

**CHANGING GEAR**  
THE ROAD TO EXCELLENCE



# Annual Report

2007-08

# Performance Plan

2008-09

# Annual Report 2007-08



# Performance Plan 2008-09

## Contents

Foreword	2
Changing Gear; Corporate plan	4
Review of Service Priorities	6
<b>Active and Sustainable Communities</b>	6
Housing	6
Employment and training	9
Leisure and culture	12
Communities that are safe, confident and involved	14
<b>Natural Environment and Built Heritage</b>	18
Environmental sustainability and biodiversity	18
Tourism	20
Planning and coastal management	21
A clean and pollution-free District	25
<b>First Class Resource Management including Financial Summary</b>	27
<b>Our Business Strategy and Organisational Development Plan update</b>	38
<b>The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Single Set of National Indicators</b>	42

**Appendix 1** – Key Performance Indicator Results and Targets

**Appendix 2** – Organisational Development Plan Progress Report



# Foreword

Welcome to the Annual Report for North Norfolk District Council. We have just published our review of *Changing Gear; Corporate Plan 2006-2009*, and rolled it forward to 2011. We have again delivered improvements in our priority services. These are shown in detail within this report but we must make particular mention of improvements made in waste management, benefits, homelessness, cleanliness, pollution control, delivering the Local Development Framework, conservation and design, tourism, leisure services and countryside and parks. Some specific examples of achievements include:

- Recycling over 45% of household waste while keeping costs low
- Reducing further the amount of time it takes to process benefit claims
- Exceeding our target of rehousing 350 households from the housing register, achieving 385
- Delivering a further 57 new affordable homes to put us on track to achieve our three year target
- Responding to significantly more pollution complaints within two days
- Delivering the Local Development Framework Core Strategy as one of the first 30 to be prepared in the country and only the second to include development control policies. The Planning Inspector confirmed that it is a sound document
- Extending facilities at Victory Swim & Fitness Centre at no cost to the Council
- Negotiating a contract with the RNLI to provide beach lifeguards at beaches in North Norfolk has enabled us to add investment in the service
- Retaining a Green Flag Award at Holt Country Park
- Investing in the North Norfolk Information Centre in Cromer
- Achieving the Investors in People standard

...and many more.

Overall we have achieved or very nearly achieved our target for 81% (79) of our key performance indicators. Details of all the key projects and performance information for all service areas can be found in the relevant sections of this report.

## What the Audit Commission has told us

“Performance across services is generally improving. The Council’s 59 per cent improvement against national performance indicators in 2006/07 is in line with the average for English district councils and 41 per cent of the indicators were in the top 25 per cent. This is above the national average for district councils of 33 per cent.

There is a clear, shared partnership vision that the District should be ‘a place where everyone can enjoy a high quality of life and where the unique and attractive environment is sustained into the future’. To deliver this vision the Council has consulted with local people and has identified continued service improvement in housing, benefits, recycling, planning, good quality jobs and training, and services focused around young people as its priorities.”

We have carried out a review of *Changing Gear; Corporate Plan 2006-2009* because Central Government is moving to a three year funding programme for local government. This is likely to start for the financial year 2008/09. It makes sense to ensure that our corporate plan, together with the Community Plan for North Norfolk, can make the best use of this situation by synchronising with this programme. This review started in the autumn of 2007 so that a new corporate plan is now in place for 2008-2011. The review included looking at the current service priorities and resources and the action that needed to be taken, reviewing and amending targets and setting new targets. As a part of the review we examined whether or not we are doing enough in a number of areas, particularly the areas of equality and diversity, the environment, sustainability, biodiversity and climate change and adjusted our priorities and targets for the three year plan to take account of these.

There are also a number of challenges and opportunities that we have identified specifically for 2008/09. These include:

- Maintaining and enhancing the improvements we have made since 2006
- Responding to the Local Government Review for Norfolk and Suffolk that has produced draft proposals for unitary local government in Norfolk and Suffolk
- Improving Customer Services
- Rising to the challenge of achieving our environmental sustainability targets
- Providing enhanced business support for local businesses and further learning opportunities
- Increasing opportunities for leisure and cultural activities, for example new play facilities.

We are satisfied that the councillors and staff of North Norfolk District Council are delivering the services that you need at the quality levels that you expect and you can see from our reviewed Corporate Plan that we also plan to improve even further.



**Councillor Virginia Gay**  
*Leader of the Council*



**Philip Burton**  
*Chief Executive*

# Changing Gear; Corporate Plan

## How we have performed so far

*Changing Gear; Corporate Plan 2006-2009* set out what we intended to do between 2006 and 2009. Changing Gear kept us focussed on achieving our goal of excellence.

Changing Gear is all about what we intend to do, but what about results? We are a publicly-funded organisation and we are accountable to the people of North Norfolk for our performance. We appreciate the significance of this and we regularly provide information to show whether we have achieved the outcomes we think will bring real benefits to the District. This annual report is a key way of providing this information in a comprehensive and accessible way.

This Annual Report provides the opportunity to present and assess achievement against our targets and delivery of our plans. This will enable us to assess our progress in achieving our Corporate Plan objectives.

The document presents an overview of how we have performed against each of our service priorities and our organisational development plan up to 2008. Our Service Priorities were designed to:

- ▶ Support and encourage active sustainable communities
- ▶ Protect and sustain our natural environment and built heritage
- ▶ Deliver first class resource management to provide excellent services and the best outcomes for the District.

You can see for each of these service priorities our progress in achieving our targets and the key actions we have taken in the last year. This document is a key tool for assessing our performance.

'Appendix 1 – Key Performance Indicator Results and Targets' includes the national set of Best Value Performance Indicators that all Councils use to monitor and improve their performance in delivering services to local people plus our local targets set within our Corporate Plan. It shows our performance towards achieving the targets set in last year's plan and sets targets for each of the next three years. Where there are new National Indicators we are not able to set targets for 2008/09 as this is the first year these indicators will be collected but will set them for 2009/10. Some indicators that were Best Value indicators have become National Indicators. We are able to set targets for these indicators. See **More Information** opposite for the link to Appendix 1.

'Appendix 2 - Organisational Development Plan Progress Report' presents a full set of progress reports for our organisational development plan. These appendices are available on our web site. See **More Information** opposite for the link to Appendix 2.

The Audit Commission produce an Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for the Council. This letter provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council, drawing on audit, inspection and performance assessment work. If we have information from the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter relevant to a service priority we have included this independent opinion in the appropriate section. Overall the Audit Commission has told us.

"The Council's performance is mostly improving in its priority areas, such as housing and recycling." and

"The Council continues to focus on the current and emerging issues for local people."

Further extracts from the letter are given below and throughout this Annual Report but to view the complete Audit and Inspection Letter see **More Information** below for the link to the document.

## What we plan to achieve

We plan to build on these strengths and improvements and address any areas that still need action. The revised corporate plan *Changing Gear; Corporate Plan 2008–2011* is designed to keep us on the Road to Excellence. We will achieve the plan by;

- ▶ taking action during 2008/09, and
- ▶ setting more challenging targets for 2008/09 and beyond.

You can view *Changing Gear; Corporate Plan 2008–2011* on our website. See **More Information** below for details.

## What the Audit Commission has told us

“Councillors and senior officers ensure that priorities continue to reflect the issues that are important to local people.”

“A higher than average proportion of performance indicators are in the top 25 per cent for councils nationally and generally services have improved.”

“Research confirmed the existing corporate priorities, but noted some increasingly prominent issues such as coastal erosion, in which the Council is now taking a national lead. Keeping abreast of important local issues enables the Council to use its resources to achieve outcomes that are relevant to North Norfolk residents.”

“The corporate plan contains specific and measurable targets to drive up performance and these are cascaded into service planning. For example the Council is aiming to achieve a 47.5 per cent recycling rate in 2008/09 and 50 per cent in 2009/10.”

“The Council’s capacity to continue to deliver its priorities remains stretched. Unexpected and significant issues, such as a controversial major retail planning application place further pressures on resources. Although the Council is carrying on with business as usual, the current review by the Boundary Commission is a further pressure as officers and councillors focus on the issues that this raises. This presents a risk to continued service improvement.”

“The overall score of 2 [for the Use of Resources] indicates that the Council is performing adequately overall.”

# Our Service Priorities

## Active and Sustainable Communities

### Our key housing targets for 2007/08

Our three year aim of providing 270 homes by 2009 remains a challenging target. However, we have already delivered 165 from 2006 to 2008 and are confident of achieving our three year target.

We exceeded our target of rehousing 350 households from the housing register each year by rehousing 385 households.

We have significantly increased the number of homes brought up to the decent homes standard from 93 last year to 151 in 2007/08, while falling short of our own target of 195.

We brought only two empty homes back into use in 2007/08, short of our target of 25. The target for the year was ambitious and has been revised downwards for this coming financial year to 10 units. The Strategic Housing Team is currently drafting an enforcement policy which will be presented to September Cabinet for adoption. The Council will then be able to undertake enforcement action in respect of empty homes.

We allocated 105 disabled facilities grants in 2007/08 short of our target of 135.

No homeless households have been placed in bed and breakfast accommodation during 2007/08. We provided permanent housing for 94.12% of homeless households within 40 weeks, only just short of our target of 95% and a significant increase on last year's performance of 87.60%.

We continue to improve our performance and exceed our targets for dealing with benefit claims. We reduced the time taken to process changes of circumstances to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit to 6.8 days, better than our target of 7.0 days and again better than last year (8.2 days). We reduced the amount of time taken to process new claims for benefits from 23.6 days in 2006/07 to 22.7 days.

## **Key Outcomes for 2007/08**

- We set out to maintain the number of affordable dwellings granted planning permission but achieved only 57 this year compared to 108 last year.
- We have prepared planning applications for temporary stopping places (TSP) for Gypsies and Travellers in the Cromer and Fakenham areas with these applications to be considered during 2008/09.
- We have further improved processing times in Benefits and will continue to identify opportunities for improvement.
- We have implemented the Local Housing Allowance Scheme by April 2008. This is a new scheme to work out entitlement to Housing benefit. This is a successful outcome from work with partners including landlords, other local authorities and voluntary organisations.
- We have submitted the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, which requires high proportions of new homes to be affordable, to the Planning Inspectorate.
- We have implemented a new IT system for Private Sector Housing including transfer of data and training.
- We have made Benefits system enhancements to allow tenants to pay by BACS and for the introduction of Local Housing Allowances.
- We have launched a Housing Forum comprising of interested stakeholders to inform the production of the Housing Strategy.
- The Housing Needs Survey and Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey jointly commissioned with partners in the Rural East Anglia Partnership were completed.
- We contributed to a review of hostels in the Rural East Anglia Partnership Area including North Norfolk, in partnership with Supporting People and other stakeholders.
- We undertook a review of homelessness services provided in North Norfolk to inform the development of the North Norfolk District Council 2008/11 Homelessness Strategy.
- We further reduced the use of temporary accommodation and the size of the temporary accommodation portfolio in line with the Government's target to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010.
- We undertook a business process review of the main services delivered by the Strategic Housing Team which focussed on delivering improved customer service.
- We lead on the negotiation of the priorities and measures for the Improving Housing Outcome Area in the Norfolk Local Area Agreement.
- We are leading on the production of a Housing and Housing Related Support Strategy for Young People in Norfolk and have commissioned research to inform the strategy.

## **Key Actions for 2008/09**

- We will produce an updated Housing Strategy developed upon up to date Housing Needs and Housing Market Assessment and Private Sector Housing Stock Condition data.
- We will develop an updated Homelessness Strategy based upon the findings of the review of homelessness services in the district.

- We will further reduce the Council's portfolio of temporary accommodation in line with the Government target to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 while maintaining a sufficient level of temporary accommodation to minimise the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation as temporary accommodation.
- We will procure an IT solution for the Housing Options Service to improve the management of the Housing Options service.
- We will review the Council's Allocations Policy and implement the newly adopted policy. We will assess options for improving choice and transparency in the allocation of social housing in consultation with partners and make recommendations to the NNDC Cabinet on a way forward.
- We will produce a Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy to inform future investment decisions in the private sector housing stock and to inform future policy reviews.
- We will further develop the Empty Homes Strategy and provide advice and assistance to owners of empty homes in bringing them back into use.
- We will develop an enforcement policy to address issues of non decency in the private sector housing stock and for bringing empty homes back into use.
- We will continue to lead on the development of the Young Persons Strategy for Norfolk to ensure that the housing related support needs and accommodation needs of young people are identified and services developed to meet the needs identified.
- We will reduce the time taken from receipt of the assessment of Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) applications to the approval of the grant to nine months and propose to increase the number of DFGs approved per annum until the current waiting list has been cleared.

#### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“The Council has been generally successful in improving performance in housing. The way in which homeless people are dealt with is better than average, with none placed in bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation since 2005. The accuracy in dealing with housing benefit claims remained comparatively low in 2006/07, but the speed of processing these claims improved to being among the best nationally. For example the time taken to process new claims reduced from 63 days in 2005/06 to 24 days in 2006/07. This performance has slipped slightly in the current year and is being closely monitored. The number of affordable homes completed in 2006/07 increased to 108 compared to 81 in the previous year, but in the current year only 62 dwellings are expected to be provided – a shortfall of ten affordable homes against the Council's target. People who are among the more vulnerable members of society have seen increased provision to meet their needs, but it is not clear that this improvement can be sustained.”

“...Similar restructuring opportunities have been identified in the current review of strategic housing”

## Our key employment and training targets

**We have provided support to 220 people in total in 2007/08 compared to our target of providing support for 300 individuals or businesses.**

**We have greatly exceeded our target of 690 people participating in training by over 70% as a total of 1,173 people took part in training during 2007/08. A total of 801 people took part in one of the various Learning for Everyone initiatives across the District and 370 in Food Safety training.**

### Key Outcomes for 2007/08

- The North Norfolk Business Forum will become a company limited by guarantee. This enhances their status in the business community and places them on a formal footing as the official business stakeholder group for businesses in the district. This achieves this year's objective for the development of the Forum. See website for more details.
- The North Norfolk Skills Partnership has published a framework for action and is working alongside the Business Forum to take this forward.
- We have carried out all food and health and safety inspections due in high risk premises.
- We developed and implemented a scheme of targeted public health risk based inspections of licensed premises.
- We produced a business case with partners, including the East of England Development Agency (EEDA), as the next step in delivering a North Norfolk Enterprise Hub and Innovation Centre. We produced a full feasibility research paper and completed a business plan.
- We have secured funding of £146,000 for a pilot of the virtual Business Support and Innovation Programme to take place between during 2008.
- We have carried out major research projects to build a picture of the key issues for the North Norfolk economy. This included;

Research to complete the true picture of North Norfolk's business stock, identifying how to gain and record information on non-VAT registered businesses.

Mapping North Norfolk District Council priorities against European, national, regional and sub-regional priorities to demonstrate a close alignment to European, national, regional and sub-regional policy and gain investment support to deliver the Community Strategy, the Corporate Strategy and Economic Development Strategy for North Norfolk.

Preparing a deprivation study of North Norfolk providing concise and understandable information below super output area level (i.e. population centres of 500+) to show deprivation at much lower levels of population concentration. This will provide evidence of need which will provide ammunition for levering in funding.

We have published the results of the research projects. This helps voluntary and community organisations to prove their objectives match those of funding bodies.

We have carried out research on the effectiveness of the broadband bandwidth and mobile network coverage across North Norfolk to discover gaps in provision which undermine business competitiveness and contribute to rural deprivation and social exclusion. The results of the research have been reviewed by the North Norfolk Business Forum and it is enabling them to lobby for improved broadband services.

- We have submitted the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, including provision of a range of employment land sites to support the local economy, to the Planning Inspectorate.
- We have successfully completed the Objective 2 programme.
- We have developed knowledge of the replacement European and regional programmes.
- We have submitted a €1.3m bid under 'Interreg 4b North West Europe' (a programme funded through the European Regional Development Fund – ERDF) for a range of economic development initiatives.
- We have supported the North Norfolk Business Forum which has assessed the possibility of a business mentoring scheme for North Norfolk. Pilot activity is taking place. The Business Forum has now taken on responsibility for developing this further including seeking funding to develop and widen the programme.

### **Key Actions for 2008/09**

- We will provide support to the Business Forum to develop the company with the ultimate aim of becoming the representative group for businesses in North Norfolk.
- We will publish an online business directory for all businesses in North Norfolk.
- We will make a decision on what financing route should be used to take the Enterprise Hub and Innovation Centre project forward. We will secure partnership support from principal colleges and schools for the project.
- We will help to develop a communal sorting and holding facility for the incubation of live crustaceans for North Norfolk fishermen, to ensure a high quality product for marketing and distribution to Europe. This is subject to the successful outcome to the public hearing being held at Wells to determine the status of the land under the 2006 Common Land Act.
- We will roll out the virtual Business Support and Innovation Programme, subject to successful completion of the pilot programme.
- We will provide a co-ordinated approach to the development of RAF Coltishall and Neatishead to maximise contribution of redundant RAF sites by attracting the best possible use of the site.
- We will consolidate the Gateway project across the District providing Information, Advice and Guidance in each of our seven key settlements.
- We will align resources for the roll out of the National Diploma which is designed to provide competence based skills development in line with local industry needs.
- We will establish a unique selling point for North Norfolk to attract new business investment and potential employers.
- Recent economic shocks have led to a number of key businesses requiring business support. We have activated teams to ensure that jobs and investment stay within North Norfolk.

### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“In line with corporate priorities, effective support has been provided to local businesses, for example the Council's economic development unit has safeguarded a yacht building operation at Hoveton by supporting its relocation to bespoke refurbished premises. The award winning Learning for Life project team has provided redundancy skills training and advice to over 150 individuals. Partnership with three other local authorities helped secure a high level of external funding that has enabled the Council to provide free 'Safer Food Better Business' food safety management training to over 200 businesses.”



## Our key leisure and culture targets for 2007/08

**The number of visitors to museums exceeded our target in the past year achieving 507.42 visits to and usages of museums per 1,000 population. This greatly exceeds the target of 170 we originally set to achieve by 2009.**

**We exceeded our 2007/08 target of 122,675 visits to Council supported theatres by 3,939, achieving 126,614. This means that we have achieved the target set in *Changing Gear; Corporate Plan 2006-2009*.**

**We have not achieved our target of 547,013 for participation at Council sporting facilities, falling short at 472,751. This target has been reviewed and amended to an annual target of 532,450.**

**We greatly exceeded our target of organising 30 events at Council-managed facilities delivering 62 events, an increase of 18 on last year.**

**Our target for 2007/08 was to provide two new play and leisure facilities for young people. We did not achieve this but the contract for providing the facilities was awarded in April 2008 and the installation of five new play facilities is planned to start in June 2008.**

### Key Outcomes for 2007/08

- We have secured funding from the National Lottery to provide new play and leisure facilities and leisure activities at locations throughout the District.
- We have extended the gym at Victory Swim and Fitness Centre in North Walsham to accommodate more gym members due to an increase in demand.
- We have extended the sports outreach service to more schools across the District with opportunities for youngsters to progress to safe established sports clubs based at our Stalham, North Walsham and Cromer Sports Centres.
- We have set up 'Active North Norfolk' the Community Sports Network to serve the District. Partners include NHS Norfolk, Local Area Partnerships (LAP), DC Leisure Management Ltd, Active Norfolk, 'Volunteer Norfolk', Northern Area Youth Work Team, Paston College, Sports Clubs, North Norfolk School Sports Partnership and North Norfolk Community Partnership.
- We are working in partnership with Lloyds Chemist which is providing £100,000 sponsorship across the county for a two year pilot project, which will attract a further £100,000 match funding from The National Sports Foundation. This project provides healthy walking sessions for people with obesity, high blood pressure and other minor ailments.
- We have built on the success of the 'Art in the Park' events programme at Holt Country Park in 2007/8 and extended the range of opportunities available.
- We have developed, in partnership with Norfolk Music Works and Orchestras Live, further projects to enable young people to experience and participate in orchestral music.
- We have developed, with the Sheringham Little Theatre, an extensive programme of outreach work for young people living across North Norfolk.
- We have identified a site and adopted policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy to establish a new Country Park for Fakenham, at Edmondson's Acre in the Wensum Valley, to coordinate public access, wildlife conservation and link visitor attractions.
- We have developed and agreed the North Norfolk Play Strategy and agreed an action plan

to be implemented from 2008.

- We have successfully set up a contract with the RNLI to manage the lifeguard service at four of our beaches Cromer, Sheringham, Mundesley and Sea Palling.

### **Key Actions for 2008/09**

- We will produce a draft Cultural Strategy that provides a vision for the Leisure and Cultural Services section to meet the needs of the community for the next three years.
- We will investigate future external funding to further sustain the Sports, Arts, Parks and other cultural activities which we provide or partner other organisations to deliver.
- We will maintain and develop the website for Leisure and Cultural Services to make information more accessible for the local community.
- We will investigate the possibility of completing a survey of Leisure Centres to establish the user profile of the facilities especially in relation to meeting the Equality and Diversity agenda.
- We will, through the Community Sports Network, further develop partnerships with other agencies including NHS Norfolk, Schools, DC Leisure Management Ltd, Local Area Partnerships, the Local Strategic Partnership, Active Norfolk, Colleges, Youth Service and Community Safety Partnership to offer sport/active recreation opportunities to the community. We will also write an action plan to secure external funding from Sport England.
- We will start implementing the North Norfolk Play Strategy action plan. This will include increasing access to fun places to play, making open spaces adventurous, exciting, fun places where young people can drop in, hang out and have fun.

We will provide new play and leisure facilities for young people at Bacton, Briston, Little Snoring, Neatishead and Baconsthorpe and provide leisure activities at other locations throughout the District.

### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“Leisure and cultural services continue to improve, for example, the contractor who runs the leisure centres is investing £275,000 in extending the gym at the Victory Pool complex.”

## **Our key community engagement targets for 2007/08**

**We only just missed our target for the participation of voters in elections in 2007/08 achieving 46.4% against a target of 47%. This was, however, a 3.6% increase from the previous elections held in 2003/04.**

**The percentage of parish councils holding elections in 2007/08 was 18.9%. We must increase this level to 30% by 2011.**

**We have promoted the active involvement in local area partnerships of parish and town councils. By 2007 65.57% of councils are actively involved exceeding our target of 60%.**

**We managed 478 anti-social behaviour referrals during 2007/08 against a target of 150 per year. We have achieved, with our partners, a success rate of 98.5% where there is no further anti-social activity. This is a significant increase on last year's 87%, and significantly higher than our target of 60%, due to the increasing effectiveness of anti-social behaviour interventions.**

### **Key Outcomes for 2007/08**

- We approved the Communications Strategy and the Corporate Identity Manual in May 2008 and both are being implemented across the Council. This is the end of the planning for improvement in Communications and Branding and represents the start of the main implementation period.
- We have made changes to the way we communicate with local residents, visitors and partners. This includes a range of new and improved signs and information panels. To see the full details of all that has happened see Appendix 2 – Organisational Development Plan Update.
- We improved the Council Year Book to make it more informative and easier to read. The year book contains a range of reference information about the Council which is useful for members, officers, the public and partner organisations.
- We put in place arrangements to work with other agencies to develop actions against persistent anti-social behaviour and environmental crime offenders.
- We assumed responsibility for issuing premises licenses in respect of all gambling activities from the Magistrates Court.
- Prior to the May 2007 elections we obtained significant media coverage encouraging members of the community to stand for election as councillors. Alongside which posters and leaflets were created and distributed across the District.
- We have prepared and implemented a Crime & Disorder protocol, for referring to Crime & Disorder issues (Section 17) in the planning process, with the Community Safety & CCTV Manager.
- We have implemented a new system for the national concessionary bus passes.
- We have met our targets for anti-social behaviour action.
- We have implemented our statutory responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 including Every Child Matters, Working Together to Safeguard Children.

- We have reviewed new and existing health related legislation policies and strategies, e.g. Tackling Health Inequalities, Strong and Prosperous Communities, Young People Strategy and Choosing Health to ensure the Council effectively and proactively fulfils its statutory duties and responsibilities in relation to the health improvement agenda.
- We have co-ordinated and delivered prevention, diversion and interventions to tackle anti-social behaviour with focus on those who have the greatest impact on their immediate community.
- We have initiated and maintained contact with North Norfolk diverse communities, i.e. migrant workers, young people, older adults and long-term unemployed.
- We updated the Community Emergency response plans including the Coastal Flood Plan and Off-site Plan for the Bacton Terminal.
- We participated in exercises for the Flood Plan and for Bacton with associated follow-up work.
- We responded to the flooding at Walcott in November 2007.
- We took part in the county-wide Flood Siren Review including in North Norfolk extensive consultation with coastal communities. We published the results of the review.

### **Key Actions for 2008/09**

- We will work with local groups and organisations to develop our Community Engagement Strategy.
- We will facilitate and support seven area forums, one for each local partnership area. These forums will encourage communications between the community, parish councils, district and county councils.
- We will apply for funding of £210,000 for Access to Nature to increase opportunities for people with learning disabilities to improve their health and sense of well being through outdoor physical activity, increase and widen participation in conservation activities, and increase opportunities for communities to enjoy the natural environment.
- We will continue to work with one parish and one town council on a pilot project called 'Branching out in Your Community' in order to increase knowledge among residents about Councillors' roles and how residents may become a councillor.
- We will set up a Crime & Disorder Committee as required under the Police Justice Act 2006 to provide a clear audit trail for compliance with Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and provide procedure for Members to take decisions on crime related issues via mainstream services.
- We will develop a third party reporting system around race hate incidents to ensure robust systems are in place to report hate incidents, and a representative from NNDC will be appointed to be an appropriate referral person.
- We will deliver training session to Members on the responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 to raise Members awareness of their responsibilities for considering crime reduction when making all decisions.
- We will carry out further work with other agencies to develop actions against persistent anti-social behaviour and environmental crime offenders.
- We will create a range of NNDC Information Packs to support economic and tourism development, residents and local community groups.
- We will develop our website and intranet in conjunction with Customer Service requirements to improve accessibility, customer satisfaction and usage.

- We will deliver two suitable Temporary Stopping Places (TSP) as identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Consultation Forum and after a successful grant bid from Communities and Local Government.
- We will develop the Norfolk Better Regulation Partnership with other enforcement agencies and Norfolk local authorities in order to ensure a consistent enforcement approach is taken to Norfolk businesses. We will develop a joint compliance code for regulators.
- We will consult with customers to understand their requirements for an integrated customer services approach.
- We will develop the use of Community Payback Scheme by mainstream services and Partnership Projects. It will add value to the services provided by the Authority; reduce the costs of delivering Partnership Projects; and contribute to the reduction of repeat offending.
- We will support North Norfolk Youth Voice in their development and implementation of a North Norfolk Youth Strategy.

### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“Increasing emphasis is being given to ensuring that services meet the needs of all groups within the community, although performance is currently weak regarding equality and diversity issues.”

“The Council continues to contribute positively to the quality of life for local people. Demand for activities for young people has reduced, indicating progress in meeting this need. But it is still important to residents and the Council continues to engage with young people to ensure that they receive the services they require. . . . North Norfolk remains one of the lowest areas for crime. Most categories of crime reduced in 2006/07 and fear of crime is low.”

“Funding has been secured for a countywide community cohesion post that the Council will host. Partnership work with faith groups is underway so that issues, such as access to services and the role these groups can play in the community, can be identified.”

“Partnership working continues to be effective in improving services, for example in the joint environmental health project with the Health and Safety Executive on work-related accommodation and the exploitation of migrant workers.”

“Political restructuring has improved input by councillors. The size of the cabinet has reduced and two cabinet support members now assist each portfolio holder. This enables increased focus on specific areas and councillors’ skills and knowledge are well used, for example the cabinet member providing support on equality issues used to work for the Race Relations Council. An open and inclusive philosophy enables councillors of all political persuasions to contribute to the work of the Council. A range of training sessions has been set up for the high proportion of new councillors. Although attendance has been variable, these sessions have been well received. This helps ensure a better informed and more positive approach to decision taking.”



# Natural Environment and Built Heritage

## Our key environmental sustainability and biodiversity targets for 2007/08

**Four out of five houses (82%) built in North Norfolk during 2007/08 were built on previously developed (brownfield) land. This is far in excess of the Government's and our target of 60%.**

**We continue to increase the percentage of household waste we recycle. Our target for 2007/08 was 45%; we achieved 45.11%.**

### Key Outcomes for 2007/08

- We have submitted the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, promoting sustainable development and addressing climate change issues, including seeking 10% of the energy requirement of new development to be from renewable sources, to the Planning Inspectorate.
- We have prepared a Design Guide for consultation which promotes sustainable construction methods and high quality design.
- We held a successful and enjoyable Green Build event at Felbrigg Hall over the weekend of 15 and 16 September 2007. Thirty-five exhibitors and more than 3,000 people attended. There were six speakers, and customer satisfaction levels for attendees and exhibitors was very high.
- We have maximised domestic waste recycling within the current service and increased the percentage of recyclable material collected.
- We have increased performance within refuse collection contract bringing missed collections and complaints down near to the industry norm.
- We have maximised the number of commercial waste recycling customers with dry recycling collection agreements increasing the number of customers from 90 in 2006/07 to just under 700 in 2007/08.

### Key Actions for 2008/09

- We will start the review of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) to ensure up-to-date TPO coverage.
- We will carry out specialist training for staff required to interpret and operate the proposed new Water Conservation Regulations and revised Energy Performance requirements.
- We will continue to promote and expand the number of commercial waste customers.
- We will increase the proportion of commercial waste customers that use the recycling service.
- We will hold the Green Build event at Felbrigg Hall over the weekend of 13 and 14 September 2008. We will have in excess of 40 exhibitors and eight speakers. We will include added attractions of a farmers' market, a food court featuring local, organic and sustainable food, and family entertainment.
- We will prepare a Corporate Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan, and establish a Board to oversee production of the plan. We will also identify and achieve a number of 'quick-wins' in particular areas. These will include:

a new webpage on our website providing links to environmental information for the District's residents,

a dedicated energy saving campaign at the Cromer office,

training for Development Control officers and Members on sustainable construction and biodiversity, and

the North Norfolk Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“Services costs are generally at or below the average for district councils, with some high levels of performance, such as in recycling.”

“The Council continues to deliver high levels of recycling, retaining its position amongst the highest performers with a further increase to over 41 per cent in 2006/07. The cost of waste collection remained amongst the lowest. . . . Residents continue to benefit from a clean environment and efficient waste and recycling service.”

“Consultancy is being used effectively to ensure that informed decisions are made, for example on the recycling of food waste. A food waste scheme is planned to start in the summer and is projected to further reduce the amount going to landfill by five per cent.”

## Our key tourism targets for 2007/08

**Last year there were 440,689 uses of our Tourist Information Centres in Cromer, Holt, Sheringham and Wells-next-the-sea. This was 60,689 more than our target and an increase of over 70,000 on last year.**

**We had 158 direct on-line bookings during 2007/08 and we are on target to achieve 600 direct annual online bookings for accommodation within North Norfolk via the Bookability facility by 2011.**

### Key Outcomes for 2007/08

- We have built the new North Norfolk Information Centre. The public opening will take place in August 2008. The Centre will be the information hub for North Norfolk particularly co-ordinating a call centre approach for tourist enquiries more effectively. The aim is to move away from traditional approaches and create an environment similar to that of a travel agent where individuals can navigate their way through web information or are provided with assistance by an information support officer.
- We have started to create the infrastructure to use the Centre as a 21st Century ICT based information hub that can be used by tourist visitors and residents alike to access local information.
- We have submitted the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, to support new tourism developments in North Norfolk, while at the same time protecting the environment, to the Planning Inspectorate.
- We published the 2008 North Norfolk Accommodation Guide.

### Key Actions for 2008/09

- We will publish and distribute the 2009 North Norfolk Accommodation Guide with an increased number of advertisers.

### What the Audit Commission has told us

“The continuing programme of business process reviews is resulting in increased efficiency, for example by transferring resources from environmental health and from management of the tourist information service into the new customer services team allowing scope for staff rationalisation and the deletion of some temporary posts. Similar restructuring opportunities have been identified in the current review of strategic housing. Creation of a customer services team has led to a more customer-orientated approach, coupled with greater productivity and the prospect of multi-skilling.”

## **Our key planning and coastal management targets for 2007/08**

**We have achieved our target of preparing character appraisals and management plans for 10% (eight) of our conservation areas achieving 10.97%.**

**We are on track to achieve our target of increasing planning application decisions taken under delegation to 90% by 2009, increasing the percentage from 85.85% in 2006/07 to 87.62% in 2007/08.**

**We did not achieve our target of moving to top quartile position in major planning applications determined within 13 weeks, achieving 62.07%. We missed our target of 91.61% for standard planning applications determined in 8 weeks achieving 86.14%. We are achieving above average performance in determining minor planning applications within eight weeks at 67.46% but short of our target of 72.00%.**

**We submitted the Core Strategy of the North Norfolk Local Development Framework by June 2007 as planned.**

**We have been closely involving stakeholders with a coastal interest in developing a 'Coastal Management Plan' to explore the issues arising from the consequences of coastal change. Meanwhile the LDF Core Strategy Submission Document includes provisions to help safeguard the future of settlements experiencing threats from coastal change. The Site Specific Proposals Document (Preferred Options) incorporates proposed allocations to help meet the future needs of the coastal 'Service Villages'.**

### **Key Outcomes for 2007/08**

- We have begun to involve local communities and other key stakeholders in developing the Coastal Management Plan. Five workshops were held in Coastal Service Villages.
- We are developing adaptation projects together with The Environment Agency, The Department of Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research and others.
- We presented an amended Shoreline Management Plan to the new Council before the end of 2007 as planned. Cabinet approved it: its final adoption was deferred pending adoption of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.
- We have investigated ways to support coastal communities which will be incorporated into the Coastal Management Plan.
- We have submitted the Local Development Framework Core Strategy to the Planning Inspectorate and are awaiting the inspectors report.
- We have carried out two public consultations on the draft Conservation Area Appraisals. A further three will be completed during 2008/09.
- We have prepared a new North Norfolk District Council Design Guide to support the Local Development Framework.
- We hosted the Local Government Association (LGA) Coastal Special Interest Group Annual Field Visit June 2007.
- We successfully completed the Cromer Township Heritage Initiative. The Initiative won the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Regional Award for Regeneration in 2006.

- We adopted the Morston Village Design Statement and it is now being used for development control purposes by the Planning Service.
- We completed the fieldwork for Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA) and Conservation Areas and Management Plans (CAMPs) for 10 Conservation Areas.
- We have finalised arrangements for Broads Authority to assume control of Broads Authority planning service. This was implemented on 1 April 2007.
- We have reviewed internal consultation arrangements with Conservation, Design & Landscape Service.
- We have reviewed the structure of Development Control Committees (East, West and Joint) and implemented the new arrangements.
- We have reviewed the scheme of delegation for the determination of planning applications.
- We reviewed the Highway Authority relationship to extend consultation in disputed cases.
- We have made changes to the Land Charges search document needed for the introduction of home information packs.
- We have corrected the corporate electronic maps for the new map base from Ordnance Survey.
- We have completed matching of Council Tax/NNDR data with the Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) database, to enable participation in the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) project.
- We have evaluated options for implementing a replacement planning and property-related back-office system.
- We have prepared a protocol for the Council's own planning applications and for applications made by or on behalf of other bodies/ Agencies with whom the Council is in partnership.
- We have carried out consultation with planning agents in implementing the new national arrangements for managing the receipt of planning applications to ensure we take account of local priorities.
- We repaired storm damage to the Walcott sea wall.
- We carried out refurbishment works to the sea defences at Sheringham, Mundesley and Bacton/Walcott.

#### **Key Actions for 2008/09**

- We will adopt the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy subject to the Inspectors report in September 2008.
- We will undertake further consultation on development sites for inclusion in the Local Development Framework (LDF) Site Specific Proposals.
- We will hold a scoping meeting with key agencies and other parties with an interest in coastal management.
- We will involve local communities in developing a vision for the Coastal Management Plan.
- We will agree and adopt a composite final Shoreline Management Plan with all relevant authorities for the coast from Kelling to Lowestoft.

- We will contribute, with partners, to production of the draft Shoreline Management Plan for the coast from Kelling westwards.
- We will carry out significant works at Overstrand together with continuing refurbishment at Bacton/Walcott and Sheringham.
- We are seeking grant aid to review the Coast Defence Strategy.
- We will undertake the fieldwork for Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA) and Conservation Areas and Management Plans (CAMPs) for a further 8 Conservation Areas.
- We will adopt the Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA) and Conservation Areas Management Plans (CAMPs) for the 10 Conservation Areas for which fieldwork was completed in 2007/08.
- We will deliver the Annual Graham Allen Award for Conservation and Design
- We will organise Design and Tree Awareness Seminars for Councillors and Officers
- We will review Planning Enforcement policy to ensure the enforcement service is responsive to Government policy and Council requirements.
- We will devise a multi-disciplinary approach for dealing with major applications.
- We will manage our response to the implementation of the new Housing and Planning Delivery Grant funding priorities.
- We will procure and implement new systems for Planning, building control, land charges, gazetteer, website essential to operate systems for current business requirements.
- We have evaluated options for implementing a replacement planning and property-related back-office system.
- We will implement the new national arrangements for managing the receipt of planning applications while taking account of local priorities.
- We will consult on draft LDF Site Specific Proposals plan during 2008 and 2009.
- We will submit an LDF Annual Monitoring Report in December 2008.
- We will adopt an LDF Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document in 2008.
- We will develop and implement a training programme for officers and Members to ensure the successful adoption of the Core Strategy and development control policies.
- The Government has short-listed a proposal for an Eco-town proposal at ex-RAF Coltishall. The Council will provide information in order for the Government to appraise the proposal and will respond to the consultation exercise.

#### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“Performance in the planning service has been mixed. There was some improvement in the speed of determinations for two of the three categories in 2006/07, but a slight reduction regarding minor applications. Council data indicates that speed of determinations for all three categories decreased during 2007, with officers having a caseload almost 30 per cent higher than recommended nationally. Performance against the planning quality of service checklist is low and the Council has programmed a project in 2008 to improve this. The level of appeals awarded against the Council in 2006/07 was among the lowest nationally, indicating that planning determinations are generally sound; however, applicants are having to wait longer for planning permission to be granted.”



## **Our key targets for a clean and pollution-free District for 2007/08**

**We exceeded our target of having 95% of land that is free from litter in 2006/07 by achieving 98%. However, this performance has slipped in 2007/08 to 92.89%.**

**Holt Country Park was rewarded Green Flag status in 2007/08 and our aim is to retain this status for 2008/09.**

**We achieved our target of obtaining four blue flags at our resort beaches.**

**Improved performance has been delivered in dealing with abandoned vehicles achieving an increase from last year's performance to 83.33% of investigations in time just missing this year's increased target of 85% and 96% of removals in time against an increased and ambitious target of 100%.**

**Our fly-tipping service has been assessed as good although we did not achieve our increased target of having 100% of all fly-tipping reports investigated within two working days, achieving 94%. This is, however, a significant improvement on last year. This is in the context of the actual number of fly-tipping incidents continuing to rise, increasing by 17% from 2006/07.**

**73% of dog fouling investigations took place within two working days against a target of 85%, a significant improvement from last year.**

**91% of all other pollution complaints were investigated within two working days against a target of 100%, an increase from our performance last year of 82%.**

### **Key Outcomes for 2007/08**

- We reviewed the monitoring scheme of public toilet maintenance and repairs, developing a programme of improvements to ensure that the standard of toilets improved to the required level.
- We are in the process of procuring a site that enables us to include kitchen waste in the garden waste service.
- We have ensured compliance with Smokefree legislation by inspecting premises on a rolling programme integrated with Food/H&S/Licensing inspection. The level of compliance locally is on a par with the national figure of 98%.
- We implemented the new software for Environmental Health and Waste Management producing improved customer service, increased performance management, and reduced staff time on clerical functions. The implementation of the software took a great deal of time away from day-to-day activities during 2007/08.
- We have carried out an assessment of the caravan sites in the District to assess health and safety and licensing standards. These assessments were reviewed and we produced a risk based inspection programme.

### **Key Actions for 2008/09**

- We will deliver the caravan site inspection programme.
- We will work with Trading Standards to ensure that day hire boats are corrected licensed and comply with relevant health and safety legislation.

### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“A robust approach to fly-tipping with prosecutions of offenders sends a clear message to businesses that this is not acceptable and contributes to the low levels of litter in the district. Residents continue to benefit from a clean environment and efficient waste and recycling service.”

# First Class Resource Management

## Our key operational business and service access targets for 2007/08

**We have not achieved our target of processing 100% of invoices on time, achieving 94.17%.**

**Our aim is to increase our Housing Benefit Security prosecutions and sanctions from the 2005/06 figure, of 4.47 per 1,000 caseload, to 5.6 per 1,000 caseload by 2010. In fact we achieved 5.3 in 2007/08 exceeding our annual target of 5.0.**

**We only just missed our target of collecting 98.6% of council tax achieving 98.5%.**

**We achieved our target of collecting 99.3% of business rates collecting 99.4%. This is the highest rate of collection achieved by the Council.**

**We have achieved the national efficiency target set in 2004. This required all local authorities to achieve efficiency gains of 2.5% each year. Half of these gains could be reallocated to priority services (cashable gains) and the remainder were improvements in efficiency (non-cashable).**

**Last year we set targets for the first time in the pilot projects put in place to monitor our customer service standards.**

- 100% of personal customers were seen within five minutes at main reception.**
- 84.97% of personal customers were seen within five minutes at Revenues and Benefits Receptions, short of our target of 100%**
- We answered 80.67% of telephone calls within 15 seconds, short of our target of 100%.**
- 79.84% of correspondence received by benefits, council tax and business rates was answered within seven working days, short of our target of 100%.**

### Key Outcomes for 2007/08

#### COMMUNITY

---

- We have reorganised the management of the dual use sports facilities to make the service more co-ordinated and strengthen the resilience of the service.

#### INFORMATION

---

- We implemented the new software for Environmental Health and waste Management producing improved customer service, increased performance management, and reduced staff time on clerical functions.
- We have reviewed the software that controls our printers, the methods used to print key documents and photocopying arrangements to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Reprographics Service.
- We have provided broadband for new and existing Council Members to make sure they have the best possible access to information.
- We delivered a programme for induction of new Council Members ensure that Councillors are equipped for their role.

- We set up an independent review panel to examine Members' allowances. The findings were reported to Full Council in December 2007.
- We have continued to develop a dedicated Scrutiny support service to deliver more effective scrutiny arrangements under the Council's political management structure.
- We have implemented short-term improvements to customer services including the transfer of new services to the Customer Services Team including licensing and bus passes.
- We have assessed the Council against the Customer Services Charter Mark with a view to developing services to ensure we can work towards achieving the standard. We will review and update the Council's Customer Care Standards as a result of this assessment.
- We reviewed the Performance Plan structure and content and prepared a timetable for the production of evidence and information.
- We undertook a Performance Management customer satisfaction survey.
- We carried out a diversity and equality policy audit.
- We monitored staff-related performance indicators to ensure we achieved our targets in terms of managing staff.
- We carried out a review of the job evaluation scheme to ensure compliance with legislation.
- We reviewed the structure, roles and resources of the HR Service to have an effective and efficient HR service in place.
- We have implemented and trained staff on the Council's Attendance Policy to ensure a consistent approach to absence management and aid understanding of the policy.
- We have establish a programme for reviewing existing Human Resource policies and identifying policies that will be required in the future to ensure that all policies are reviewed to ensure they are relevant and fit for purpose.
- We have made improvements to network cabling in the building and the management software.

## ENVIRONMENT

---

- We have made significant progress in developing resilience or recovery in the event of a disaster or failure to part of the service through business continuity planning. Specifically, negotiating sole access to short-term work area recovery sites.
- We negotiated alternative power sources for the Cromer offices.
- We delivered business continuity training to managers.
- We have completed the centralisation of the Building Control Service within the District with home and remote working arrangements.
- We have developed the Corporate Health and Safety function to continue to develop a safe working environment for both staff and others in connection with all Council activities. This includes training, delivering policy relating to driver safety, contractors, and accident reporting.

## RESOURCES

---

- We developed service specialisms in the Legal Service, particularly in the areas of anti-social behaviour, prosecutions, employment, data protection and freedom of information, which has led to improvement of service delivery, particularly in the area of enforcement.

- In line with the Government's three year grant settlement announcement we moved to three year budgets to provide greater certainty around future budgets and council tax levels. This supports and is aligned to the corporate plan and service planning and identifies future budget gaps.
- We have continued to review process and practice, improving the collection rates of Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debts.
- We delivered a training programme in Revenues and Benefits including; management development training, ongoing legislation training, software training, and ongoing support for NVQ candidates. We delivered Local Housing Allowance (LHA) training to registered social landlords and voluntary agencies.
- We improved the capital bidding process to incorporate whole life costing of all capital bids. Cabinet require a full business case before they will make a decision about large capital projects. This results in improved decision making in relation to capital spend and financial planning.
- We carried out a full analysis of revenue and capital budgets to establish levels of corporate funds for repairs and maintenance. This informed the development of the Asset Management Plan.
- We closed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 1st April 2007. There are still some outstanding issues in respect of the former HRA and LSVT these continue to be monitored.
- We developed a Constitution that is up to date and 'fit for purpose' and implemented revisions and reissued the Constitution.
- We revised the Data Protection Policy and Registration to ensure the council complies with it's legal obligations
- We raised awareness of the Whistleblowing Policy.
- We delivered training for members and officers on ethics and probity.
- We documented all legal titles, the majority of leases and contractual obligations.
- We developed the enforcement function throughout the Council
- We identified and provided training of clients in new legislation and enforcement to ensure that clients will be better informed in making decisions and will be less reliant on the Legal Service. This will enable the Legal Service to provide advice where it is genuinely needed and increase efficiency.
- We met targets for benefit fraud prosecutions.
- The Council can demonstrate that members of the Standards Committee are preparing for their role in local investigations and determinations and that there are arrangements in place to support effective local investigations and determinations.
- We launched a BACS – Housing Benefit Take Up Campaign to increase direct payment to customers from April 2008. The majority of landlords are now on the BACS system and we have a significant and increasing number of benefits customers receiving payments by BACS.
- We implemented the Benefits Fraud Initiative (BFI) Action Plan

## Key Actions for 2008/09

### COMMUNITY

---

- We will implement new systems for Strategic Housing to ensure the replacement for the current systems are in place.
- We will review all contracts with: DC Leisure Management Ltd, Norfolk County Services and Openwide to investigate future opportunities and value for money to increase efficiency savings.

### INFORMATION

---

- We will ensure that the new arrangements for Scrutiny will enable the Council to comply with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2008.
- We will procure a new telephony system. The order has been placed and an implementation plan being developed with a view to implementation in September 2008.
- We will procure and implement a Customer Contact Management system.
- We will implement a revised corporate complaints procedure.
- We will revise and promote the new Customer Service Standards.
- We will publish our Customer Access Strategy and Information Management Strategy.
- We will advise on the development and delivery of a customer care programme for all employees as part of the BPR implementation to ensure that the programme is appropriate and meets the needs of the authority.
- We will complete bringing the corporate property database and software up to the standards required for the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG).
- We will make customer service improvements including implementing a contact system, replacing the website, updating the telephone facilities and opening the North Norfolk Information Centre in Cromer.
- We will produce and implement an archiving and storage strategy to secure data and make it logically and easily accessible with the appropriate permissions.

### ENVIRONMENT

---

- We will progress the improvements in the health and safety culture within the Council including producing a Health and Safety Handbook, an Accident Investigation Policy, developing the Intranet to provide up-to-date and relevant information to staff.
- We will be working with Coastal Services and Property Services to ensure that any health and safety issues relating to these service areas are identified and managed.
- We will take part in the county-wide business continuity exercise in 2008.
- We will upgrade our business continuity plans and policies based particularly on the outcomes from the business continuity exercise.
- We will provide additional support and training to the Parish Flood Wardens teams.
- We will set up and support Emergency Co-ordinators for non-coastal parishes.
- We will decide on actions required in North Norfolk as a result of the county-wide Flood Siren Review.

- We will increase our capability to deliver business continuity support and advice to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary sector organisations in the District.
- We will take part in the pilot Severe Rainfall Event warning scheme.

## RESOURCES

---

- We will link service plan risks to corporate risks and manage them using the risk and performance system.
- We will manage corporate and service risks using the Ten® Performance and Risk system.
- We will review the Risk Policy and Strategy to ensure they remain up-to-date.
- We will review performance management system models and structure of the system to make access to information straightforward.
- We will implement the revised Changing Gear targets and National Indicators on the performance system.
- We will implement the new eProcurement module for eFinancials to help facilitate improvements to internal processes in relation to procurement, increase efficiency and management information.
- We will upgrade the financial system to implement BACS and eProcurement.
- We will update the financial strategy in the context of the Local Government Review.
- We will monitor planned savings and efficiency gains delivered against the annual target of 3% (cashable) and actual performance of delivery of the efficiency gains against those included within the Annual Efficiency Statements (AES).
- We will develop techniques to monitor the efficient use of assets including the release of resources through disposals.
- We will regularly monitor the budget monitoring reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny to achieve budgeted targets.
- We will continue to review and consider alternative options for investment of the Council's surplus funds to ensure improved investment returns consistent with associated risks.
- We will monitor and deliver against the improvement plan for the Use of Resources, CPA assessment to maintain a level 2.
- We will refresh the People Strategy and Development Plan.
- We have developed a diversity programme for all employees and Members within the context of the Corporate Diversity agenda to ensure that the programme is appropriate and meets the needs of the authority.
- We will carry out an equal pay audit to comply with legislation and meet commitments under the Diversity and Equality agenda.
- We will carry out a staff survey.
- We will review our flexible working practices and implement any changes.
- We will establish a new Standards Committee system to reflect the new ethical framework to improve standards of conduct amongst officers and members.
- We will ensure that the work of the Standards Committee is communicated openly to a wider public. Where appropriate, the Council has taken effective action learning from issues arising from local investigations and determinations.

- We will ensure compliance with standing orders, standing financial instructions and the scheme of delegation is monitored by management and any breaches identified and appropriate action taken.
- We will recruit a Corporate Asset Manager.
- We will prepare a reliable and up to date Service Plan for Property Services.
- We will develop a vision and mission statement for Property Services together with an internal business plan.

## Financial Summary for Annual Report 2007/08

The final outturn position for the 2007/08 revenue account was a surplus of £192,000 against the revised budgeted position. This allowed the Council to earmark money at the year end for a number of ongoing and new projects including £80,000 for regeneration projects, £20,000 for arts and community projects and £92,000 for organisational development whilst still remaining slightly above the minimum recommended level of general reserve of £1.1 million.

For some services the actual year end position was better than anticipated and allowed some underspends and additional income to be earmarked for ongoing and new projects. This included the earmarking of £83,000 received for Local Performance Service Agreement which has been earmarked to support the expansion of the garden waste recycling scheme.

Despite the current uncertainty within the financial market the Council exceeded its target for return on investment income of 5.35%, achieving 5.65%. This resulted in an additional £410,000 being received during the year.

In addition the Council spent £3.4million on capital projects in the year, including housing improvement grants, support to housing associations for the provision of affordable housing, new public conveniences at Sea Palling, the North Norfolk Information Centre which will open in July 2008, and upgrading information systems.

The following summaries provide details of the Council's spend on revenue and capital for the year, along with where the money came from compared to the previous year. It also provides information on the earmarked reserves held at the year end. For further information a full copy of the Financial Statements for the year can be found on the Council's website at [www.northnorfolk.org](http://www.northnorfolk.org)

### **Revenue**

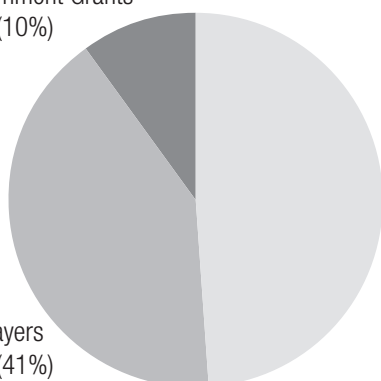
The revenue account represents the day to day cost of running the Council services and is financed from Council Tax payers, Government Grant and redistributed Non Domestic Rate Income.

## Revenue Expenditure

	2007/08		2006/07	
	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Net Expenditure £000s
Central services to the public	9,788	(8,286)	1,502	1,361
Cultural, environmental and planning services	16,432	(5,524)	10,908	10,463
Highways, roads and transport services	1,512	(1,808)	(296)	(413)
Local authority housing (HRA)	0	0	0	11
Other housing services	21,904	(19,427)	2,477	1,927
Corporate and democratic core	2,178	(78)	2,100	2,192
Non distributed costs	8	0	8	72
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>51,822</b>	<b>(35,123)</b>	<b>16,699</b>	<b>15,613</b>
Parish Council Precepts			1,129	1,049
Less Internal charges for the use of Council Assets and other internal accounting			(2,807)	(2,911)
Appropriations to and from reserves			490	429
Amount to be met from government grants and local taxation			15,511	14,180
Financed by:				
Non Domestic Rate Income			(7,387)	(6,885)
Council Taxpayers			(6,244)	(5,997)
LABGI Grant			(340)	(365)
Central Government Grants			(1,240)	(1,336)
Total Income			(15,211)	(14,583)
<b>Net (Surplus)/Deficit for the Year</b>			<b>300</b>	<b>(403)</b>
General Fund Balance Brought Forward			1,403	1,000
General Fund Balance Carried Forward			1,103	1,403

## Revenue Resources 2007/08

Central Government Grants  
£1,240,000 (10%)



Non Domestic Rate Income  
£7,387,000 (49%)

Council Taxpayers  
£6,244,000 (41%)

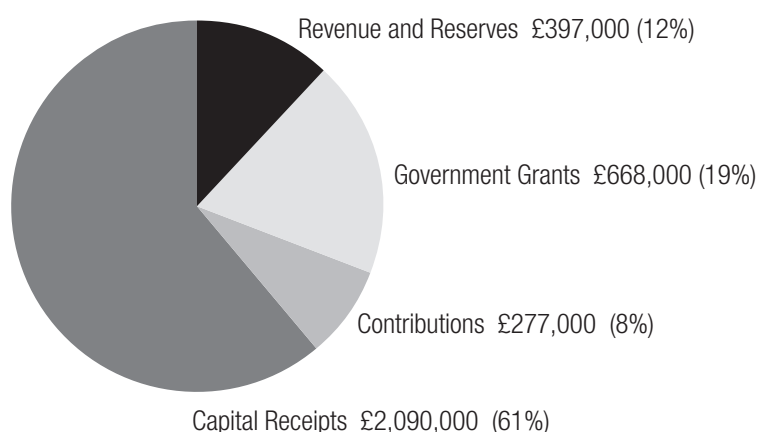
**Total £14,871,000 (100%)**

## Capital

Capital expenditure generally represents money spent by the Council on purchasing, upgrading and improving assets such as equipment and buildings. The Council will receive the benefit from capital expenditure over a longer period of time than revenue, normally more than one year.

### Capital Expenditure

Capital Scheme	2007/08 £000
Improvement Grants	772
Disabled Facility Grants	532
Housing Association Grants	1,195
North Norfolk Information Centre	313
CCTV	54
Virtual Business Support	62
Sea Palling Public Conveniences	149
Waste Management & Environmental Health System	80
NEWS MRF Plastic Sorter	36
Implementing Electronic Government (IEG)	34
Customer Services Integration Project	23
ICT Replacements	23
Benefits System Software	16
Asset Improvements & Health and Safety Works	29
Other work under £15,000 in the year	114
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,432</b>



## Reserves and Balances

Reserves are normally held for the purpose of providing a contingency to reduce the impact of unexpected events or emergencies, for example during 2007/08 the Council needed to use £50,000 of the general reserve to cover costs associated with storms during November 2007. The recommended minimum balance on the Council's general reserve has been set at £1.1 million, this level takes account of risks and potential liabilities which the Council may face. At the year end the balance on the general reserve stood at £1,103,523.

The Council also holds a number of earmarked reserves which have been established for specific liabilities and at the year end the total of these stood at just under £2.3 million.

There is a further balance of capital receipts which at the year end was £12.1 million. The majority of this balance represents the balance of capital receipt following the transfer of the housing stock and subsequent repayment of debt in 2006. While this balance is available to finance future capital spend, it is used to earn investment income which provides in excess of £650,000 to the revenue account each year.

### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“The Council’s performance is mostly improving in its priority areas, such as housing and recycling. Improved IT and different ways of working have resulted in better access, speed, and quality of service to customers.”

“Value for money remains adequate. Services costs are generally at or below the average for district councils, with some high levels of performance, such as in recycling.”

“The continuing programme of business process reviews is resulting in increased efficiency.”

“...the capacity of the Council to continue to deliver its priorities remains stretched.”

“We issued an unqualified audit opinion on the 2006/07 financial statements and certified the completion of the audit in September 2007.

We concluded that, in all significant respects, the Council made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2007, except for the failure to put in place arrangements to maintain a sound system of internal control. This qualification reflected the fact that the Council’s business continuity plan was still under development at the year end.

We assessed the Council as performing at level 2 in our ‘use of resources’ judgement which represents an adequate level of performance. However, there was a reduction in the score for financial reporting from the previous year’s assessment, as not all of the requirements of the new Statement of Recommended Practice were fully complied with, and some improvements are required in this area when the 2007/08 financial statements are prepared.”

“Improved IT and different ways of working have resulted in better access, speed, and quality of service to customers.”

“The Council continues to deliver adequate value for money. Services costs are generally at or below the average for district councils, with some high levels of performance, such as in recycling. ... Some savings have resulted from internal reviews, such as in printing costs.”

“The Council is currently reviewing the affordability of its existing plans. In-depth research commissioned jointly with the local strategic partnership is helping to inform this and to secure alignment with the refreshed community strategy. This approach ensures that the revised corporate planning reflects community priorities and secures partnership commitment to carrying through actions to secure the desired outcomes the community.”

“The level of sickness absence has improved, but is not yet meeting the targets that the Council has set. A more systematic management approach is resulting in staff who have been off ill for a long time either returning to work or leaving. Managers are quicker to make home visits where staff are off several weeks and reports are now available on request for groups of staff to identify any trends. However, there is still a significant number of long-term absences and the number of days off due to colds, flu and other viral infections during the winter months doubled this year compared to last. Sickness levels continue to impact on capacity.”

“Your appointed auditor has reported ... to the Audit Committee on the issues arising from our 2006/07 audit and has issued an audit report, on 27 September 2007, providing an unqualified opinion on your accounts and a conclusion on your value for money arrangements to say that these arrangements are adequate except for the failure to put in place arrangements to maintain a sound system of internal control”

“The overall score of 2 [in the Use of Resources assessment] indicates that the Council is performing adequately overall.”

“Although our overall Use of Resources assessment has remained unchanged, this should be set in the context of the criteria having become more challenging in some areas in 2007.”

“The Council produced its financial statements on time, supported by relatively comprehensive working papers, and an unqualified opinion was issued. However, the 2006/07 financial statements required material amendments due to the incorrect application of the new CIPFA Statement of Recommended Practice (the SORP) to a small number of items in the financial statements. Additionally, the Statement of Internal Control did not provide sufficient detail on Internal Audit’s findings regarding significant weaknesses and was redrafted before our audit opinion was issued.

Openness and accountability are areas in which the Council has been strengthening its arrangements in respect of financial reporting. Access to the financial statements and annual audit and inspection letters is provided on the Council’s website. However, the requirements regarding information being published in accessible formats appropriate to comply with duties under the equalities legislation is being expanded, and this is an area which may benefit from wider consideration.

The Council’s medium term financial strategy, budgets and capital programme are soundly based and are designed to deliver its strategic priorities. Regular budget monitoring takes place and the outcome is shared with members. This could be further improved by the linkage to key operational activity indicators and clearer monitoring of planned savings where these are necessary.”

“Arrangements designed to maintain a sound system of internal control need to be further improved in some areas. The key area to be addressed is the full implementation and review of the business continuity plan. This was not sufficiently developed and embedded at 31 March 2007, and this is the main cause of the qualified value for money opinion.”

“The Council’s arrangements to promote and ensure probity and propriety in the conduct of its business are acceptable but areas of improvement have been identified which need to be addressed before the Council could be considered to be ‘performing well’ in this area.”



# Our Business Strategy and Organisational Development Plan Update

The organisational development plan, a key element of the corporate plan, identified the corporate themes and activities that would be undertaken between 2006 and 2009. The organisational development plan was designed to improve customer service and community engagement, deliver greater efficiency and cost effectiveness and strengthen governance and compliance, to underpin the successful delivery of our targets for service improvement and resource management.

The organisational development plan was designed around nine themes. The following section presents the key achievements for each of those themes so far.

## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

---

We provided training for Members and Officers in the form of monthly open house sessions for assistance in using the performance management system.

We have conducted a customer satisfaction and feedback exercise. The information from this process will be used to develop the performance management system particularly looking at ease of use and accessibility.

We have participated in the East of England Performance Improvement Programme which aims to help us to drive sustainable improvements in our performance by:

- ▶ addressing our current improvement priorities in real time
- ▶ changing behaviours and cultures as well as performance systems
- ▶ building a 'team' of performance champions within our authority, and
- ▶ fostering improvement networks between authorities.

The programme was completed in June 2008.

The Performance and Risk Management Board reviewed the ways we can communicate our performance, achievements and plans to all people and organisations with an interest and approved a new format for our Annual Report.

This means that the action plan for Performance Management has been delivered and it is no longer necessary for it to be one of the improvement themes.

### What the Audit Commission has told us

“Performance management is becoming increasingly embedded and effective.”

“Overall data quality arrangements are satisfactory but further work is necessary to develop and embed these arrangements across the Council.”

“The corporate plan contains specific and measurable targets to drive up performance and these are cascaded into service planning. For example the Council is aiming to achieve a 47.5 per cent recycling rate in 2008/09 and 50 per cent in 2009/10.”

“Working relations across the Council continue to be good and staff and councillors are clear about their respective responsibilities. Priorities and plans are discussed and performance is regularly reported to senior management and to councillors in a format that enables constructive challenge, for example regarding the environment and under-performance on diversity and equality issues. Where performance is low, this is either accepted due to resource constraints in non-priority areas or tackled to ensure improvement, for example regarding benefits processing. Scrutiny has not been fully effective but is becoming increasingly proactive, for example by raising a number of issues and making formal representations to cabinet.”

## RISK MANAGEMENT

---

- We review the strategic risk register and service business plan risks every six months.
- We set up a partnership assessment framework to ensure the risk management process identifies risks in relation to partnerships and ensures the management of those risks.
- We have identified all business critical systems and they are appropriately documented. To further improve the situation we have set up a procedure to ensure this documentation is standardised and maintained.
- We developed the Business Continuity Plan and it was adopted in March 2007. The plan ensures we have robust procedures for emergency planning and disaster recovery.
- The Performance and Risk Management Board and the Audit Committee have monitored the Statement of Internal Control to improve overall governance arrangements of the Council.
- This means that the action plan for Risk Management has been delivered and it is no longer necessary for it to be one of the improvement themes.

### What the Audit Commission has told us

“The Council has adequate arrangements in place to manage its significant business risks. These arrangements could be further improved by fuller consideration of risks in relation to significant partnerships. Additionally the Council should ensure that all appropriate staff have been given relevant training and guidance to enable them to take responsibility for risk management.”

## ASSET MANAGEMENT

---

- We have improved the capital bidding process to incorporate whole life costing of all capital bids. Cabinet require a full business case before they will make a decision about large capital projects. This results in improved decision making in relation to capital spend and financial planning.
- We have carried out a full analysis of revenue and capital budgets to establish levels of corporate funds for repairs and maintenance. This informed the development of the Asset Management Plan.
- We have set up an Asset Management Board whose primary purpose is to make decisions on assets or make recommendations to Cabinet concerning assets.
- We have prepared a draft functional specification for an Asset Management system and put funds in the budget for 2008/09 for procurement.

### What the Audit Commission has told us

“Management of the asset base is improving following significant work by the Council.”

“In 2005/06 we received correspondence from several members of the public in relation to contractual arrangements entered into between the Council and a major supermarket chain. On the basis of the evidence provided to us, we did not identify any unlawful actions by the Council in this regard.

The Council developed an action plan and has, more recently, formalised its monitoring arrangements for this, with the action plan to be monitored by the corporate management team and the Audit Committee. We have considered the progress on the action plan, noting the positive contributions that development of the Asset Management Board, a property asset disposal policy, and a database for contracts have all made, and consider that the Council, whilst acknowledging that further action is still required in some areas particularly around procurement, has taken appropriate action.”

## PROCUREMENT

---

- We have started the process of upgrading the financial system in preparation for implementing eProcurement.
- We have developed standardised documentation supporting the procurement process. We developed a procurement newsletter that is issued quarterly.
- We appointed a Procurement Officer. We designed procurement documentation to reduce barriers to local companies and a web site has been developed giving information about contracts and contracting with the Council.
- We agreed the business case for eProcurement in January 2007. The eProcurement module can be implemented once the upgrade of the financial system has been completed.
- We have reviewed energy supply contracts and contracts for supply and maintenance of printing machines and achieved significant savings.

### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“There has been slow progress in implementing the procurement strategy, but the procurement board has secured savings, for example by rationalising suppliers.”

## DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

---

- We published the first Annual Equality Monitoring Report in 2007. This report summarises what had been delivered and what we intend to do in 2008.
- We carried out three pilot diversity and equality assessments in Revenues and Benefits, Property Services and Communications. We completed a review of the assessment process and agreed the programme for the Year 2 assessments. We will carry out assessments in Strategic Housing, Leisure and Culture, Economic and Tourism Development and Emergency Planning.
- We are working with the Audit Commission to develop a corporate understanding and capacity in addressing equality issues. We are committed to preparing a combined equality statement by the end of 2008

### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“Increasing emphasis is being given to ensuring that services meet the needs of all groups within the community, although performance is currently weak regarding equality and diversity issues.”

“Progress in diversity and equality is weak. The Council had only reached Level 1 of the Local Government Equality Standard by March 2007 and was amongst the weakest performers regarding meeting its duty to promote race equality, for example with no published Race Equality Scheme. Equality impact assessments should have been carried out on all policies and procedures since 2002, but so far these have only been implemented in three areas.”

“The Council is working with the Audit Commission and an action plan has been drafted to ensure compliance with legislation and achievement of Level 3 of the Local Government Equality Standard by 2009/10. However not all of the planned equality and diversity actions for 2007/08 were completed and it is not clear that the Council has the capacity to deliver its future plans in this area. The Council is unable to demonstrate that all groups within the community are being provided with services meeting their needs and helping them to enjoy a high quality of life.”

## BUSINESS PROCESS REVIEW AND CUSTOMER SERVICE INTEGRATION now called Customer Service Improvement)

---

- We carried out a feasibility study on new telephony systems and we have decided to purchase a contact centre upgrade to allow the Council to target calls to the person best placed to resolve the query or provide the service.
- We have appointed a Customer Service Manager (CSM) and a Project Manager who are working on the Customer Services project plan.
- We have produced feasibility studies for corporate Electronic Data Management and Customer Relationship Management.
- We have mapped Customer Services business processes.
- We have agreed a Customer Services Strategy.
- We have set up a centralised Customer Services Team.
- We have produced a draft Access Channel Strategy and a draft Information Management Strategy.
- We put forward proposals for a revised complaints procedure.
- We have assessed the Council against the Customer Services Charter Mark with a view to developing Services to ensure we can achieve the standard.

### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“Improved IT and different ways of working have resulted in better access, speed, and quality of service to customers.”

“The continuing programme of business process reviews is resulting in increased efficiency, for example by transferring resources from environmental health and from management of the tourist information service into the new customer services team allowing scope for staff rationalisation and the deletion of some temporary posts... Creation of a customer services team has led to a more customer-orientated approach, coupled with greater productivity and the prospect of multi-skilling.”

## DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PEOPLE

---

- We have achieved the Investors in People standard after 18 months of working towards a wide range of stringent targets. This is one of the top awards available to business organisations, recognising excellence in their ways of working, especially in involving and developing their staff.
- We have produced a comprehensive Recruitment Guide which supports Managers through all the stages of the recruitment process.

### **What the Audit Commission has told us**

“Working relations across the Council continue to be good and staff and councillors are clear about their respective responsibilities.”

“A range of training sessions has been set up for the high proportion of new councillors. Although attendance has been variable, these sessions have been well received. This helps ensure a better informed and more positive approach to decision taking.”

## PARTNERSHIP

---

- We have identified significant partnerships and we are in the process of placing partnerships into risk categories. This will enable us to determine the level of corporate governance review needed. High risk partnerships will require in depth review and low risk partnerships a light touch.

### What the Audit Commission has told us

“Partnership working continues to be effective in improving services, for example in the joint environmental health project with the Health and Safety Executive on work-related accommodation and the exploitation of migrant workers.”

## COMMUNICATIONS AND BRANDING

---

- We approved the Communications Strategy and the Corporate Identity Manual in May 2008 and both are being implemented across the Council. This is the end of the planning for improvement in Communications and Branding and represents the start of the main implementation period.
- In May 2008 we carried out a reader satisfaction survey of the new-look *Outlook* publication. Three quarters of responders said it was good or very good and 66% said it had improved since it's relaunch.
- We produced a new media protocol to ensure a consistency of response to media enquiries from staff and Members.
- We replaced old signage in car parks across the district and the opportunity was taken to add more explanatory signs.
- We have replaced beach safety signs at all blue flag beaches at Cromer, Mundesley, Sea Palling and Sheringham.
- We developed and implemented a Media Training Programme.

### What the Audit Commission has told us

“Information is now more quickly available from the improved website and services are being more actively promoted through the quarterly Outlook magazine that is distributed to all households. The Council is aware that it needs to better promote some services, such as cultural provision in rural areas, but overall local people are becoming better informed about what is available.”

“... the requirements regarding information being published in accessible formats appropriate to comply with duties under the equalities legislation is being expanded, and this is an area which may benefit from wider consideration.”

## ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

---

This improvement theme has been added as a result of the production of the revised *Changing Gear: Corporate Plan 2008-2011*. We will report on the progress against this new theme in next year's annual report.

# The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Single Set of National Indicators

From April 2008 local authorities and local authority partnerships will be measuring 198 National Indicators (NI). These are the key elements of the New Performance Framework. The National Performance Framework is designed to fulfil two main purposes;

- To ensure that the Government's priorities are being delivered by local partnerships, and
- To ensure that the vision and local priorities in our Community Strategy are delivered.

Within Norfolk we have agreed with the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East) a draft set of indicators, 'Norfolk Action: Norfolk's Local Area Agreement (LAA)', for which we will set targets and take action to achieve the targets. The indicators in the LAA are mostly drawn from the complete list of 198 National Indicators.

The draft LAA contains three types of indicators that are referred to in this document:

- 'designated indicators': these are 35 of the National Indicator Set chosen by the local area in negotiation with GO-East,
- 'local indicators': these can be other indicators from the National Indicator Set that do not appear in the designated 35, or other indicators not in the national set that we want to measure locally, and
- 'statutory indicators': these are 16 indicators set by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) that will appear in all LAAs.

For each indicator:

- A lead partner and other partners are identified,
- Links to other plans/strategies are shown,
- The evidence for using the indicator is laid out,
- The geographical area or group of people concerned is identified,
- The baseline measure for the indicator is given if available, and
- The improvement targets set.

These indicators have been chosen to ensure we can measure and manage our performance to achieve the eight outcomes in the LAA. These are:

- Outcome 1: Thriving economy
- Outcome 2: Improving skills and fulfilling aspirations
- Outcome 3: Improving housing
- Outcome 4: Environmental sustainability
- Outcome 5: Stronger communities
- Outcome 6: Safer communities
- Outcome 7: Supporting independence
- Outcome 8: Improving health and well-being

For each outcome one or more lead partners are identified to drive forward the action needed to achieve the targets. North Norfolk District Council is the lead partner for Outcome 3: Improving housing and will be co-ordinating activity to achieve this outcome.



**CHANGING GEAR**  
THE ROAD TO EXCELLENCE



NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL  
HOLT ROAD, CROMER, NORFOLK NR27 9EN  
TELEPHONE 01263 51381

[www.northnorfolk.org](http://www.northnorfolk.org)

---