivery arrangements. It is good practice to be able to draw a 'golden thread' between the plans and identify how individual members of staff, teams, service departments and Councillors will work towards the Council's key priorities.



## Reporting Back

Improvement planning does not stop with the implementation of actions. As was indicated in the introduction to this Service Delivery Plan, it is a cyclical process during which we constantly revisit and revise our plans in light of the changing circumstances in which we work.

In 2015 we will publish an **Improvement Review**. This document will discuss, in broad terms, whether or not we have achieved the Objectives we have set. It will include evidence such as performance statistics and progress reports on the completion of projects. It is an opportunity for us to assess our own performance and to share that evaluation with our customers and regulators.

The Improvement Review will also help plan our activity for future years and will help us to establish whether or not we are tackling the right issues and whether we are going about this in the right way.

Finally the review process will provide us with a further opportunity to reflect on the comments we have received from our customers and partner organisations.

As stated we will not publish the Improvement Review until 2015. However the actions and performance measures set out in the Service Delivery Plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis by Senior Officers and Councillors.