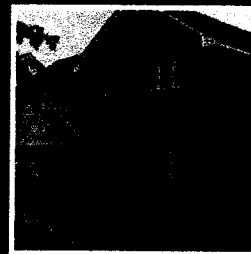


Spotlight

on our performance



Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Corporate Performance Plan
2004/05



Getting the most from Spotlight

FOREWORD

We hope you will find this year's edition of *Spotlight* both interesting and informative. As well as giving information on the Council's performance over the past year, it sets out our vision and the key priorities upon which the Council will be focussing in the current year.

We believe our overall record of performance is commendable and compares favourably with other Councils of similar size and responsibilities. Our leisure facilities have achieved national recognition and we were the first Council in Kent to be recognised by the Government Office for the South East as having an exemplary Housing Strategy. The improvements we have made to our planning procedures have simultaneously enabled members of the public to have their voices heard at Planning Committees and allowed for speedier decisions on planning applications as required by the Government.

We are not complacent, however. Public expectations of Councils are rising and we need to ensure that we provide the high quality services that the community desires and deserves. We believe we are meeting that challenge and are committed to further improvement. Through a wide range of consultation methods we are enabling residents to contribute to the shaping of future service delivery and will continue to do so.

In a few months time we will know this Council's categorisation under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment that all Councils must undergo. We are optimistic that we will be recognised as a high performing Council but this is less important than learning the lessons to improve even further. This is the essence of the CPA process.

On page 3 you will find details of how to make comments on any aspect of our performance referred to in this Corporate Performance Plan. We hope that many of you will take this opportunity to provide us with your views so that we can take account of them when planning our service delivery.



Mark Worrall,
Leader of the Council



David Hughes,
Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

These first four pages describe the information that is set out in *Spotlight* and how it links together.

Spotlight is Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Corporate Performance Plan for 2004/05. It places on record:

- Our vision for the Council.
- Our aims, priorities and targets for 2004/05 and beyond.
- Progress against our priorities for 2003/04.
- Our performance against targets for the past two years.
- Our performance compared with other councils.

Spotlight sets out our approach to corporate planning and shows how our individual plans and strategies fit together to achieve our vision, aims, priorities and targets. It shows how we contribute to achieving borough-wide, county-wide and national priorities for improvement. It also covers our Best Value Performance Plan responsibilities for 2004/05.

Spotlight is divided into the following themes. Each theme is colour coded for easy identification. The pages for most of these themes are set out in a similar way.

Corporate Affairs and Planning	Pages 5 - 10
Public Access and Involvement	Pages 11 - 16
Planning and Development	Pages 17 - 22
Housing (including Benefits)	Pages 23 - 30
Leisure and Culture	Pages 31 - 36
Street Scene	Pages 37 - 39
Waste Collection and Recycling	Pages 40 - 42
Highways and Land Drainage	Pages 43 - 47
Public and Environmental Health	Pages 48 - 52
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Community Leadership	Pages 59 - 60
Crime and Disorder Reduction	Pages 61 - 63
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Getting the most from Spotlight

OUR AIMS

Our work under each theme is guided by one or more overall aims. These aims tend to remain fairly constant from one year to another. They set out in broad terms what we are trying to achieve.

OUR IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

We feature our improvement priorities as shown in the example below and show the time period that applies to each of them. These are based on the financial year, April to March, unless specifically stated otherwise. Where appropriate, we also provide background information to help understanding.

EXAMPLE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY	PERIOD
Improve the speed of determining planning applications.	2004/05



Six of them are considered by the Council to be key priorities for improvement. These are identified by the adjacent symbol.



Next to this symbol we summarise, often with examples, the progress made against our priorities for 2003/04, as set out in last year's edition of Spotlight.



Next to this symbol we summarise how we expect to tackle our 2004/05 priorities in the year ahead.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance indicators (PIs) are a fundamental part of this performance plan. Improved performance is encouraged by setting challenging, realistic targets and then doing our best to achieve them. Our PI tables show:

- How we performed against targets in 2002/03 and 2003/04.
- Our targets for 2004/05.

Some PI's are "Best Value" PIs, these are set by the Government. They are marked "BV". We use them to compare our performance with three different groups of local authorities based on the latest, 2002/03 (or 2003/04 for BVPIs that measure public satisfaction - see below), comparable data available:

- Nationally - either all councils in England or all district councils in England, depending on which of these the Audit Commission selects as the most appropriate.
- Our 'Family Group' of most comparable authorities, as selected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA).
- All other district councils in Kent.

For each of these comparisons, we indicate how well we compare with others by using colour within the tables:

- Green indicates we are in the top quartile.
- Amber indicates we are in the inter-quartile range.
- Red indicates we are in the bottom quartile.

Where truly comparable information exists we are working towards achieving and maintaining top quartile performance.

	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2003/04	2004/05
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
BV Council Tax collected during the year. ¹	98.6%	98.4%	98.6%	98.3%	98.7%

↑ ↑ ↑
NATIONAL CIPFA KENT

Note to Table

1. A commentary associated with each table explains the reasons for any marked differences between targets and actual performance for 2003/04 and targets for 2004/05. Explanations of any marked differences between targets and actual performance for 2002/03 indicators were included in the 2003/04 edition of this Plan.

Getting the most from Spotlight

We also include Local PIs where they will help to give a more balanced and complete picture of our performance. These are marked "LP".

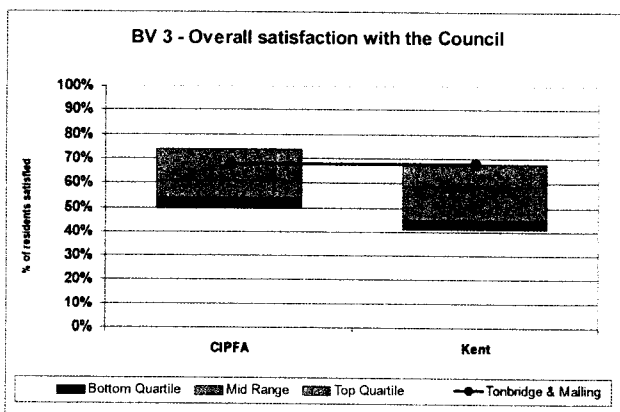
For all performance indicators, other than where individually stated, at this stage our targets for 2005/06 and 2006/07 are expected to be the same as for 2004/05. However, targets for 2005/06 and 2006/07 may change during the next one or two years, respectively, as a result of Best Value Reviews or other improvement initiatives. In this case we will report the new targets in future editions of this plan.

All performance indicator information within this plan has either already been independently checked by external auditors, or will be by 31 December 2004.

PERFORMANCE - THE PUBLIC'S VIEW

Some Best Value Performance Indicators measure public and user satisfaction with our services. So that all councils measure these satisfaction BVPIs in the same way, the Government sets out how the surveys should be carried out and specifies the exact questions to be asked. There were three such surveys in 2003/04. One was a general survey, covering a number of our services, satisfaction with the way we respond to complaints and overall satisfaction with the council. We surveyed residents across the Borough using a sample provided by the Government. The two other surveys covered housing benefit claimants and planning applicants/agents. All three surveys will be repeated in 2006/07.

Within this plan we show most of our results for the 2003/04 surveys in charts like the one below. As for other BVPIs (see above) we compare our performance with other councils. Additionally, these charts show the full quartile ranges, based on the 2003/04 results for other councils.



The 2003/04 general survey results have been independently adjusted to be more representative than their unweighted counterparts by weighting the responses according to the profile of the borough in terms of: number of adults per household, age/gender, ethnicity and work status. The weighted results are between only zero and two percentage points different to their unweighted counterparts.

Within the commentary that accompanies these charts we show our 2000/01 results for these surveys. Our 2000/01 general survey results are unweighted but they are based on a survey of the (then) newly formed, representative Citizens' Panel and, logically, we expect that weighting, if applied, would also change these results by a maximum of two percentage points. We also set out our targets for 2006/07.

For the technically minded, our 2003/04 results, base numbers and confidence intervals are provided on the page opposite.

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Our Best Value Review programme is set out on page 65. Where a review, or its improvement plan is ongoing, it is also featured under the most appropriate theme. For the improvement plans, each edition of *Spotlight* concentrates mainly on progress during the previous year and improvement actions for the year ahead.

Scrutiny Committee's work programme for 2004/05 is set out on page 66. We intend to summarise the outcomes of these reviews under the appropriate themes in the 2005/06 CPP.

FURTHER INFORMATION

i Next to this symbol we refer to strategies, plans and other published documents that provide more information than can be included in *Spotlight*. These are available on our website at www.tmbc.gov.uk or by contacting the named officer.

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THIS PLAN.

We want to improve our performance and *Spotlight* year on year. Please contact Bruce Hill, Improvement & Development Manager with any suggestions for improvement or further copies of this plan. It can also be viewed on our website at www.tmbc.gov.uk

By E-mail: Bruce.Hill@tmbc.gov.uk



By telephone: 01732 876020 (Direct line)

Public Access and Involvement

Our Overall Aim

To improve the public's access to, and influence over, services provided by the Council and the Council's role in representing the public.

BEST VALUE REVIEW - INVOLVING THE PUBLIC

Scope of the Review:

Our "Involving The Public" Best Value Review (ITP BVR) covers the following elements:

- Established and new ways in which people contact the Council, now and in the future.
 - Ways of raising awareness and informing the public and media about the Council's services, news and other issues, now and in the future.
 - Complaints made to the Council about the Council.
 - The Council's image - remote and impersonal?
 - Planning, for the next few years, how we can better consult the public.
 - Elections and electoral administration.
- Collectively, work on this review is helping to achieve the following improvement priority, as well as other improvement priorities within this theme.

Improving the Service - Progress Report

IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY	PERIOD
Improve the public's awareness of and access to Council services.	2003/05

03/04

During 2003/04 we:

- Made significant progress in some areas of the ITP BVR, although other parts experienced further delays.
- Raised awareness and improved access to a range of our services, particularly Street Scene services, with the introduction of a dedicated hotline.

04/05

During 2004/05 we will:

- Continue to implement agreed Improvement Plans.
- Complete this review and produce further Improvement Plans by Autumn 2004.

We will also continue to rationalise our approach to this review by further integrating improvements concerning "The Council's image - remote and impersonal?" element within the Improvement Plans of other elements.

i For a copy of the interim report *The Council's Image - Too Remote & Impersonal (December 2002)* contact Bruce Hill, Improvement & Development Manager, on 01732 876020 or Bruce.Hill@tmbc.gov.uk.

Otherwise our progress during 2003/04 and plans for 2004/05 and beyond, are summarised for each element of this Review in the following sections.

CONTACTING THE COUNCIL

According to a survey of our Citizens' Panel (Page 14), the public are less satisfied with the way that we respond to their letters than they are with the way that we respond when they contact us in other ways. Our Involving The Public Best Value Review (ITP BVR) aims to improve our performance in responding to letters.

IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES	PERIOD
Respond better to letters from the public.	2003/05
Enable people to pay for Council services by phone.	2003/05

During 2003/04 we:

- Established, further to the interim report on our ITP BVR, a corporate standard of providing a substantive response to all letters from the public within 10 working days, effective 01/04/04.
- Implemented Automated Telephone Payments for: Council Tax, Business Rates, Penalty Charge Notices and certain types of miscellaneous income.
- Implemented Telephone/Intranet payments for a range of bills and invoices by debit and credit cards.

During 2004/05 we will:

- Complete the ITP BVR covering the public's operational contact with the Council, including an assessment of the style and content of our letters to the public, and formulate an Improvement Plan. We anticipate that this will also help in reducing the proportion of our public that see the Council as remote and impersonal.
- Increase the range of bills and invoices that can be paid via the telephone/intranet.

i A review of the ways by which the public contact the Council is covered in our interim report *Contacting the Council - Operational (January 2003)*. For a copy of this report, which is part of the ITP BVR contact Bruce Hill, Improvement & Development Manager, on 01732 876020 or Bruce.Hill@tmbc.gov.uk.

More information on the public contacting the Council via the Internet is set out in the section on E-Government on the opposite page.

Housing - a roof over your head

Our Overall Aim

To improve the availability and quality of housing for those most in need.

HOUSING STRATEGY

The Council believes that every household in the Borough should have a good quality, affordable home. The way that we are working towards achieving this is set out in our latest Housing Strategy (2002/05). The strategy is based on a thorough review of local housing needs, stock condition data and wide consultation with other organisations concerned with housing issues. It sets out the priorities, aims and targets that have been adopted by the Council and explains how they will be delivered. We review and update the Housing Strategy each year, including new information and developments in published supplements.


Amongst the main priorities within the Housing Strategy are:

- Preventing homelessness wherever possible.
- Providing accommodation for homeless people and permanent homes for people in temporary accommodation.
- Helping people to improve sub-standard housing.
- Bringing empty private sector properties back into use.
- Assisting people to become home-owners.
- Facilitating the supply of affordable rented accommodation.
- Helping elderly and disabled people to stay in their own homes.
- Offering free energy efficiency advice.

Each of these activities is reviewed on the following pages.

We also...

- Provide free and confidential housing advice.
- Advise landlords and tenants who are concerned about their accommodation.
- Are working towards ensuring that all social housing, and 70% of all private accommodation occupied by vulnerable people, meets the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010. These are national targets for all Councils.

 Access a summary of the Housing Strategy at www.tmbc.gov.uk, or contact Lawrence Dey, Chief Housing Officer, on 01732 876207 or Lawrence.Dey@tmbc.gov.uk.



OUR PERFORMANCE - AN INDEPENDENT VIEW!

Each year the Government Office for the South-East (GOSE), the Government's regional office, carries out an assessment of our housing performance and plans to meet housing needs. We are pleased that our Housing Strategy has been assessed as "fit for purpose". This is the highest level that can be achieved. We are one of only two local authorities in Kent and one of only 14 of 67 in the South-East region that achieved this level.



PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO HOMELESSNESS

Our main partner in providing housing services is Tonbridge & Malling Housing Association (TMHA). TMHA investigates homeless claims, advises homeless applicants and recommends to the Council how it should assist applicants. Our housing association partners help us to find temporary accommodation for homeless families and then further assist by providing permanent homes. Those waiting for permanent homes are placed on our Housing Register. Run by TMHA on our behalf, the register is a list of people in priority order based on housing need.

IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES	PERIOD
Do more to prevent homelessness.	2003/05
Improve services to homeless households, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Nominating more homeless families into permanent housing.➤ Increasing the availability and quality of temporary accommodation and reducing the use of bed & breakfast.	2003/05
Enhance housing support services for those in need.	2003/05

Housing - a roof over your head

03/04

During 2003/04, amongst other actions, we:

➤ Developed and adopted a five-year Homelessness Strategy for preventing homelessness and improving services to

homeless households.

➤ Worked with TMHA to decommission the older temporary accommodation. This was completed ahead of schedule in November 2003.

➤ Extended the range of advice and support provided by our Housing Advisers to include advocacy and help with housing related court hearings.

➤ Extended the Cash Deposit Scheme, assisting more applicants to obtain private rented accommodation.

➤ Brought together multiple agencies at monthly meetings of the Joint Assessment and Referral Panel (JARP) to ensure households with special needs can obtain suitable housing and sustain their tenancies with appropriate support (Page 26).

04/05

During 2004/05 we will:

➤ Continue to implement actions set out in our Homelessness Strategy (2003/08).

Preventative measures included within the Strategy are: extending the cash deposit scheme and further promoting our housing advice service.

➤ Continue to bid for additional funding from the ODPM to fund alternatives to bed and breakfast.

➤ Ensure Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) commitments are delivered over the next 2 years.

➤ Support bids for new building, and refurbishment, made by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to the Housing Corporation that are deliverable and meet the aims and targets of our Housing Strategy.

➤ Continue to ensure high priority is given to homeless households through our Allocations Scheme.

➤ Survey residents in temporary accommodation to establish whether satisfaction with the general condition of their accommodation has improved from 3.19, in 2001, to our target of 4(+), on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good.

➤ Identify gaps in services for vulnerable households and, under the Supporting People regime, support bids for new funding that will meet their needs and reduce the risk of repeat homelessness.

Helping Homeless / Vulnerable People

	2002/03 Target	2002/03 Actual	2003/04 Target	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Target
BV176	Domestic violence refuge places per 10,000 population which we provide or support. ¹				
	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
BV183i	Average length of stay of households that include dependant children or a pregnant woman, are unintentionally homeless and in priority need in Bed and Breakfast Accommodation. ²				
	New in 2002/03	5.86 weeks	6 weeks	7.58 weeks	6 weeks
BV183ii	Average length of stay of households that include dependant children or a pregnant woman, are unintentionally homeless and in priority need in Hostel Accommodation. ³				
	New in 2002/03		0 weeks	0 weeks	0 weeks
LP10	Surgeries held per month to provide housing advice in relation to homelessness.				
	4	9	9	9	Deleted Indicator
LP76	Households provided with housing advice by our housing advice service.				
	New Indicator in 2003/04			778	800
LP11	Households from the Housing Register that were provided with permanent accommodation by RSLs. ⁴				
	250	335	250	293	250
LP16	Homelessness applications where we make a decision and write to applicant within 33 working days. ⁴				
	90%	89%	97% (2004/05)	92%	97%

Notes to Table

1. We financially support two domestic violence refuge places for Borough residents.
2. In 2003/04 we adopted the Government's national target. During 2003/04, we under-performed against our target as we had to accommodate four families that were difficult to place in permanent accommodation.
3. In 2002/03 LP11 measured the number of households that we put forward for permanent accommodation from the Housing Register. This indicator has been clarified as measuring the number of these households that are actually provided with permanent accommodation, a more effective measure of performance.
4. We receive, on average, 300 applications a year from households who claim to be homeless. We aim to further improve our performance to 97% in 2004/05 through closer working with TMHA, which investigates homeless applications on our behalf.