

FOREWORD

Thank you for taking time to read this plan. This is the third year we have published our plan, showing our performance across a wide range of the Council's services.

We are committed to improving our services year on year. Some of the highlights of our approach to best value from this past year are:

- We have been nationally recognised as a Beacon Council for our work on community safety in rural areas. This has been achieved with Tewkesbury and Forest of Dean Councils. We have the only award of Beacon Council status in the whole of the South West region
- Our housing service has been rated one of the top 5 in the South West region for the second year running
- Our recycling rate is the best in Gloucestershire
- We are leading partners with British Waterways in the restoration of the Cotswold Canal, an £80 million project to regenerate the canal linking the Severn to the Thames
- Stratford Park has won a national award
- Our Museum in the Park is one of only three provincial museums approved to take touring exhibitions from the National Portrait Gallery
- The refurbished Subscription Rooms hosted over 300 exhibitions, concerts and community events
- Over 60% of the District's residents have said they are satisfied with the way the Council runs things
- We launched a new website **www.stroud.gov.uk** which enables people to make payments to the Council, request services and make complaints – one of the best transactional websites provided by a District Council.

As part of our plans to provide best value in the future:

- We are investing in sports development, in partnership with Sports England, providing opportunities for people of all ages in all parts of the District
- We are introducing a pilot scheme in Cam and Dursley as part of our efforts to tackle crime and the fear of crime. Wardens will be a visible presence on the streets helping local people and working closely with the Police
- The Stratford Park Leisure Centre will have a £1,000,000 facelift, with new facilities that the public have asked for
- We will be taking services out of Ebley Mill as part of our Citizen First plan to improve access, working closely with partners such as parish and town councils.

In the same way that we are committed to improving services, we have also sought to improve this plan. This year it includes details of the continual improvements planned by individual services. Your views count. We need to know what you think of the plan and your comments are welcome by post, telephone, fax or email (see back cover for details).



John Stephenson-Oliver *David Hagg*

Cllr John Stephenson-Oliver
Leader of the Council

David Hagg
Chief Executive

ABOUT THE BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN

We produce an annual Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) to provide a 'snapshot' of our performance over the last 12 months.

Information on our performance is clustered into two key sections:

Managing our Performance

This section contains information that relates to the Council as a whole and includes information on the Community Strategy, our approach to service improvements, equality issues, our finances, best value, and consultation. It also includes our Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) and a comparison of our performance with others.

Our Services

This section gives more detail on how our services have performed over the past year. It outlines what we did in the last year, and what we intend to do over the next year.

Information availability

The Best Value Performance Plan information is presented in a number of ways to enable as many people as possible to view the particular depth of information that they wish. This includes:

'Your Guide'

This guide includes a summary of our performance over the past year and was sent to all households in March with the Council Tax demand.

Audience: Internal – All Councillors and staff.
External – All local residents and businesses.

'Working Together'

This newsletter was published in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Police Authority and was sent to all households at the beginning of April.

Audience: Internal – All Councillors and staff.
External – All local residents and businesses.

Best Value Performance Plan

This document is the Best Value Performance Plan and was published in June. It is available to anyone who requests a copy and includes more detail than in the information presented in 'Your Guide' and 'Working Together'.

Audience: Internal – Councillors, staff and managers.
External – Interested residents, businesses and other voluntary and public sector organisations. The District Auditor, Audit Commission, and Department of Local Government, Transport and the Regions.

Technical Annexes

These give more technical information than the Best Value Performance Plan including the service actions plans, consultation details, benchmarking information, review/audit details and the local performance indicators.

Audience: Internal – Some Councillors and staff.
Strategic Team and managers.
External – District Audit, interested residents, businesses, public and voluntary sector organisations.

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MANAGING OUR PERFORMANCE

This section provides information on how we manage overall performance and presents information regarding some of the projects that we are undertaking across the Council.

Introduction

The Stroud District Council vision is 'to make the district a better place to live and work for everyone'. This statement is defined by seven corporate objectives:

- To continuously improve the Council's performance by providing Best Value services
- To protect and improve the environment
- To help build economic prosperity
- To help those in particular need
- To prevent and reduce crime and disorder
- To create and expand recreational and cultural opportunities
- To maintain and improve the community's health.

These objectives are given direction by a number of strategies, plans and budgets. Each service has a service plan that identifies how it contributes to the corporate objectives and the key strategies.

Over the next few years, these objectives will be reviewed and may be changed as a result of the Community Strategy process which is being undertaken. This will enable us to align the corporate objectives to the needs and aspirations of local people and the work of our key partners.

Approach to Service Improvements

'To continuously improve the Council's performance by providing Best Value services'.

We take this corporate objective very seriously and over the past year have worked hard on reviewing our management activities.

This year, we have introduced a new service planning framework. A standard format allows each service to identify issues that may affect them over a five-year period. They then produce a summary of how they expect to address these issues and develop a more detailed action plan for the coming year. As part of our Investors in People (IiP) process, these actions are assigned to staff as part of their annual appraisal. This establishes a clear link between corporate objectives, service activity and individual targets.

Each service is requested to monitor their own service plan on a monthly basis and provide an update for the Strategic Team and Councillors every four months.

Over the next year, we will:

- Report quarterly to Strategic Team and Councillors on performance
- Review the service planning process and make improvements
- Start to produce next year's service plans from September
- Produce and implement an action plan based on the results of the new national comprehensive performance assessment.

Community Strategy

As part of the Government's modernisation agenda, every Council has a duty to produce a Community Strategy in which the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area is promoted. Stroud District Council welcomes this and understands that we need to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. This partnership is called the Local Strategic Partnership.

Our initial work in this area has included some analysis of issues and needs identified through our consultation exercises and by a number of other public bodies, including Parishes and Town Councils.

The first meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership was held in March. It is still early days but we believe that there is tremendous energy amongst the partners and they are keen to work together to promote the well-being of the district.

Over the next year, we will:

- Continue to work with our partners in the Local Strategic Partnership to help it develop further
- Work with the Local Strategic Partnership to produce a Community Strategy with an action plan.

Citizens First Strategy

Our Citizens First Strategy forms part of our agenda for modernising the Council based on the two principles of taking services to the community and 'first-time-fix'. We aim to deal with a high proportion of all enquiries at the first point of contact, however we are contacted, for example by phone, personal visit or email. The customer has no need to know anything of our internal structures.

Over the next year, we will:

- Ensure that new technology does not create a divide between those with access to electronic media and those without
- Consult with the County Council and other District Councils within Gloucestershire looking at projects where we can work jointly
- Consult with Town and Parish Councils, in Stroud District, looking at where we can provide our services at a local level.

Equality issues

We are committed to promoting equality, not just as an employer but also as a service provider. All Councils have to produce an annual Race Equality Scheme by May 2002. This shows how we have analysed all our functions and policies to ensure that we are not directly, or indirectly, discriminating and are actively promoting racial equality. Based on the findings an action plan is produced.

We will be consulting widely to ensure that we take on board the views of those who could be affected.

Over the next year, we will:

- Produce an Equalities Scheme that can be presented for inspection
- Draw up a programme that ensures all our services complete a review
- Produce an action plan for the services that have completed the equalities review.

Environmental issues – EMAS

We are one of a handful of Councils that have achieved registration to the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). This is a voluntary scheme to help local authorities manage their environmental impacts in a systematic and considered way. To gain registration under the scheme an authority must demonstrate 'continuous improvements in environmental performance'.

The Council began developing EMAS in May 1996 and achieved formal registration on 31 March 1999. We were re-accredited in January 2001 and are due for our next independent verification in July 2002.

Over the next year:

- We will undertake a top management review of the scheme and intend to integrate EMAS into our business planning process.

OUR FINANCIAL STRATEGY

In this section of the Best Value Performance Plan we explain:

Who provides your local services

Who pays for local services

How we decide our spending plans

Our spending plans for 2002/03

Capital projects

Other key facts

Who provides your local services

The services you pay for through your council tax are provided by four public bodies. The table below shows a council tax demand for someone living in an average band D property and how the bill is divided between the four service providers.

Service provider	£	%
Gloucestershire County Council	746.27	72.4
Gloucestershire Police Authority	94.01	9.1
Stroud District Council	152.10	14.8
Town or Parish Councils	37.78	3.7
Average band D bill	1,030.16	100.0

Stroud District Council will collect approximately £42 million in council tax for 2002/03. For every £1 we collect, 72.4p will go to Gloucestershire County Council for services such as education, social services, fire and rescue services, waste disposal and libraries. A further 9.1p will be passed to the Police Authority and an average of 3.7p to the town and parish councils. 14.8p will remain with Stroud District Council to pay for services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, leisure and cultural facilities, housing services and many others.

The leaflet 'Your Guide' enclosed with your council tax bill provides more detail on the spending plans of each provider and gives you a contact point where you can gain further information about financial matters. Each of the service providers works closely together with the aim of delivering quality services to the community.

The remainder of this financial summary focuses upon the services provided by Stroud District Council.

Who pays for local services

The council tax you pay is only one source of income towards the total cost of services provided. There are many other contributions received towards the overall total cost. The table below shows how services were paid for last year and how they will be paid for this year.

	2001/2002 £m	2002/2003 £m
Gross cost of Stroud District Council services	43,565	45,412
Paid for by:		
Fees and charges e.g. planning fees, leisure centres	2,353	2,351
Rents	14,443	14,575
Government grants	11,306	11,566
Other grants	416	485
Other income	3,611	4,749
Net cost of local services	11,436	11,686
Funded by:		
Business rates	4,104	4,606
Revenue support grant	1,288	912
Council taxpayers	6,044	6,168

As you can see, there are three main contributors to the net cost of services: business ratepayers, the Government (revenue support grant) and local tax payers.

Business rates

Business rates are collected locally by District Councils as agents for the Government and paid into a national pool maintained by the Government. This pool is then shared out between Councils. The amount paid by businesses depends upon the rateable value of their premises, which is set by the District Valuer and the national rate multiplier. The multiplier for 2002/2003 is 43.7 pence and increases each year in line with inflation.

In 2002/03 we will collect approximately £17 million in business rates which is passed to the Government for redistribution to councils throughout England and Wales. The amount received by Stroud District Council is £4.6 million, calculated as an amount per head of population.

Government grants

The amount of council tax local people have to pay is directly affected by the sums of money we receive from the Government towards providing local services. The less the Government gives, the more you have to pay for the same level of services. Less than 50% of the Council's net expenditure is funded from Government grants i.e. revenue support grant and business rates.

We receive the lowest amount of Government money, per head of population, out of all the district councils in Gloucestershire, as shown in the following table:

District	Government support received per head of population	Variation to Stroud
Stroud	£50.35	
Gloucester	£81.82	+£31.47
Cheltenham	£68.55	+£18.20
Cotswold	£60.89	+£10.54
Tewkesbury	£57.36	+£7.01
Forest of Dean	£56.99	+£6.64

How we decide our spending plans

The Council's own priorities influence how much we spend on local services and these are determined by a number of factors including:

- The outcome of community consultation exercises
- The demand for services we provide
- National priorities the Government expects us to deliver
- How much we need to spend to keep the assets and land we own in good repair and condition
- The outcome of our annual in depth service reviews
- National trends and movements in interest rates and prices.

The Council's financial year runs from 1 April to the following 31 March. The detailed budget for the financial year 2002/03 was set in February 2002. When considering the budget, the Council looks ahead for a further 4 financial years to ensure that we can plan, in good time, for financial pressures likely to arise. These could come from new government initiatives, legislation, fluctuations in demand for services, changes in Government grants or general changes in the economy as a whole, e.g. interest rates and inflation.

Spending plans for 2002/03

2001/2002 Net Cost £000	Services	Expenditure £000	Income £000	2002/2003 Net Cost £000
1,545	Central services to the public	5,727	-4,025	1,702
1,286	Corporate and democratic core	1,526	-198	1,328
2,369	Cultural and related services	3,337	-1,036	2,301
3,383	Environmental services	4,481	-750	3,731
1,152	General Fund housing	6,484	-5,358	1,126
548	Highways, roads and transport	970	-419	551
298	Housing Revenue Account	31,354	-31,429	-75
77	Other operating income & expenditure	220	-143	77
1,640	Planning and development services	3,040	-1,429	1,611
185	Other Services	236	0	236
12,483	Total Committee Expenditure	57,375	-44,787	12,588
334	Information Technology strategy	339	0	339
50	Contingency	50	0	50
62	Drainage Board levy	64	0	64
-298	Use of HRA balances	75	0	75
-1,300	Interest and financing adjustments	210	-900	-690
301	Transfer to/from reserves	674	-84	590
-196	Use of working balances	0	-1,330	-1,330
11,436	Budget Total for the year	58,787	-47,101	11,686

Our total requirement for 2002/03 has increased by £250,600 to £11,686,100, an increase of 2.19%. The table below shows the main changes to the budget from 2001/02 to 2002/03:

At a glance – changes from 2001/02 to 2002/03	£m
The net cost of services in 2001/02	11.436
The net cost of services in 2002/03	11.686
The increase between years is	250
The extra resources are accounted for by:	
New and improved services (as shown in table opposite)	683
Efficiency savings across a number of services	-300
Increase in Pension Fund contribution	180
Lower interest rates have reduced investment income	270
Increase in use of the Council's balances	-955
Provision for pay and price increases	410
Other changes in service demand	-38
Total change in budget	250

New and improved services

Services Changes	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Rural grant scheme	150	0	0	0
Golden Jubilee projects	100	0	0	0
Street Wardens – pilot scheme	40	40	0	0
Community Safety	28	0	0	0
Canal Partnership match funding	20	0	0	0
Citizens panel	12	12	0	0
Bus shuttle service in Stroud	40	40	0	0
Twinning	10	0	0	0
Town Centre Manager	0	43	43	43
Citizens Advice Bureau	10	0	0	0
Building maintenance	30	30	30	30
Sport development staffing	45	45	45	0
Museum – increased opening	21	21	21	21
Museum – free admission	25	25	25	25
Rural transport partnership	10	10	10	0
Automatic toilet – temporary bus interchange	27	27	27	27
Garden Assistance Scheme	10	10	0	0
Periodic Electoral Review	5	0	0	0
Contribution to Capital Reserve	100	0	0	0
Total	683	303	201	146

Capital projects

We plan to spend £7.29 million on capital projects in 2002/03. A summary of the programme is shown below:

Housing Account

Improvements to council houses £3.98m

General Fund

Supporting housing associations £0.35m
 Grants to improve private homes £1.30m
 Access to services and citizens first strategy £0.22m
 Stratford Park Leisure Centre improvements £0.53m
 Temporary bus interchange facility £0.26m
 Equipment, land purchase and other small schemes £0.65m

Key Facts

- We currently employ 371 full time equivalent staff
- We had market loans of £4.5 million outstanding at 31 March 2001
- Our investments were valued at £11.859 million at 31 March 2001
- The value of assets owned by the Council at 31 March 2001 was £178.942 million.

Statement of Efficiency

Summary of the Council's approach

Background

Under Best Value the Government requires that each local authority achieve an average of 2% efficiency savings per year, over a five-year period. However, this may vary year on year and between services. Following a review of spending plans across all Council services, efficiency savings of £300,000 were achieved and incorporated in the budget for 2002/03.

Definition

Efficiency gains include areas where gains are anticipated and have a monetary saving, or those where the cost has remained constant, or even increased, but this is more than justified in terms of additional services that may be provided. This latter definition requires comparisons of outputs, the former inputs.

Methods

Delivering savings and service improvements are considered and addressed in the following ways:

The medium term financial plan supports the corporate objectives but incorporates on-going efficiency savings. An annual sum titled 'allowance for underspending' includes corporate efficiency savings that cannot be attributed in advance to individual services. The latest Plan includes a specific additional efficiency target, to be measured as cost savings each year.

Whenever there is staff turnover the opportunity is taken to review the provision of that service. This includes not replacing the member of staff, re-allocating the duties, changing the way the service is provided and re-appointing on reduced conditions of service and/or salary.

Service managers can transfer certain amounts and types of budgets between items, giving them the flexibility to react to external changes and improve the delivery of services to their customers.

The individual service plans outlined in this document demonstrate continuous improvement, identifying how and what changes are to be made in the coming period, with the aim of achieving upper quartile performance and budgetary constraint.

The best value reviews undertaken by the Council seek to identify areas for efficiency savings or better services, either at nil cost or at additional cost where this can be justified in terms of service improvements. This is the most comprehensive service-level option appraisal that the Council performs. It includes identifying 'best practice' in other organisations and adapting those practices that can be used by this Council.

Service targets

Each service area is unique. Therefore the level of success in achieving improvements needs to be judged against services' own performance criteria. The ability of a service area to achieve efficiency gains will be constrained by delivery of the key target performance levels and dates that are set out in the following sections within this document.

Best Value

The Government requires all local authorities in England and Wales to 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which they exercise their functions, having a regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness'. This includes reviewing all services and functions by 2005. These 'Best Value Reviews' (BVRs) have to be based on four Cs:

Challenge why, how and by whom a service is being provided;

Secure comparison with the performance of other providers across a range of relevant performance data;

Consult local taxpayers, service users, partners and the wider business community in the setting of new performance targets; and,

Use fair and open competition wherever practicable as a means of securing efficient and effective services.

In other words, we are asking local people what they need and want and trying to align our services or work in partnership with others to meet these in the most cost effective ways possible.

The Best Value Review Programme

We established a five-year programme two years ago. This included fourteen reviews. All but one of the reviews has a theme-based approach. For example, the 'Professional Support Services' review currently under way covers the following services: finance and audit, information services, legal services and personnel and training.

The Council reviewed the Programme in March 2001 and a number of changes have been made in response to changing local circumstances. Some changes have been made for 2002/3. The approach stays broadly the same, although we will review the programme during 2002/3 in the light of new legislation and the results of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) that we will be undertaking over the next twelve months.

Five-Year Best Value Review Programme

Year 1 2000/1	Year 2 2001/2	Year 3 2002/3	Year 4 2003/4	Year 5 2004/5	
Environmental Contracts Refuse Collection Recycling Grounds maintenance Building cleaning Public conveniences Street cleaning	Regeneration & Culture Promoting Stroud's Economy Economic Development Town Centre Regeneration Car parks Tourism Commercial Property Management	Professional Support Services Accountancy & Audit Legal Services Information Systems Personnel & Training Starts Apr 4th 02 Completes Dec 19th 02	Housing (Phase 2)* Planned maintenance Day to day repairs & voids Housing and estate management Housing income collection Sheltered housing Tenants services/participation Right to buy	Active Leisure Dursley Pool Joint Use Centres Stratford Park Leisure Centre	
		Culture Subscription Rooms Museum Service Arts Development Leisure outreach Grants to voluntary sector (culture related)	Promoting Stroud's Environment Environmental Protection Food Safety Pest Control Licensing Environmental Strategy Starts May 29th 02 Completes Dec 19th 02	Serving Stroud's Economy Community Safety Concessionary Fares Elections and Electoral registration Grants to voluntary organisations Land charges Starts Apr 03 Completes Dec 03	Planning Planning Strategy Development Control Conservation & Listed Buildings
			Committee & Member Services Democratic Services Overview & Scrutiny (Policy & Review) Starts Sept 02 Completes Dec 19th 02		Revenue & Benefits Council tax NNDR Housing Benefit Council Tax Benefit
			Housing (Phase 1)* Housing Strategy Rehousing Housing Improvement	General Support Services Administrative support Corporate administration (including Policy & Review) Emergency planning Starts Apr 03 Completes Dec 03	
			Careline Service Starts Sept 02 Completes Dec 19th 02	Building Control Starts Apr 03 Completes Dec 03	
	Tourist Information Centre Starts Sept 02 Completes Dec 19th 02	Public Conveniences Starts Apr 03 Completes Dec 03			

*Housing is undertaking an evaluation of future options and the results of this evaluation may result in the reviews being held at a later date.

Best Value Reviews completed in 2001/2

Last year we completed a Best Value Review of our Regeneration and Cultural services. This covered:

- Economic Development
- Special (Regeneration) Projects
- Tourism
- Asset Management
- Car Parking
- The Subscription Rooms and Arts Development
- Museum Service
- Sports Development.

These were selected for review early in the five-year programme for two principal reasons. First, the total annual expenditure is considerable and, second, these services have the potential to significantly improve the quality of life of local people and it was felt that the opportunities available were not being fully exploited.

Comparison

Each of the service areas gathered together any readily available benchmarking data. Use was also made of the 'Regeneration through Culture, Sport and Tourism' Beacon Councils; centres of excellence given money by the Government to share their experiences with others. Although the readily available benchmarking data was patchy, it did allow the Council's performance to be set in a national context and proved a good source of ideas for improvement.

Consultation

Consultation was done in a number of ways:

The 'Fertile Ground' workshop drew together 50 local cultural organisations and interested parties in order to review the Council's Cultural Strategy performance.

A similar event drew together 40 or so organisations, including Town and Parish Councils, Chambers of Trade etc. interested in the economic regeneration of the district, enabling key stakeholders to comment on the Council's past performance and future role.

A number of customer satisfaction surveys of Museum and Subscription Room users were carried out.

We also held meetings with a wide range of local, County and Regional bodies, such as the Regional Development Agency and Sport England, in order to elicit feedback about the Council's performance.

Competition

The Council undertook a study of how other Councils deliver Regeneration and Cultural services. What became clear was that across the country these are delivered in many different ways and that the Council needed to examine some of these and decide whether they provide more effective ways of meeting local needs. The main areas identified for further work during 2002 were:

- Regeneration and Cultural Services generally need to be based on, and work in, partnership with a wide range of local interests and stakeholders if they are to be successful
- Car parking elsewhere has a high degree of private sector involvement
- Museums are increasingly run by Trusts
- Arts centres like the Subscription Rooms may be of interest to the private sector and are often run by Trusts.

Improvements to date

We have already made a number of changes as a result of the BVR. These early wins include:

The management structure within the Council has been changed to allow a greater focus on regeneration and culture. This has included repositioning the asset management team so that they are better able to support regeneration initiatives.

The Museum opening hours have been extended to allow schools to utilise the facility and entrance is now free.

Significant resources have been put over to Sports Development as it became clear that we were one of the only Councils in the South West not to have a dedicated staff resource.

New links have been built with the communities of Cam/Dursley and the Stroud Valleys by enabling the submission of Expressions of Interest under the Regional Development Agency's new Market and Coastal Towns initiative.

The Council is working in partnership with British Waterways and others to enable the restoration of the Cotswold Canals.

Next Steps

A more detailed improvement plan setting out the long term development of the service has also been developed, allowing us to build on the early wins. The Audit Commission Inspection Service will be scrutinising our improvement plan and the overall performance of the Regeneration and Culture Service in September 2002.

Best Value Inspectorate and the Environmental Contracts Review

The Best Value Inspectorate visited Stroud to inspect our review of Environmental Contracts in April 2001. They looked at the results of the review and made a judgement on the service. They gave a two star 'likely to improve' judgement. This essentially means that not only is the service good but our plans for the future will lead to further improvements.

Following the review, a report was produced. Below are the main recommendations of the Inspectorate.

'We recommend the Council should now:

Help councillors, staff and local people improve their understanding of how the Council is delivering and performing in these services by reviewing its improvement plan and linking it to a service plan covering all the work of the Environmental Contracts team. (This is in line with the commitment made to address this weakness on page one of the Council's BVPP 2001/02.)

Progress with the service plan should be reported to councillors and local people

Provide better information to the public about recycling and other environmental services by developing a communications policy and a comprehensive plan to implement it

Engage local people in new and innovative ways of recycling by working much more closely with parish councils and other community groups. As part of its communications policy, it should target and provide information on waste minimisation issues and recycling options at the very local community level

Keep its recycling performance under very close review to ensure it will meet its statutory recycling targets for 26% in 2003/04 and 36% by 2005/06.'

The following table outlines the progress to date on the five-year improvement plan that was agreed following the Environmental Contracts Best Value Review.

Environmental contracts improvement plan 2000-2006

No	Objective	Implementation	Target date	Progress comments
1	Improve standards of public conveniences in District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Commence strategy to reduce total number of public conveniences from 16 to 10 and improve service provision to remaining 10 b) Consult with Town and Parish Councils which are affected with possible closure of public conveniences c) Include increased frequency of cleaning in new contract price d) Negotiate closure or alternative management of 6 affected public conveniences e) Commence improved cleaning and service in new contract (Phase 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 April 2000 April 2001 Dec 2000 Sept 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Number of PC's open are now at 10 with effect from 21/04/02 b) Consultation undertaken c) Completed Dec 2000 d) 4 have been transferred or demolished. Negotiations for transfer ongoing for last 2 e) Started 1st October 2001
2	Improve management and maintenance of recycling bring sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review usage of bring sites and reduce/resite to maximise cost effectiveness b) Standardise signage to and at recycling sites c) Provide collection facilities at sites for residual rubbish which is not recyclable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct 2001 Oct 2001 Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) In progress b) Completed c) Completed
3	Extend kerbside recycling service to all households within the District and range of recyclables to be collected. (Current recyclables collected paper: cans: glass)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Obtain base price for current level of service in new contract b) Secure funds within Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in order to achieve extended service c) Negotiate with short-listed contractors to maximise level of service within District d) Award Contract e) Commence phase 2 of contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dec 2001 Feb 2001 April 2001 July 2001 April 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) – e) Completed
4	Resolve the problems created by not collecting refuse on Bank Holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Obtain base price for current level of service in new contract b) Negotiate solution with short-listed contractors to ensure that all householders within the District receive refuse collection on the same day every week c) Award contract d) Commence Phase 2 of contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dec 2000 April 2001 July 2001 April 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) – d) Completed
5	Improve special collection service for bulky household refuse items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Obtain base price for current level of service in new contract b) Negotiate solution with short-listed contractors aiming for collection by appointment level of service c) Award contract d) Commence phase 2 of contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dec 2000 April 2001 July 2001 April 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Completed b) Completed c) Held in obedience
6	Provide a green waste collection service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Negotiate with short-listed contractors to achieve at least partial service to District householders. (5000 properties) b) Award contract c) Commence phase 2 of contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 2001 July 2001 April 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressing
7	Provide monitoring data for Councillors and key service managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Extract performance monitoring data from IT systems b) Produce one-off year report for period April 2000 – March 2001 to establish base line c) Produce information reports on quarterly basis, identifying particular problem areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 2001 May 2001 Start July 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressing
8	New contract operations to be understood by Council staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training to be carried out for key staff on operational procedures and contacts prior to start of new contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aug/Sept 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressing

Environmental contracts improvement plan 2000-2006 (cont'd)

No	Objective	Implementation	Target date	Progress comments
9	Review of client side structure and staffing levels	a) Negotiation with preferred contractor on operational interaction with client side staff and possible transfer of staff to contractor b) Report on level of staffing required for client side to Cabinet, advocating that any financial savings be re-invested into achieving future enhanced service level of contract c) Implement appropriate staff changes	July 2001 Sept 2001 April 2002	Not pursued at present pending other issues
10	Establish operational protocols with new contractor	Agree/Establish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring systems • Key performance indicators • Fleet • Partnership Board (Comprised of Councillors: Contractor Management: Client Officers: Other Representatives) 	July 2001 – April 2002	Progressing
11	Establish new collection round schedules for the new contract	Agree: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) New refuse schedules b) New kerbside collection schedules c) New organic collection schedules d) New street cleaning schedules 	July 2001/ March 2002	a) Implemented b) Implemented c) Not applicable d) Implemented
12	Establish protocol with new contractor promoting waste management issues	Agree: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Waste minimisation campaign b) Liaison with County Contract c) News items, events etc. 	July 2001/ March 2002	Will progress through Partnership Board
13	Achieve nationally recognised standards/ awards	Develop with contractor service standard improvements to achieve national accreditation e.g. Green Flag status for Stratford Park	April 2003	Progressing
14	Interface District waste collection contract with new short term (two-year) County Waste Disposal Contract	Liaise with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council • County Contractor • District Contractor 	July/Aug 2002	Progressing
15	Review new collection round schedules	Agree and implement any changes if found necessary	Aug/Sept 2002	In progress
16	Monitor and review progress of new contract	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Operation and development of agreed protocols b) Performance monitoring of targets and PIs c) Data extraction from client and contractor interfaced IT systems d) Advise Cabinet/Council on achievements to date e) Identify shortfalls or problem areas and advocate remediation or funding as required 	April to Oct 2002	On going
17	Increase community involvement in land management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explore opportunity for voluntary bodies to look after/develop local amenity land sites b) Develop protocol for involvement in such sites 	Aug 2001 – Oct 2002	Working with Stroud Valley Project on site at Dursley
18	Aim to achieve statutory recycling target	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Monitor and review systems and progress to achieve or exceed 22% target b) Advocate for changed systems, funding sources as necessary 	March 2004	On going
19	Aim to achieve higher statutory recycling target	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Monitor and review systems and progress to achieve or exceed 36% target b) Advocate for changed systems, funding sources as necessary 	March 2006	To follow above

Best Value Reviews in 2002/3

We are undertaking four major reviews this year, although only three are expected to be completed. These are:

Professional Support Services

This includes Accountancy and Audit, Information Services, Legal Services and Personnel & Training.

Protecting Stroud's Environment

This includes Environmental Health as well as the Environmental Sustainable Development Strategy work carried out by Policy & Review.

Committee and Member support

This includes Democratic Services and the Overview and Scrutiny work carried out by Policy & Review.

Housing (Phase 1)

This is part of a wider housing review. The thinking is that we should start the process by looking at the services that provide a strategic context for housing. These services will include Housing Strategy, Rehousing service and Housing Improvement.

Two smaller reviews are also due for completion:

- Careline Service (telephone alarm and support service for older and vulnerable people)
- Tourist Information Centre.

The Auditors' Report

Our Best Value Performance Plan and our service improvement processes are audited by District Audit. They make a number of recommendations for improvement and the Council agrees an action plan in which we will deal with the issues that arise. The key issues are set out in the table overleaf.

2000/1 Best Value Audit (Key recommendations – rated as high priority)

Auditor Comment/Recommendation	Council Comment/Action
<p>The Council now needs to develop a comprehensive performance management system including quality assurance for producing, collating and monitoring performance indicators on a regular basis. The quality assurance role should cover both the estimated statutory and local indicators as well as targets and previous year indicators.</p>	<p>A performance management system that includes quality assurance is now in place.</p> <p>A service planning framework has been introduced which requires updating on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Quality assurance has been built into the system at four levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of Service are responsible for updating the PIs and in reporting them to Policy & Review. Heads of Service must sign off all BVPIs at the end of the year stating that they have been produced within the standards laid down by the definitions. • Strategic Team review the PIs on a quarterly basis. • Review Committee receive the PI monitoring information and have requested that Strategic Team attend the Committee. • The internal auditor has undertaken reasonableness checks on the BVPI monitoring information. The internal auditor also undertakes a 'process audit' of a selection of BVPIs to ensure that the method for producing them is appropriate.
<p>Minimum quality standards in the form of a Performance Indicator guide should be developed and implemented. These standards should cover areas such as the definition of indicators to be published, documentation of evidence (for estimates, actuals and targets), roles and responsibilities of central staff, managers and reporting.</p>	<p>A BVPI definitions guide and sign off document has been delivered to all Heads of Service. They are to sign that they have checked that their actuals for 2001/2 are accurate and are requested to briefly report any reasons for any deviation of +/- 15%.</p> <p>A BVPI definitions guide has been drawn up and delivered to all Heads of Service. This lists all the BVPIs for 2002/3 that the Head of Service is responsible for and includes the definitions.</p> <p>All Service Plans are to be updated and sent to Policy & Review every quarter. Dates for this have been distributed to all heads of Service in the 'Policy, planning and resource allocation' document. Heads of Service will be emailed prior to these dates reminding them.</p>
<p>Further consideration should be given to the regular production and use of performance information throughout the year, both to facilitate collation for the Plan and as a management tool to monitor performance.</p>	<p>All BVPIs have been reported to Review Committee on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Prior to going to Review Committee, they are presented to Strategic Team for discussion.</p>
<p>The Council needs to continue to develop a comprehensive performance management framework linking objectives throughout the organisation, improving service planning, setting targets and monitoring action plans.</p>	<p>The service plan pro-forma ensures that the corporate objectives are linked to the activities undertaken by the services. Firstly, the service contribution to corporate objectives and corporate strategies and secondly, direct links are made with the service action plans.</p>

Consultation

The Council is committed to consultation and taking appropriate action as a result. In recognition of the importance of consultation, a strategy and action plan have been adopted to ensure our activities are effective and co-ordinated.

The Council has agreed the following key principles for consultation and a Code of Practice for engaging in consultation is based upon these. It should be ensured that all consultation activities:

have a clear purpose. The Council should have a good reason to consult and decisions must not be predetermined. All those involved should understand from the outset what can or will change as a result of the exercise. Consultation must not be used as an information provision exercise;

are co-ordinated, to ensure the best use of resources and make use of existing information to avoid duplication of work;

make full use of the results of existing consultation;

are managed competently, the process must be well planned, adequately resourced and effectively followed through so that it produces a valid outcome;

are targeted at the right audience which could include residents, service users/non-users, businesses, voluntary organisations, police, Health Authority, other councils etc.;

are inclusive, or where appropriate, targeted at equalities groups so that there is a representative cross-section of the public, including disabled people, young people, older people and minority ethnic groups, etc.;

consider what method would be appropriate prior to undertaking any consultation. Services are encouraged to try out a variety of methods and not be restricted to questionnaires;

ensure that results are acted upon. The views expressed by members of the public must be adequately reflected in policy and decision-making processes and be reported in the Service Plan;

give feedback to the consultees so that people know their contributions were valued and can see how the issue was progressed even if the Council's subsequent decisions and actions do not fully align with the consultation findings;

are evaluated to check that the aims of the exercise have been met; to help develop best practice; and to ensure resources are used wisely;

consider the need to involve/work in partnership with other local service providers such as the Police, Health Authorities, Voluntary Organisations, Businesses, etc.;

be agreed in advance by the Corporate Consultation Group.

Consultation in Stroud District

Strategic Consultation

Consultation is an essential element of developing strategies and plans. Consultation with a wide range of stakeholders will continue to be undertaken in respect of the following:

Community Strategy

The Council has a duty to prepare a strategy that will outline how we, and our partners, will work together to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. It is essential that the priorities that are addressed are chosen as a result of consultation.

Community Safety Strategy

Working with the many partners that have come together to form the Crime and Disorder Partnership, we have issued a revised strategy for 2002 to 2005. This strategy was drawn up following a wide-ranging consultation exercise.

Local Plan

The Council's Deposit Draft Local Plan has been the subject of extensive consultation throughout its preparation. The large response we had to its proposed modifications prior to the Local Plan Inquiry has led to some revisions in our policies.

Housing Strategy

This strategy outlines the Council's plan for meeting the housing needs of the district. It is developed following extensive consultation and partnership with many organisations.

Housing Tenants consultation

We carry out regular ongoing consultation with our tenants and are committed to ensuring that they are fully involved in the management of their homes. We produce a regular newsletter which keeps tenants informed about all aspects of housing.

Satisfaction Surveys

A number of services carry out customer satisfaction surveys. We use the results of these to make improvements in our services.

Citizens' Panel

We are in the process of establishing a citizens' panel which we hope will comprise 1,000 residents. The citizens' panel will play an important role in the Council's approach to consultation.

Stroud Household Survey 2001

In December 2001, a telephone survey was undertaken in which householders were asked a number of questions. The overall satisfaction with the Council and its services was quite high, with 63% of the respondents stating that our services are very good or good and 32% stating our services were average. 5% of respondents thought that overall we provide poor or very poor services. A similar survey in 2000 revealed that 64% of people were satisfied with the services provided to them by Stroud District Council. In addition, 60% of respondents thought we were good or very good at communicating and consulting with the public and a further 32% thought we were average. 5% thought we were poor at communicating and consulting.

Handling complaints

14% of those asked in the 2001 survey had contacted the Council in the past 12 months to make a complaint. 63% of them had been satisfied with the response and 32% were not satisfied.

Council spending

Amongst those who offered an opinion, just over 20% stated that they would find it acceptable for Council Tax to rise by 2% or more to pay for improvements in services. The areas in which they would like more money spent were:

Helping those in particular need –	54%
Improving community health –	60%
Improving the environment –	47%
Creating more recreational and cultural opportunities –	37%
Reducing crime and disorder –	72%
Making our services available either electronically or in your local area –	31%

Service initiatives

People were also asked for their opinion on a number of initiatives, bearing in mind that some may have an impact on Council Tax. The results were:

- 46% said they would use the new multiplex cinema complex
- 54% said that Stroud's museum in the park should be free
- 41% said that more staff should be employed at the museum, to increase the opening hours
- 66% said that, where practical, we should provide services jointly with other Councils
- 56% said that assistance should be provided to re-open the Stroud water canal
- 67% said that street wardens should be employed to reduce crime and the fear of crime
- 35% said that we should employ more staff to develop sports in the district.

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPis)

Summary of performance

The Government believes that there is a basket of indicators that can be used to give an overall picture of a local authority's performance. They were selected through a series of statistical tests that showed which were the best predictors of performance. The table overleaf shows these indicators and our performance compared to other local authorities in the area as well as the average performance for both district councils and all local authorities in England. There are eighteen indicators in this basket representing some of the core services provided by the Council as well as our corporate health.

It shows that, overall, our services have improved and that improvements in service have been made in all service areas. Seven of the indicators show a real improvement in performance. This is especially the case in reducing the time and increasing the accuracy of processing benefits, as well as in housing where we have reduced the time it takes to relet property by over ten days.

Five indicators show performance to have remained roughly at the same level. These are mainly in the area of corporate health, and recycling where we are already in the top quartile for performance. In housing, we are in the top quartile for completing urgent repairs within time limits but are below average in collecting rent, (including arrears). Only two indicators show a fall in performance. The number of burglaries committed has seen a small increase. We hope our new three-year crime and disorder strategy will address this issue. The other fall in performance was in the percentage of business rates collected.

In terms of user satisfaction we are in the top quartile for six of the indicators, and above average for a further five, showing, we believe, that Stroud District Council is performing quite well. However, we are below average in four of the indicators and in the bottom quartile for three indicators. While this is partly because we did not report our performance in two instances, we intend to improve performance over the next year.

Comparing our performance with others 2000/2000

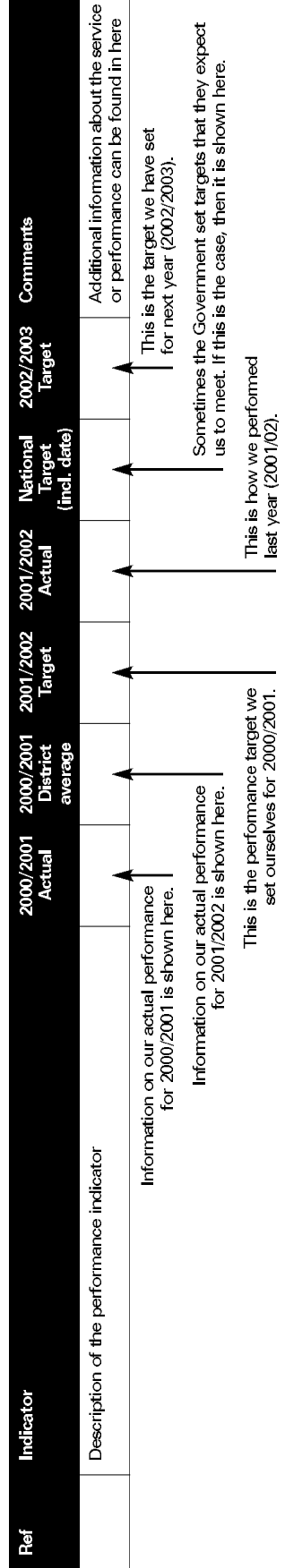
Description	Stroud 2001/2002	Stroud 2000/2001	Cotswold 2000/2001	Forest of Dean 2000/2001	Tewkesbury 2000/2001	Gloucester 2000/2001	Cheltenham 2000/2001	All England Average 2000/2001	District Average 2000/2001
Benefits									
Average time to process new council tax or housing benefit claim	35.15	37	31		64	39	26	52	48
% of council tax or housing benefit calculation that were correct	92.7		88		95	95	96	95	96
Community Safety									
Burglaries per 1,000 households	12.62	12.2	10.2	5.8	9.8	16.3	16.4	14	11
Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	10.36	12	8.8	9.9	11.7	24.2	19.7	16	12
Culture/corporate health									
Proportion of council tax collected	98.2	98	98	98	98	97	97	96	97
% business rates that should have been received during the year that were received	97.4	99	99	95	99	99	98	98	98
Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness	6.1	7.2	9.4	10.7	11.8	11.3	3.5	10	9.8
Ill-health retirements % total workforce	0.26	0	0.2	0.2	0.38	0.24	0.59	0.52	0.54
Waste									
% of total tonnage of household waste recycled	16.66	16.8	16.8	9.3	7.1	6.7	7.9		9.8
Housing									
Proportion of rent collected, including arrears of current tenants	96.63	96		97		95.3	99.3	96.4	97.2
Average relet times for local authority dwellings let in the financial year in calendar days	31.6	44		33		25	64	44	39
% of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	97.26	97		91		95	93.6	88	88
Planning									
% of new homes built on brown field sites	59	54	53	88		61.6	87	62	55
Average time taken to determine all planning applications: number of days	10.03			8.1	13.08	10.3	10.3	12	10
User satisfaction									
% of citizens satisfied with local authorities overall service	64	64	70	53	74	51	68	64	67
% of people satisfied with the overall waste collection service	87	87	89	85	93	90	87	84	87
% of people in council housing satisfied with the overall service of their landlord	81	81		79		72	72	77	80
% of planning applicants satisfied with service	78	78	81	78	71	69	75	77	78

Comparing our performance with others 2000/2001 – update

Because it had to be produced before the end of the financial year, the 2000/1 Best Value Performance Plan performance indicators were based on estimates of performance. As a result of investigation by District Audit and Internal Audit, some errors in applying definitions and calculating the performance indicators were revealed. The significant differences include:

Ref	Description	2000/2001 Estimate	2000/01 Actual
BV 12	Number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence	5.95	7.2
BV 62	The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of action of the local authority	0.9%	1.4%
BV 63	Energy Efficiency – the average SAP rating of local authority owned housing	50	43
BV 64	The proportion of private sector dwellings that have been vacant for more than 6 months at April 1 2000 that are returned into occupation or demolished during 2000/1 as a direct result of action by the local authority	19	1.6%
65b	The average weekly costs per local authority dwelling of repairs	£10.26	£11.26
66a	Local authority rent collection and arrears: proportion of rent collected	101.6%	96.04%
66b	Local authority rent collection and arrears: rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	2.07%	3.43%
BV 71	The number of local authority dwellings receiving renovation work during 2000/1	1141 98	20.1% 1.6%
BV 73	The average time taken to complete non-urgent responsive repairs	82.31%	11.6 days
BV 75	Tenant satisfaction with opportunities for participation and decision-making	54%	70.9%
BV 79b	Accuracy of processing: the percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year	67%	81%
BV 82a	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings that have been recycled	22.2%	16.75%
BV 84	Number of kilograms of household waste collected per head	332kg	341kg
BV 88	Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections of household waste	60.97	893
BV 113	Number of pupils in organised school groups visiting museum	0	12
BV 116	Spending per head of population on cultural and recreational facilities and activities	£11.57	£14.03
BV 170a	Visits/usages per 1,000 population	0.24	34
BV 170b	Visits made in person per 1,000 population	0.24	32
BV 126	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	10.9	12.2
BV 127	Robberies per 1,000 population	5.33	7.3
BV 128	Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	9.13	11.98

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) The diagram below explains what the information in the following BVPI table means.



Corporate Health

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 1	Has the authority established a timetable for preparing a community strategy that works towards a long-term sustainable vision for the area? Yes/No	No	77% Yes	Yes	Yes			
BV 1a	Does the authority have a Community Strategy with the Local Strategic Partnership, for improving the economic, social and environmental well-being in a way that is sustainable?						Yes	
BV 1b	By when (mm/yy) will a full review of the Community Strategy be completed? If such a review was scheduled for this year, was it completed on time?						Dec 03	
BV 1c	Has the authority reported progress towards implementing the community strategy to the wider community this year? If no, by when (mm/yy) will this be undertaken?						Dec 03	
BV 1d	By when (mm/yy) does the authority plan to have such a strategy in place? Are the partnership arrangements in place to support the production of the strategy?						Dec 02 Yes	
BV 2	The level (if any) of the Commission for Racial Equality's Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms	0	0.6	2	0		2	This work was rescheduled in light of the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendments) Act and the advent of the new Equalities Standard for Local Government. Work began in January 2002 and the 2001/02 target will be achieved during 2002/03
BV 2	The level (if any) of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms							
BV 3	The percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by the authority	64.4% (+/- 2.9%)	67%					The Government expects this survey to be carried out every 3 years and will be undertaken again in 2003/4. However, a telephone survey held in December 2001 stated that overall satisfaction with the Council and its services was quite high with 63% of the respondents stating that our services are very good or good and 32% stating our services were average
BV 4	The percentage of complainants satisfied with the handling of their complaints	53% (+/- 7.6%)	41%					Of those asked who had contacted the Council in the past 12 months to make a complaint, 63% of them had been satisfied with the response
BV 5a	The number of complaints to the Ombudsman classified as 'maladministration'	0		0	0	N/A		
BV 5b	The number of complaints to the Ombudsman classified as 'local settlement'	1						
BV 6	The percentage of turnout for local elections	38.22%	34%	38%	38.22%		40%	No local election was held in 01/02
BV 7	The percentage of electoral registration form As returned	99.8%	97%					Indicator deleted for 2001/2

Corporate Health (cont'd)

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 8	The percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services that were paid by the authority within 30 days of such invoices being received by the authority	93.9%	88%	95%	94.17%		95%	
BV 9	The percentage of Council Tax collected	97.7%	97%	98.25%	98.2%	98.2% (2005)	98%	
BV 10	The percentage of Non-Domestic rates due for the financial year that were received by the authority	98.5%	98%	98.25%	97.4%	98.7% (2005)	98%	
BV 11	Percentage of senior management posts filled by women	11%	20%	12%	11.8%			
BV 11a	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women						20%	
BV 11b	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are from black and minority ethnic communities						5%	
BV 12	Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	7.2	9.8	5.8	6.1	6.8	5.5	Variation due to less long term sickness and the impact of policies to reduce short term sickness
BV 13	Voluntary leavers as a percentage of staff in post	12.0%	10.7%	10.0%	7.9%			Less staff left during 2001/02 than was anticipated
BV 14	Percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce	0.4%	0.68%	0.8%	0.21%	0.45%	0.8%	Less staff left under early retirement criteria
BV 15	The percentage of employees retiring on grounds of ill-health as a percentage of the total workforce	0.0%	0.54%	0.4%	0.21%	0.35%	0.4%	Less staff left due to ill-health
BV 16	The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition compared with the percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area	1.5%	2.4%	2.0%	1.9%: 9.6% (*)		2.0%	*Figure is derived from the Shroud General User Survey October 2000 that used a less stringent definition of disability than that in the DDA
BV 17	The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities compared with the percentage of the economically active minority ethnic community population in the authority area	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%: 0.5%		1.5%	
BV 156	The percentage of Authority Buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people	83% ACPI A1b		71%	71%	100% (Oct 2004)	71%	
BV 157	The percentage of interactions with the public, by type, which are capable of electronic service delivery and which are being delivered using internet protocols or other paperless methods				61%	100% (2005)		The method of calculation was agreed with the DTLR and is as submitted in November 2001 with the IEG Statement. The Council relaunched its website in April 2002 with an enhanced interactive customer focus
BV 157	The number of types of interactions that are enabled for electronic delivery as a percentage of the types of interactions that are legally permissible for electronic delivery					100% (2005)	75%	
BV 180 a	The energy consumption/m ² of local authority operational property, compared with comparable buildings in the UK as a whole							No target set for 2002/3 as we are establishing a baseline

Housing

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 62	The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority	1.4%	2.9%	1.2%	5.2%		5%	Improved performance is due to a change in baseline figure for unfit properties (2000 Local House Condition Survey) and improved data collection
BV 63	Energy Efficiency – the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	43	53	48	47.5		53	
BV 64	The proportion of private sector dwellings that have been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April 2001 that are returned into occupation or demolished during 2001/2 as a direct result of action by the local authority	1.6%	3.3%	1.6%	2.5%			Greater number of empty properties brought back into use than originally forecast due to increased activity in this element of the Private Sector Housing Strategy
BV 64	The number of private sector dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished during 2002/03 as a direct result of action by the local authority						40	
BV 65a	The average weekly costs per local authority dwelling of management	£10.68	£10.08	£10.68	£13.84			Definition includes the costs of Scheme Managers and communal facilities at schemes. Council's costs will be higher given there are 29 schemes (15% of housing stock). Figure has increased during the year following Council's decision to increase the level of support service charges borne by the Housing Revenue Account
BV 65b	The average weekly costs per local authority dwelling of repairs	£11.26	£12.17	£11.26	£11.24			
BV 66a	Local authority rent collection and arrears; proportion of rent collected	96.04%	97.2%	99.5%	97.64%		97%	
BV 66b	Local authority rent collection and arrears; rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	3.43%	2.6%	2.0%	2.04%			
BV 66c	Local authority rent collection and arrears: rent written off as not collectable as a proportion of authority's rent roll	0.42%	0.46%	0.40%	0.44%			
BV 67	Proportion of homelessness applications on which the authority makes and issues written notification to the applicant within 33 working days	100%	86%	98%	99.2%			
BV 68	Average relet times for local authority dwellings becoming vacant	44.2 days	39 days	40 days	31.6 days	25 days		2001/02 Target = 40 days: Achieved 31.6 days. This is a former National Target BVI. We aim to achieve 25 days by 2004/05; reason= procedural improvements have resulted in performance surpassing target
BV 69	Percentage of rent loss through local authority dwellings becoming vacant	1.02%	1.8%	<2.0%	0.93%			Performance well surpassed target 0.93% against target of <2.0%. Target for 2002/03 tightened to <1.5%
BV 70	Average annual change in SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	4	2.6					

Housing (cont'd)

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 71a	The number of local authority dwellings receiving renovation work during 2002/03 as proportion of the number needing renovation work at 1st April 2002. a) £5,000 and under	20.1%	46%	65.7%	39.3%			Replaced by BV 184 from 1.4.02. Actuals discrepancy between 2001/02 and 2000/01 were as a consequence of an incorrect interpretation of the definition. This was highlighted by Internal Audit and was corrected for 2001/02
BV 71b	The number of local authority dwellings receiving renovation work during 2002/03 as proportion of the number needing renovation work at 1st April 2002. b) Over £5,000	1.60%	8.8%	67.8%	48%			Discrepancy between 2001/02 and 2000/01 Actuals were as a consequence of an incorrect interpretation of the definition. Corrected for 2001/02.
BV 72	The % of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	97.05%	88%	98%	97.26%			
BV 73	The average time taken to complete non-urgent responsive repairs	11.6 days	22 days	16 days	12.67 days			Measure changed from % to no. of days. Performance surpassed target set by 21%
BV 74	Satisfaction of tenants of Council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord	80.7%* (+/- 2.7%)	80%				N/A*	*Survey required once in every 3 years – 1st survey carried out February 2001.
BV 74a	Satisfaction of tenants of Council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord: with results broken down by a) black and minority ethnic tenants						80%**	**This target is based on current levels of satisfaction. These indicators are new and there is no baseline information available.
BV 74b	Satisfaction of tenants of Council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord: with results broken down by b) non-black and minority ethnic						80%**	
BV 75	Tenant satisfaction with opportunities for participation and decision-making	70.9% (+/- 3.6%)	62%					
BV 164	Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing?	No ACPI D1	55% Yes	Yes	Yes			
BV 164	Does the Authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in rented housing and follow the Good Practice Standards for social landlords on tackling harassment included in the Code of Practice for Social Landlords: Tackling Racial Harassment?						Yes	
BV 183	The average length of stay in (i) bed and breakfast accommodation and (ii) hostel accommodation of households which include dependant children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need						4 weeks	
BV 184a	The proportion of LA homes which were non-decent at 1st April 2002						34.3% (actual)	
BV 184b	The percentage change in proportion of non-decent LA homes between 1 April 2002 and 1st April 2003						32.9%	
BV 185	Percentage of responsive (but not emergency) repairs during 2002/03, for which the authority both made and kept an appointment <i>(Note: Appointment is an arrangement to carry out a repair on a specific date)</i>							*Council does not operate a specific date appointment system at present

Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 76	Security: whether the authority has a written an pro-active strategy for combating fraud and error which embraces specified initiatives including those sponsored by the Department of Social Security, which is communicated regularly to all staff	Yes	81% Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
BV 77	The average cost of handling HB or CTB claim, taking into account differences in the types of claim received	£54.67	£63.55	£65.00	£74.06			Basis of calculation has changed now excludes Weekly Benefit Savings & Verification Framework income. Also 2.5 new staff included
BV 78a	Speed of processing: a) Average time for processing new claims	37 days	48 days	35 days	36.02 days	36 days Top quartile (TQ)	36 days	78a and 78b were based on a joint figure as they could not be split. From 2001/02 we can split the data and accurately record 78b separately
BV 78b	Speed of processing: b) Average time for processing notifications of change of circumstances	37 days	16 days	35 days	10.16 days	9 days TQ	9 days	
BV 78c	Speed of processing: c) Percentage of renewal claims processed on time	98.1%	65%	96%	76.66%	83% TQ	79%	
BV 79a	Accuracy of processing: a) Percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct on the basis of the information available for the determination for a sample of cases checked post-determination	Not collected	96%	Not set	92.7%		93%	
BV 79b	Accuracy of processing: b) The percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year	81%	59%	69%	48.1%		50%	The basis of the calculation was previously not strictly in line with the definition
BV 80	Benefits User Satisfaction Survey – overall satisfaction summary							
	Facilities to get in touch with the office	82.90% (+/- 2.7%)	81%					
	Service in the office	85.30% (+/- 3.9%)	82%					
	Telephone service	83.90% (+/- 4.2%)	74%					
	Staff	86.20% (+/- 2.5%)	84%					
	Clarity/understandability of the forms	68.20% (+/- 3.3%)	62%					
	Time it took to be told about result of claim	81.60% (+/- 2.7%)	70%					

Environmental Services

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 81	Has the local authority completed a full review and assessment of air quality in its area, including consultation with statutory consultees, in order to determine whether or not an air quality management area has to be designated?	Yes	89% Yes	Yes				
BV 82a	Total tonnage of household waste arisings – Percentage recycled	16.75%	9.8%	22.16%	16.66%	26% (Mar 2004)	19%	The number of properties on the kerbside recycling scheme was restricted. From 1st April 2002 the whole district came on line
BV 82b	Total tonnage of household waste arisings – Percentage composted	0	1.1%	0	0		0.3%	
BV 84	Kg of household waste collected per head	341 Kg	387 Kg	350 Kg	343 Kg		352 Kg	
BV 85	The cost per kilometre of keeping relevant land, for which the local authority is responsible, clear of litter and refuse	£47,584.90	£71, 919	£45,600	£48,020.20			
BV 86	Cost of waste collection per household	£28.10	£30.41	£28.75	£29.93		£36.84	
BV 88	Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections of household waste	893	278	678	101			The predicted bad weather conditions did not arise over the winter period with consequently little disruption to the service
BV 89	Percentage of people expressing satisfaction with cleanliness standards	62.8% (+/- 2.9%)	67%					
BV 90a	Percentage of people expressing satisfaction with household waste collection	87.1% (+/- 2.0%)	87%					
BV 90b	Percentage of people expressing satisfaction with recycling facilities	77% (+/- 2.5%)	69%					
BV 91	Percentage of population served by a kerbside collection of recyclables or within 1 kilometre of a recycling centre	93%	87%	93%	93%		100%	

Community Legal Service

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 177	Is the authority part of a Community Legal Service Partnership? Yes/No	No		No	Yes			
BV 177	Percentage of authority expenditure on legal and advice services which is spent on services that have been awarded the Quality Mark and meet priority legal need identified in the Community Legal Service Partnership service plan						25%	

Planning

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 106	The percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	54%	55%	50%	59%	60% over country as a whole – by 2008	50%	Variance of + 9% against 2001/02 actual and 2000/01 actual. Variance of + 18% on 2001/02 actual and 2001/02 target the reason being the phasing policies had even more positive effect than anticipated when target set
BV 107	Planning cost per head of population	£11.65	£12.15	£14.24	£12.57		£12.00	
BV 108	The number of advertised departures from the statutory plan approved by the Authority as a % of total permissions granted	0%	0.90%	0.05%	0%			
BV 109	Percentage of applications determined within 8 weeks	72%	65%	80%	72%			
BV 109a	Percentage of applications determined within 13 weeks						60%	
BV 109b	Percentage of minor applications determined with 8 weeks						65%	
BV 109c	Percentage of other applications determined within 8 weeks						80%	
BV 110	Average time taken to determine all applications		10 weeks	*	10.03 weeks			*Target was not set because there was no information available to base target upon
BV 111	Percentage of applicants satisfied with the service received	78.4% (+/- 3.5%)	78%					
BV 112	Core against a checklist of planning best practice	44%	58%	56%	44%			Variance caused by the award of costs against the Council relating to the TETRA mast appeal
BV 179	The percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days	99.7% ACPI G1	94%	98%	97.92%		98%	
BV 188	Percentage of applications determined under delegated powers						90%	The last quarter of 2001/2 achieved 87%

Environmental Health

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 166	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for Environmental Health/Trading Standards			80%	74.1%		80%	

Cultural Services

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 113	Number of pupils in organised school groups visiting museum (changed to BV 170c: 2002/3)	12		1200	1215		1680	
BV 114	The adoption by the authority of a local culture strategy	Yes	17% Yes	Yes	Yes			
BV 114	The adoption by the authority of a local Cultural Strategy – score against a checklist of the guidance in 'Creating Opportunity' guidance issued in December 2000						100%	
BV 116	Spending per head of population on cultural and recreational facilities and activities	£14.03	£21.61	£11.60	£13.85			Inappropriate target was set for 2001/02
BV 119	Percentage of residents by targeted group satisfied with the local authority's cultural and recreational services							
	Sports/leisure facilities	60.4% (+/- 3.4%)	52%					
	Museums/galleries	39.9% (+/- 3.9%)	48%					
	Theatres/concert halls	34.2% (+/- 3.6%)	50%					
	Parks/open spaces	73.6% (+/- 2.9%)	61%					
BV 169a	The number of museums operated by the Authority	1 ACPI 13a		1	1			
BV 169b	The percentage of that figure which are registered under the museums registration scheme administered by Resource (museums, libraries and archives council)	100% ACPI 13b		100%	100%			
BV 170a	Visits/usages per 1000 population to the museum	34 ACPI 14a	440	146.83	107.5		162.43*	*Assumes website launched April 2002
BV 170b	Visits made in person per 1000 population to the museum	32 ACPI 14b	553	146	106.9		153.3**	**Assumes increase in visitor figures of approx 40% due to abolition of charging from 1 April 2002
BV 170c	Number of pupils in organised school groups per 1000 population						15.3	

BV170a and 170b – Comment – Cultural Services

The Museum fell some way short of its 2001/02 target. This was mainly the result of this being the Museums first year of operation and as such the target was set in isolation from any trading history. It was also not clear what impact the late decision to charge an entrance fee would have. The Best Value Review of the service revealed that charging and afternoon only opening were a major barrier to people using the facility and explains the discrepancy between target and actual. The target set for 2002/03 is ambitious but given free entrance, morning opening and enhanced web presence is realistic.

Community Safety

Ref	Indicator	2000/2001 Actual	2000/2001 District average	2001/2002 Target	2001/2002 Actual	National Target (incl. date)	2002/2003 Target	Comments
BV 126	Domestic Burglaries per 1,000 households and percentage detected.	12.2	11	10.7	12.62 (35%)		12.36	The target is to reduce incidence of domestic burglary by 2% year on year
BV 127	Robberies per 1,000 population and percentage detected	7.3	8	5	0.26 (32%)			
BV 127	Violent crimes per 1,000 population and percentage detected, broken down to show:							No target set because on 1st April 2002 a new crime recording standard came into operation and this impacts upon the way crimes are recorded and so target difficult to establish. It is intended to reduce the number of violent crimes year on year against a baseline that is in the process of being established
BV 127a	Violent offences committed by a stranger per 1,000 population							
BV 127b	Violent offences committed in a public place per 1,000 population							
BV 127c	Violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises per 1,000 population							
BV 127d	Violent offences committed under the influence per 1,000 population							
BV 128	Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population and percentage detected	11.98	12	8.9	10.36 (11%)		10.20	Several prolific offenders resulted in a greater number of offences than was anticipated. Methods of operation by the Crime & Disorder Partnership are regularly reviewed and actions in the new strategy will be directed to enhancing our performance in this area. The target is to reduce incidence of vehicle crime by 2% year on year
BV 173	Has the local authority established a corporate strategy to reduce crime and disorder in their area? Yes/No. If no, has the authority established a timetable for doing so?	Yes		Yes	Yes			
BV 174	The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population	ACPI A2a	6	Not set	1		2	A system was not in place to record racial incidents until 2001/2. The target is to increase the number reported because it is believed to be an issue that is under reported
BV 175	The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action	ACPI A26	78%	Not set	1		2	The target is to increase the number reported because it is believed to be an issue that is under reported
BV 176	The number of domestic violence refuge places per 10,000 population, which are provided or supported by the authority	0.7 ACPI A3	0.49	0.7	0.7		0.7	0.7 places is the equivalent of 2.2 beds
BV 189a	Percentage of residents surveyed who said that they feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' after dark whilst outside in the local authority area				54.1%			Not being collected until 2003/4 but a perceptions of crime and disorder survey was carried out in Autumn 2001 with the results as shown
BV 189b	Percentage of residents surveyed who said that they feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' during the day whilst outside in the local authority area				90.8%			Not being collected until 2003/4

OUR SERVICES

How is the service information organised?

Service – name of the service.

What we do – an explanation of what the service does.

We have – a brief explanation of what we did last year.

We have not – if necessary, a brief explanation of what we planned to do last year but did not complete.

We will – a brief explanation of the main activity over the next year – detailed information can be found in Technical Annex E: Service Action Plans.
(See The Technical Annex Request Form on page 54.)

Accountancy & Audit**What we do**

The section provides a financial service to the Council.

A main responsibility is to produce and monitor the Council's budgets and to close the annual accounts in line with proper accounting practice. Another important area is the production and reporting of medium term financial projections. Other financial services provided include paying invoices, dealing with insurance claims and premiums, treasury management, banking, VAT and giving financial advice. The section also pays employees and members expenses. Internal audit undertakes a planned programme of work to evaluate the adequacy of internal control and to ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively.

We have

Met last year's targets. Obtained a satisfactory report from the District Auditor on the Council's final accounts. There was also a satisfactory District Audit report on their review of Internal Audit.

We will

- Work on the development of a new budget system and promote interest in its use by other local authorities in Gloucestershire
- Investigate the possibility of joint working with other local authorities in Gloucestershire for some of our functions
- Prepare revenue budgets for each service
- Prepare capital budget and monitoring information
- Produce information to allow the Council Tax to be set for 2003/04
- Complete the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2002/03
- Produce management information on the 2002/03 outturn
- Prepare an annual Audit Review Statement
- Implement an Audit Plan
- Produce a Pension Fund Annual Statement.

Building Control

What we do

The parent legislation is The Building Act 1984 which allows Building Regulations to be made to secure public health and safety in and around buildings, the conservation of fuel and power and to provide for access to and facilities within buildings for disabled people. The section is also responsible for securing dangerous buildings and discharging the Council's street naming and numbering functions.

We have

Targets were generally attained. It was not always possible to have a professional officer in Ebley Mill during all working hours. Attendance at dangerous structures, usually associated with a fire service request meant that on a limited number of occasions, the section was staffed by administrative team members only. However, the introduction of mobile phones by all visiting Building Control Officers means that, if necessary, a request for technical advice can be answered even if the officer is not in Ebley Mill. The disadvantage of this method is that the advice is not given to the customer face to face.

We will

- Install and implement new computer systems
- Review administrative support functions to complement new systems
- Review the use of I.T. equipment by travelling Building Control Officers
- Organise a seminar with customers to review operation of new Building Regulations.

Community Safety

What we do

The Community Safety Service ensures the Council's delivery of the Community Safety Strategy, which is a multi-agency approach to the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the District. The Service is responsible for the co-ordination of all aspects of the District's Crime and Disorder Strategy in support of the duties placed upon the authority by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Its role is to participate in a partnership approach to the prevention and reduction of Crime and Disorder and to do all that can be reasonably done to reduce crime and disorder within the authority's various functions. (Section 17 of the Act)

The Stroud District Crime and Disorder Partnership Strategy came into effect on 1 April 1999, together with its Action Plan. It includes specific targets for the prevention and reduction of crime, together with details of the strategic delivery and actions by over 100 partner organisations or agency departments. The second strategy for 2002 to 2005 is about to be published alongside the report on the work of the partnership for the first three years, plus an action plan for the next three years, the audit documentation and a one page summary of the new strategy.

The service secures inward investment and distributes a budget to pump prime schemes which have crime reduction (including the fear of crime) as a major part of their outcomes. It manages the CCTV schemes in Stroud and Dursley with the support of the user group members.

We have

Introduced and developed partnership working by:

- The introduction of a Crime and Disorder Strategic Group
- The introduction of three Tactical Groups based on the geographical areas of the three Inspector Neighbourhood areas of Stroud, Stonehouse and Dursley
- Incorporating the subject-based groups of Substance Action, Safer Estates, Racial Incident, CCTV user groups for Stroud and Dursley
- Development and introduction of the Parish Council Cluster Group meeting to improve communication between Town and Parish Council with the Community Safety Partnership

- Obtained funding from external sources £74,700 for Stroud CCTV, £88,300 for Communities against Drugs from the Government. Message in a bottle from Help the Aged, Age Concern £2,500
- Taken every opportunity to raise awareness of issues pertaining to Community Safety by visiting groups such as Probus, Round Table and Rotary.

We will

- Launch a new three year Crime & Disorder Strategy (2002 to 2005) plus a report on the first three year strategy, an Audit Document for the formulation of the Strategy, plus an Action Plan and flyer
- Strive for Beacon Status for rural crime reduction
- Recruit and train Neighbourhood Wardens
- CCTV – expansion/improvements
- Improve the reporting of racial incidents
 - through playing a leading role in the Cotswold and Stroud Racial Incidents Group
 - publicly launch the Cotswolds and Stroud Racist Incident Group
- Improve the collation process of issues to be targeted by the Partnership
- Increase the number of local Council's participating in action delivery
- Pump-prime new initiatives raised by partnership
- Implement new or improved lighting schemes in the district.

Democratic Services

What we do

Democratic Services hold a statutory duty to administer the constitution of the Council, Members, Directorates and the public. The officers of the service provide a vital link between central and local government and between the authority and elected members.

The section is responsible for:

Committee administration particularly with the preparation of agendas, reports and minutes for Council, Cabinet, Policy Panels and various Committees. All documents must comply with the specified corporate format and must be available for distribution within strict timetables. The team acts as a Hub for the Council by means of archiving all agendas, documents and minutes.

We attend about 120 meetings each year to provide an accurate report of discussions and decisions made. The Democratic Services team must also provide an efficient service of dissemination of decisions arising from these meetings to facilitate prompt implementation and progress chasing.

The development and enhancement of working relationships between the 51 Members, officers, external individuals and organisations. There is continual clerical support for elected members with the need to further develop member training.

We also monitor and review of the Members Code of Conduct as well as administer the reprographics for the authority.

We have

- All agendas, reports and minutes are available on the Internet
- Initiated a member development and training programme.

We will

- Develop an open forum on the Role of the Councillor
- Produce a training programme to develop leadership in the community
- Produce a pocket guide for new councillors
- Disseminate documents via information technology to encourage a more self-sufficient elected member
- Provide support for area committees, neighbourhood forums etc.
- Be aware of the need to provide internal and external research facilities for the Scrutiny committees.

Electoral Services

What we do

The Electoral Services Section is responsible for two main statutory functions and corporate administration.

The Electoral Registration Service is responsible for the compilation of the electoral register used to enable the people of the Stroud District to cast their vote. Over 45,500 properties are recorded on our database registering over 85,000 electors. This includes the management of a rolling registration programme.

The administration of all elections held within the Stroud District or Parliamentary Constituency forms the second main function of the section. District Council elections are held by thirds concurrently with a third of the parish council elections for the area. There are 51 District Councillors, 49 parishes and 3 parish meetings. County Council elections are held once in every four-year period electing 12 councillors and European Parliamentary elections occur every five years electing Members under the system of proportional representation. Stroud is responsible for 1 Parliamentary Constituency whereby elections have no fixed timetable but are generally run every four to five years.

The Corporate Administration function deals with the internal administration of the building.

We have

Actual turnout figures at local elections have remained steady averaging at 38%. Our turnout figures, although not as high as we would like, are still one of the highest in the South West.

At the 2001 Parliamentary election we experienced a drop in turnout of approx 7% compared to the 1997 Parliamentary election but still remained 19th highest in the country.

Response rates for canvass form returns remain a constant 99%. BV7 has now been taken out as a national performance indicator and new regulations do not place an emphasis on 100% returns.

All other locally set performance indicators reflect a true level of service satisfaction i.e. responses to letters, phone call statistics etc.

We will

- Carry out the annual audit to compile the Revised Register of Electors
- Carry out a periodic electoral review – District and Parish
- Manage full district elections
- Put maps on polling cards
- Carry out a young voter education programme
- Participate in Local Democracy Week
- Carry out a polling station review
- Review of postal vote issue
- Introduce forms in braille.

Environmental Contracts

What we do

Develop, maintain and manage efficient and cost effective services for Refuse Collection and Recycling, Street Cleansing, Building Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance and Public Conveniences.

We have

- Continued work on the Councils policy towards providing one high usage public convenience facility in specific areas
- Continued working towards green flag status at Stratford Park
- Implemented the first phase of the new Multi-Service Contract for Street Cleaning, Building & Public Convenience Cleaning & Grounds Maintenance
- Continued work on the interface between the District Waste Collection Contract and the new short term County Waste Disposal Contract.

We will

- Improve management and maintenance of recycling bring sites
- Extend kerbside recycling service to all households within the District and range of recyclables to be collected
- Resolve the problems created by not collecting refuse on Bank Holidays
- Improve special collection service for bulky household refuse items
- Provide a Green Waste collection service
- Produce Quarterly information reports identifying particular problem areas of the Green Waste service
- Establish new collection round schedules for the new contract
- Involvement in the joint bid with the County and other Districts for a proportion of the £140m Government funding for recycling
- New staff operations to be understood by Council staff
- Working to achieve green flag status for the Stratford Park Site
- Provide monitoring data to councillors and key service managers.

Environmental Health

What we do

The overriding aim of the Environmental Health Service is to safeguard and improve public health and the environment within the District by delivering the Council's Environmental Health responsibilities which are predominantly statutory in nature. The service is managed by the Head of Environmental Health and the service is divided into three sections: Food & Health and Safety, Environmental Protection and Housing Improvement. An administration section provides administrative support to the unit.

The current structure of the service was established in 1998 when the previous Environmental Services and Housing Improvement Divisions were amalgamated under one service head following a value for money audit by District Audit.

We have

The section had successfully removed a large backlog of food premises inspections during 2000-2001 that had accumulated due to staff shortages in previous years. On 1 April 2001 the section had programmed 774 inspections for the year. Difficulties were experienced in recruiting a suitably qualified technical officer in the food safety section, which had an impact on the performance of the section in the latter part of the year. Despite this setback, flexible use of staff resources enabled inspection targets to be substantially met by the year end.

The major outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the first half of 2001 meant that the food section was required to direct considerable resources to dealing with enquiries from members of the public and in performing regulatory functions in respect of food exports. This affected all environmental health departments in the County and a number of programmed bench marking activities progressed very slowly as a result.

Foot and mouth restrictions also interrupted the private water supply sampling programme.

Proposals to carry out a survey of food business proprietors requesting information on their impressions of the service began in April 2001 and the results were very favourable. A proposal to organise a local forum for food business proprietors was postponed until later in the year.

Publication of the contaminated land strategy was completed within the statutory time limit of June 2001.

We were shortlisted for Beacon Council status for the work in relation to alleviating fuel poverty.

Flooding over the winter 2000 and spring 2001 raised the profile of land drainage problems. This put a significant strain on the resources of the team causing a general backlog of work to accumulate. The growth item approved for a new member of staff to enforce land drainage issues from April 2002 will address this situation.

Some of the targets for the dog warden service were not achieved. This was due to the unforeseen circumstances of the long-term sickness absence of the Animal Welfare Officer coinciding with the resignation of the Dog Warden whose post was vacant for several months.

It was pleasing to note from the customer survey that of those using the service 89% found the quality of the service either good or excellent.

We will

- Undertake a Best Value review of the service and produce an action plan for continuous improvement
- Work in partnership with the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) to deliver the radon roll out programme and target help and advice towards householders living in homes above the action level
- Implement the contaminated land strategy so as to identify and record contaminated land sites in the District and ensure remediation works are carried out when necessary
- Help reduce the risk of flooding in the District through enforcement of the newly adopted land drainage byelaws and prioritise resources for flood alleviation measures highlighted by the critical watercourse survey
- Review the private sector housing strategy in consultation with others so as to produce a policy that fully reflects local needs in the light of the new general power for housing renewal to be enacted by the Government during the year

- Promote the bringing back into use of empty properties through a combination of targeted promotion, advice grant aid and enforcement as appropriate
- Build on partnerships already established to deliver the affordable warmth strategy and actively seek to lever in external resources to help fund energy efficiency and awareness projects
- Ensure food safety and hygiene standards are maintained in the District's food premises through inspection, education and enforcement as appropriate
- Facilitate health and safety training opportunities for local businesses and inspect workplaces in line with the national strategy
- Investigate complaints of nuisances arising from domestic and commercial premises and use the statutory powers available to remedy nuisances where appropriate.

Estate Management

What we do

Estate Management is both a support and a front-line service. Through both the day to day and strategic management of the Council's property the section enables the Council's other front-line services to achieve their objectives. The service also helps to achieve the Council's corporate objectives through the direct management of its 'commercial' property portfolio e.g. off-street car parks.

The Section comprises property management, car parks and markets and building maintenance. The aim of the service is to manage the Council's property in the most effective and efficient manner to enable it to meet its corporate objectives by:

- Providing a high quality, efficient asset management service for the Council's land and property
- Providing an effective building maintenance and architectural service for the Council's non-housing property
- Effective monitoring and control of off-street parking on Council-owned car parks.

We have

- Achieved all targets and objectives
- Realigned with special projects and economic development to focus on regeneration for the District
- The team progressed its major regeneration projects i.e. Stroud Cinema, Supermarket Development in Dursley. Preferred developers have been selected for both schemes and detailed terms of disposal are being negotiated
- The disposal programme has been progressed – Dudbridge Depot, Stroud, Kingshill Depot, Dursley and Chapel Street, Cam, although these have been difficult schemes to bring forward
- Best Value recommendations are being implemented – The resurfacing of Church Street car park has been brought forward, a gritting procedure has been agreed with the Town Centre Manager and Chamber of Trade; the implementation of pay-on-exit has been deferred pending the outcome of the review into externalising the service

- The Asset Management Plan received a 'satisfactory' rating from GOSW. The asset management group has been very proactive, implementing an action plan to ensure a 'good' rating is achieved on next year's plan
- Joint working is being improved both with the County and Town Councils and this will be strengthened through the new partnerships and the alignment with the Market towns and Rural Regeneration team.

We have not

Introduced new software to speed up the processing of car park fines. Quotes were received but implementation has been put on hold pending the review of delivery of this service.

We will

- Implement the improvement plan arising from the best value review of regeneration
- Investigate and report on the externalisation of the car park service
- Undertake condition surveys of the Council's property portfolio and revise the planned maintenance programme in light of the results
- Implement and develop the action plan for asset management planning and submit a revised plan to the Government Office
- Carry out capital projects funded in this year's programme e.g. Market Street improvements, Nailsworth
- Progress the disposals programme.

Facilities Management

What we do

Facilities Management is both a support and a front-line service. Its activities include both the day to day and strategic management of the Council's operational buildings.

We have

Facilities management is a new corporate service within Stroud District Council. The service has only been operational since January 2002, so therefore has no previous history from the previous year.

We will

- Participate in the development of one-stop shops/call centre
- Undertake Regeneration and Culture H&S safety audit
- Implement and monitor energy consumption
- Development of corporate facilities Management
- To review Ebley Mill Caretaking Service
- To coordinate review of Ebley Mill staffing locations
- To coordinate disposal and relocation of storage from Ebley Mill
- To continue and where possible improve Mailroom services.

Housing Management

What we do

To provide a high quality housing management and repairs service for Council tenants. To achieve this through trained staff committed to delivering a range of services to meet the needs of individuals and estates. Also to ensure the genuine opportunity for tenant involvement and to work in partnership with other agencies in seeking to improve these services.

We have

- Achieved high levels of tenant satisfaction with the overall service and opportunities to participate as a result of a national tenant satisfaction survey
- Reduced total housing arrears for the third successive year
- Void turnaround times surpassed target for the year
- Maintained compliance with CRE Code of Practice in Rented Housing and provided Race and Equalities training to staff, tenants representatives and councillors
- Implemented the Estate and Repair modules of the New Integrated Housing Management System
- Reviewed and extended the contract for the recovery of former tenants' debts
- Published Stroud District Housing Partnership (Tenant Compact) Update for 2001/02
- Contributed to the Crime and Disorder Strategy 2002-2005 both strategically and operationally
- Undertaken Best Value Review of the Careline Service
- GOSH! Week to promote sheltered housing was a successful event.

We will

- Launch the first Neighbourhood Compact Agreement with Hampton Waves Residents' Association
- Further void turn-around performance improvements following 'away day' and establishment of officer Voids Focus Group (see Section 5.2. for P.I. target)

- Further improve rent collection and arrears recovery performance through three-monthly Action Plans established by Rent Arrears Working Group (RAWG) (See sections 5.1. and 5.2. for PI targets)
- Complete implementation of Integrated Housing Management System
- Review and update Scheme Managers Handbook
- Research the possible implementation of a 'specific date' Repairs appointment system to comply with new BVI 185
- Consider ASB service improvements in light of DTLR Consultation Paper: 'Tackling Anti-Social Tenants'.
- Sheltered Housing Capital and Maintenance Requirements – new five-year programme
- CRE Code of Practice in Rented Housing – Review of Action Plan 2002
- Award a new communal TV Relay Contract to embrace changes to digital technologies.

Housing Strategy

What we do

This service measures the housing needs of the people of the District and intervenes in the housing market to influence the Quality and suitability of housing across all tenures, the Quality of Social Housing and the Affordability of adequate housing.

The Head of Housing Strategy has overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the Council's Housing Strategy, Housing Investment Programme and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. His role includes preparation and management of the Council's Housing Capital and Housing maintenance programme and management of the Housing Revenue Account. He is also the Council's lead officer for the Implementation of the Government's new 'Supporting People' regime.

The Housing Strategy Division has three sections. The first is the Housing Strategy & Enabling Section which prepares and co-ordinates the Council's Housing Strategy. In its enabling role it administers the Council's Social Housing Grant budget to fund Housing Associations and co-ordinates the allocation of Housing Corporation resources for the District. It also administers Right to Buy applications from Council tenants and administers Leaseholder service charges. The Rehousing section administers the Housing Register (Waiting List) and allocates both Council properties and makes nominations for vacant Housing Association dwellings. This section also deals with applications from homeless households. The third and final section is Housing Rehabilitation that deals with planned maintenance, major repairs and improvements to Council dwellings. It also has tenders and lets the contracts for day to day maintenance and work to empty properties prior to reletting. The activities of the Housing Rehabilitation Section are covered by the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

This Service Plan covers the Division's General Fund services and does not deal with the majority of the Division's activities that are funded from the Housing Revenue Account are therefore covered by the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

We have

In 2001/02 the Division was upper quartile performer for all but one of its Best Value Performance Indicators. This was BVPI 63 that relates to the average energy efficiency rating of Council homes. We are continuing to meet our performance improvement target for this indicator.

In 2001/02 we have

- Completed a Stock condition survey, analysed the results and produced a costed profile for element/component replacement
- Determined the future of our 58 BL8 Prefabricated Bungalows and agreed a contract commenced their refurbishment
- Completed the complete refurbishment of 29 'Cornish Unit' style Council homes
- Secured funding for a Direct Access Hostel in Stroud for homeless young people
- Commenced an appraisal to determine the best way of providing our Landlord service in future
- Implemented a new system for calculating the rents of our properties
- Again received a 'well above average' rating from the Government for the Quality of our Housing Strategy and our Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.
- Develop a Supporting People Strategy
- Open a new direct access hostel in Stroud for single homeless young people
- Report the outcome of our Housing Options Appraisal and pursue the selected option
- Implement a new Housing Allocations Policy
- Successfully complete the BL8 Aluminium bungalow refurbishment contract
- Make another successful Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan submission to Government
- Undertake Best Value Reviews of all General Fund housing services provided by the Division
- Implement bogus callers deterrent initiative for SDC housing occupied by older people
- Implement a new twice-yearly newsletter for Housing applicants.

We have not

Implemented the new allocation policy due to the delayed start of the new computer system.

We will

- Revise our Homelessness procedures and staffing to enable the Council to discharge its duties to homeless households
- Launch New Floating Support Schemes for new young single Council tenants, funded from Transitional Housing Benefit
- Publish annual newsletter to Parish Councils on the Council's Enabling role
- Conduct needs survey for Supported Housing

Human Resources

What we do

The Human Resources Section provides the Council with the professional expertise to manage its business effectively through its investment in people.

The responsibilities of the service include: advice on personnel matters and employment law, corporate training, recruitment of staff and contracts of employment, human resource planning, job evaluation, welfare and counselling.

Legal duties include issuing a written contract of employment to all staff, job evaluation to aid equal pay considerations, criminal record and other reference checks, and completing various statistical returns for central government. Corporate responsibilities include maintaining the Council's Investor in People status, overseeing appraisals and production of the Corporate Training Plan, providing central training on personal and management skills, advice on terms and conditions of service, monitoring of sickness absence, development of personnel policies and advice to Council, Cabinet and committees.

Services and individual responsibilities cover provision of central training events, recruitment and selection, advice and assistance in grievance and disciplinary cases, operation of maternity leave provisions, determining regrading applications, welfare advice and counselling, restructuring, redundancy and early retirement.

We have

- Been involved in the recruitment of 96 staff, including casual and temporary staff
- Been re-accredited as an Investor in People organisation following an annual assessment
- Produced and delivered an annual Corporate Training & Development Plan
- Revised our Induction Handbook for new staff

We will

- Seek re-accreditation as an Investor in People
- Produce a Corporate Training & Development Plan
- Produce a Corporate HR strategy as part of Best Value Review
- Assist in the production of an Equalities Scheme to meet the Council's duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act.

Information Services

What we do

The Information Technology service exists to provide a range of information technology services. There are four principle divisions; Customer engineering handles day to day needs of 420 users including training. System engineering manages major application and helps implement new package systems with a focus on integration. The PC Development team provides technical PC-based programming, internet and GIS services. The Network engineers manage the servers, security and networks.

We have

- Put all elected members on-line
- High speed link to Museum in the Park
- Improved tape backup facility
- Maintained high availability of core systems
- Implemented new business rates system
- Implemented several new housing systems including: repairs, planned maintenance, estates
- Improved the buildings at risk database
- Enabled payment by credit/debit card
- GIS mapping of crime and disorder hotspots and linking in with the County MAIden project.

We have not

- Implemented new housing rents system
- Implemented council tax system
- Fully implemented IT help desk.

We will

- Launch Stroud Direct web site
- Help with citizen access strategy
- Work with suppliers to complete new systems
- Launch members portal
- Join National Land & Property gazetteer.

Land Charges

What we do

The Local Land Charges section is responsible for the compilation of information in relation to production of Local Searches. This is a service for people buying or remortgaging property or land in the Stroud District.

We have

- Been preparing for applying for a chartermark
- We have reached level 2 of the implementation of NLIS.

We will

- Work on the continual and sustainable reduction in search turn around times
- Work on achieving level 3 of NLIS
- Development of Web Site
- Implement a computer system to computerise the land charges service and maintain the National Land & Property Gazetteer.

Legal Services

What we do

The Legal section provides legal advice and representation to all service units of the Council in a wide range of Council activity. Advice is also provided to elected members on request and at Council and Cabinet and Committee meetings. The section plays an important role in advising on the new political structures and in advising officers on new legislative changes in their areas of responsibility.

The Council's Legal Section, comprising 11 staff, has three main roles;

- a) to advise the Council, its Members and officers on the statutory framework regulating the role and work of the Council, (including the role of the Head of Legal Services as the Council's Monitoring Officer).
- b) to contribute to the sound management and administration of the Council (for example attending at Council, Cabinet and other meetings to ensure prompt procedural and legal advice is available on all matters). Advising on implementing the modernisation programme and new ethical framework.
- c) to assist in the Council's law enforcement role and generally to act as in-house lawyers for the wide range of activities undertaken by the Council. This includes such areas of work as conveyancing and general property development; litigation including criminal and civil actions; prosecutions and general advocacy; planning and environmental law, licensing and other general areas of legal involvement.

In addition, the head of Legal & Democratic Services holds the post of the Council's monitoring officer.

We have

- Completed the Ebley Wharf development, one of the largest section 106 agreements the Council has ever entered into
- Completed the land sale negotiations for the Tesco development in Dursley
- Achieved 95% compliance towards LEXCEL accreditation according to independent consultants report
- Carried out the scoping for our Best Value Review

- Drafted for adoption the Council's new constitution
- Coordinated a review of members allowances
- Successfully defended three major high court cases against SDC in areas of planning and housing.

We will

- Appoint a Legal Services Manager to modernise our practice management standards
- Complete LEXCEL accreditation
- Implement computerised case management and time recording systems to improve performance and efficiency
- Carry out a Best Value Review of the service.

Leisure Services

What we do

The delivery of leisure services is a discretionary service, however the benefits the service brings contributes to a number of Council core objectives.

The service exists to enable the people of the District to partake in leisure activities of their choice. In doing so not only do they improve their physical well-being, they improve their confidence and self esteem.

The current service is primarily 'facility based', represented by the two principal sites of Stratford Park Leisure Centre and Dursley Pool. These two sites are supported by a network of Joint Use Sports Centres which provide limited facilities to the various small communities located in the District. These centres are based in Dursley, Wotton, Stonehouse, Nailsworth, Berkeley and Eastcombe (as from 2002).

The management of the service is separated into three main trading areas: Stratford Park Leisure Centre, Dursley Pool and Sports Centre and Joint Use Sports Centres. A private company, CCL Leisure, manages Stratford Park, whilst the Council manages both Dursley Pool and Sports Centre and the Joint Use Sports Centres 'in house'.

The section also manages and owns several areas of Commons and Woodlands, some of which are managed by agencies on behalf of the Council.

A Best Value of Leisure and Cultural Services was undertaken in 2001 which included sports outreach work and Commons and Woodlands.

We have

- Provided a new fitness suite to Wotton Joint Use Centre
- Opened a new Joint Use Centre at Thomas Keble School including the provision of a sun shower facility
- Made arrangements to appoint a Sports Development Officer
- Agreed a programme of improvements to Stratford Park Leisure Centre – Investment programme due to commence in July 2002 with completion expected in October. Scope of works include new roof for centre, disabled access improvements, new bar/café, and changing room refurbishment

- A five year rolling programme of replacement of cardio vascular was completed at Dursley and Maidenhill Joint Use Sports Centres
- Installed a new CCTV system at Dursley Pool and Dursley Sports Centre.

We have not

- Installed of computerised booking system at Dursley Pool – budget not available
- Carried out the project to provide additional changing accommodation at Dursley Sports Centre – project now cancelled
- Provided investment in the facilities at Berkeley Vale Leisure Centre – a budget not available.

We will

- Select and organise a Stroud District team for Area Youth Games
- Organise and publicise Health and Fitness Tours
- Agree a schedule of maintenance for Joint Use sites
- Oversee the appointment of a ‘Regeneration through Sport Manager’
- Complete £1 million investment programme at Stratford Park Leisure Centre
- Plan and organise Stroud District Soccer Tournament
- Assist the Wotton Community Sports Foundation to prepare a lottery bid for the New Road complex
- In partnership with Dursley Town Council provide an ATP on the Dursley Recreation Field
- Organise corporate fitness testing for local companies
- Work with Maidenhill School to secure New Opportunities funding for investment in the facilities at Maidenhill Recreation Centre
- Upgrade the facilities at Wotton Pool through the provision of a new fence and an upgraded pool surround
- New skating facilities to be provided in Stratford Park in a joint partnership with Stroud District Council and the District Youth Council.

Museum

What we do

The Museum service is a discretionary public service provided by means of a partnership between Stroud District Council and the Cowle Trust (a registered charity). The Council provides the management and funding for the service and the Cowle Trust are the legal guardians of the collections. In 2000 a new corporate mission and aims were developed. Mission – inspiring people to explore the past, understand the present and imagine the future.

Aims

The service delivers its mission by:

- 1 Encouraging people to find out about the people and place of Stroud district through our Collections and services.
- 2 Collecting and recording evidence of the lives and achievements of the people of this area, its special identity and environment in a time of constant change.
- 3 Managing the Collections to the recognised national standards to ensure their preservation for future generations.
- 4 Basing all our services on developing knowledge and expertise.
- 5 Providing:
 - a A place to which people will want to return.
 - b A place from which people will want to explore the local environment and the world beyond.
 - c Cultural opportunities which act as a catalyst for learning and enjoyment.

We have

The Museum in the Park was completed on time, within budget and quality.

User satisfaction ratings exceeded targets.

Awarded Full Museums Registration with Resource.

We have not

Appointed a Commercial/marketing Consultant on a profit-share basis.

We will

- Establish the museum as a venue for adult learner groups by developing partnerships
- Host Open Studios taster exhibition
- Develop website pages
- Review and develop marketing strategy and plan.

Planning

What we do

We provide a full statutory planning service for the District. This includes all aspects of Development Control, Planning Strategy, Trees and Landscape and Conservation.

We have

Achieved the construction of 59% of houses in the last year on brownfield land. This is impressively high. The national target is 60% countrywide. It is recognised that rural areas do not have the same ability as urban areas to meet this target and therefore the performance in 2001/02 of 59% is testimony to the effectiveness of the emerging Local Plan allocations and phasing policies, and the importance of the Council winning the Eastington appeal on phasing.

Determined 72% of planning applications within 8 weeks. This is impressive given the extremely high level of applications received during the year. However, the Government continues to stress the importance of this indicator, and has now set a series of more complex, but no less challenging, targets for the year ahead. Measures are currently being taken internally to seek to move towards these targets, but the biggest push in this direction has come from the increase in delegated powers agreed in December 2001. Unfortunately, the last quarter of 2001/02, which was the first quarter using the new delegated powers, coincided with a particularly large increase in workload, particularly of the more complex and time-consuming applications. Without the increase in delegated powers, performance would have suffered more than it did.

Seen nearly 80% of applicants satisfied with the planning service. This reflects the findings of the Best Value Review into Development Control conducted in 1999, and is also impressive given the workloads of the past year.

Defended planning appeals successfully – the percentage of appeals dismissed was at a high level of 77% in 2001/02. This is well above the national average, and is particularly impressive in the absence of a Local Plan – most authorities experience an improvement at appeal once a Local Plan is adopted. This indicator is a good measure of the overall health of a Development Control service, and our results suggest that most decisions are being correctly made, and those appeals that result are being competently defended by officers.

Commenced the Local Plan Inquiry in January 2002 – this is now estimated to conclude in December 2002, and continues the important process of moving Stroud towards having an adopted Local Plan.

We will

- Conclude the Local Plan Inquiry
- Acquire a new computer system and develop GIS
- Secure high quality designed development
- Maximise the provision of affordable housing
- Review the Section 106 process to increase transparency and maximise contributions
- Increase the level of delegation to 90%
- Meet Government targets for determining planning applications
- Contribute to AONB management
- Prepare development briefs for major sites
- Monitor housing and employment
- Produce Supplementary Planning Guidance on affordable housing.

Policy & Review

What we do

The overriding aim of Policy & Review is to provide leadership and project management for a number of corporate strategies including the undertaking of Best Value reviews.

Policy & Review is essentially the delivery mechanism for the Government's Modernisation Agenda. Its main legislative accountability is through the Local Government Acts of 1999 and 2000. The overall objective of the Policy & Review team is to ensure that Stroud District Council is recognised as a 'striving' Council when the Comprehensive Performance Assessment for District Councils is carried out in 2003/4. The key tasks are:

Community Strategy
Consultation Strategy
Best Value
Scrutiny and Review Co-ordination
Business Planning and Performance Management
Public Service Agreement
Partnership Co-ordination
Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)

We have

Community Strategy
A large issues event and some facilitated public meetings have been undertaken. This, along with an analysis of a number of public strategies and Parish/Town appraisals has led to a discussion document being drawn up which will be presented to the proposed Local Strategic Partnership.

Performance Management
Following a review of performance management, a new performance management system was introduced based on a service plan pro-forma. All services are using the service plan pro-forma and performance will be monitored using the service plans.

Consultation Strategy
A consultation strategy was agreed by Cabinet in January 2002 and the subsequent action plan forms part of the work programme for 2002/3. This will be monitored by Scrutiny Committee.

Best Value Reviews
A 'Promoting Stroud's Economy' review and a 'Culture' review were undertaken, leading to a significant restructuring of these services and the production of comprehensive implementation plans.

Scrutiny Inquiry

The first scrutiny inquiry was held, investigating Stratford Park Leisure Centre. This proved to be very successful and resulted in a number of significant recommendations which were approved by Cabinet.

Equalities

An interim Equalities Review and work to progress the Race Equalities Scheme commenced in February 2002 and will be completed in 2002/3.

We have not

Work was not carried out concerning the implementation of a Race Equality Scheme. This is concerned with what level of the Commission for Racial Equality's standard for Local Government the authority conforms to. Work regarding this issue did not commence until February 2002.

We will

- Coordinate Best Value Reviews in Professional Support Services, Protecting Stroud's Environment, Member and Democratic Services and Housing (Phase 1)
- Implement a Consultation Strategy
- Arrange a feasibility study of a hydro scheme
- Work with the Local Strategic Partnership to produce a Community Strategy
- Work with the County and District Councils in Gloucestershire to put a Public Service Agreement bid to the Government
- Conduct an initial self-assessment as part of a Comprehensive Performance Assessment
- Administer the Council's Core, Rural and Themed Grants
- Implement an Equality Scheme to ensure that we do not discriminate in our services or practices
- Work with the Scrutiny Committees to draw up a work programme and format for undertaking scrutiny inquiries.

Public Relations

What we do

- Ensure a corporate approach to public relations
- Provide advice and practical assistance on PR as requested
- Stroud District Youth Council
- Civic Twinning with Landkreis Gottingen
- Emergency Management – provision of assistance to the emergency services in the event of a civil emergency

We have

Twinning – Successfully hosted visit to Stroud by 19 Germans and organised civic visit to Gottingen.

Emergency Management – Volunteer numbers significantly increased; enough to guarantee the operation of a 'second shift'. Radio communications greatly enhanced.

Public Relations – Communication Strategy drawn up and approved by Strategic Team and Service Heads. Summary version of BVPP published and distributed in partnership with other five districts, the County Council and Police Authority.

Youth Council – Now awarding own (Youth Initiative) grants. Participation at Cabinet meetings now in place.

Grants

Rural Project grants successfully distributed; has led to a renewal of the scheme in 2002/3 and additional funding. Jubilee Grants scheme initiated successfully at short notice.

We will

- Develop and implement the Communications Strategy
- Manage the Jubilee Grant Scheme
- Establish and operate Citizens' Panel
- Manage Party in the Park
- Arrange Civic visit to Germany
- Draw Up Twinning Action Plan
- Emergency Management exercises
- BVPP summary version
- Employ part-time youth worker to facilitate the Youth Council.

Regeneration

What we do

This is a new team, formed in January 2002 by merging the Special Projects Team and Economic Development Officer. The main purpose of the Market Town and Rural Regeneration service is to increase the vitality and viability of the main market towns within the district by improving retail competitiveness, creating new business and employment opportunities, encouraging new entertainment and leisure facilities, promoting redevelopment opportunities and achieving environmental improvements. All these towns service a rural hinterland so making links and strengthening the connections between the towns and the countryside are an integral part of this activity.

The focus for the first year will be updating the regeneration strategies as many of the objectives have been achieved. In addition it is essential that stakeholders become more involved in regeneration projects in their widest sense. New projects and priorities will be developed in conjunction with extended partnerships, which consider how the towns function as part of the wider rural community. These new partnerships will be expected to produce regeneration strategies that incorporate a wide range of service areas with partner organisations. Additional rural strategies will need to be produced for more remote areas within the South of the district to include Wotton-under-Edge and the Berkeley area.

We have

The service currently has no national or local performance indicators.

Both Stroud and Dursley have experienced a reduction in the number of vacant premises in the past year and an increase in pedestrian footfall.

Significant progress has been made on delivering key regeneration proposals, namely Dursley Supermarket and Stroud Cinema. Preferred developers have been selected for both schemes and detailed terms of disposal are being negotiated.

Progress on environmental enhancement projects has been hindered due to staff turnover and limited funding to commence certain projects. Many schemes have, however, been successfully completed.

Two expressions of interest were submitted to the SWRDA under the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative on behalf of Cam and Dursley and the Stroud Valleys.

A great deal of liaison work has been undertaken in connection with the Lister site in Dursley and with individual groups in Stroud. It is expected that the new partnerships will pull these interests together.

The District Council now has a Green Travel Plan.

The Study of Rural Transport needs is almost completed and will enable the District to provide evidence to support funding application.

We have not

Updated the Town Centre Regeneration Strategies. Although this was progressed (a draft of the strategy for Dursley was agreed), it has now been overtaken by events with the need to develop and widen partnerships as part of the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative by the SWRDA. These partnerships will be responsible for developing the new strategies that consider regeneration in a much wider context.

We will

- Develop a regeneration strategy for the District
- Assist the development of new community partnerships as part of the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative
- Assist and support the development of regeneration strategies in Berkeley, Sharpness and Wotton-Under-Edge
- Develop a healthcheck system for Towns (expansion of current footfall counts) and programme of implementation
- Develop a town centre management strategy for the District
- Support British Waterways in its work to reopen the Cotswold Canal
- Progress key regeneration proposals – Dursley Supermarket, The Weaver’s House, Dursley, Stroud Cinema, Cheapside and the transport interchange, Stroud
- Work with the relevant Parishes and County Council to submit Rural Transport bids for three clusters within the District.

Revenue & Benefits

What we do

The Revenue and Benefit Service provides a front line customer service for Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefits. We aim to maximise income collection; correctly and promptly award Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit to those in need; and to prevent and detect Housing Benefit fraud. We also provide a corporate reception and switchboard service.

We have

Performance – Achieved excellent collection rates and improved the turnaround of benefit cases. Introduced the facility to pay by debit and credit cards. Exceeded the fraud detection target set by Government. Implemented a new computer system for image, workflow and business rates. We increased direct debit take up by 5% council tax and 4% for business rates.

Staff issues – We joined together with other Gloucestershire districts to provide a training partnership for revenue and benefits training. Where vacancies arose the job was reviewed and changed where required to meet our business objectives.

Service delivery – The Citizen First front line working group was set up in March 2002 to improve our service delivery to our customers. Sponsoring a member of staff to learn sign language to help customers with hearing difficulties. Worked in partnership with the other Gloucestershire districts to promote the take up of housing benefits.

We have not

We reviewed our recovery reminders to make them more customer friendly but we are still waiting for IT to implement the changes.

We will

- Improve our service by implementing a new computer systems for council tax and housing benefits in Nov 2002
- Maintain collection rates for council tax, business rates and housing benefit overpayments
- Continue to develop our service delivery to our customers through the front line Citizens First project
- Promote housing benefit to increase take up
- Introduce the new housing benefit Performance Framework principles to improve standards
- Increase direct debits to keep collection costs down
- Introduce an action plan on Equality Issues for the service.

Subscription Rooms

What we do

Present the widest range of arts and entertainment, both participatory and non-participatory, for the people within the Stroud District, taking into consideration the social and geographical make-up of the area. As well as performances and classes, we also host business meetings, conferences and community events.

We have

Presented 268 arts events and classes, made up of: popular and classical concerts, occasional theatre, performances, a film festival, a community fashion show dance nights, ballroom dancing, ceilidhs, and dance workshops youth events, 'Battle of the Bands' and talent contests.

Completed the redesign of the Forecourt in time for the 2001 Fringe Festival. It has been used by charities, for meetings and recruitment sessions and for street entertainment sponsored by Stroud Town Council.

Installed exhibition lighting in March 2002. We have also recruited a visual arts panel to select exhibitions for the George Room and foyers and created an exhibitions programme from May 2002 onwards.

Secured funding and a programme for a monthly Sunday afternoon recital series in association with Stroud & District Arts Festival.

We have not

No suitable application for a catering service was received. The Council has fitted out the ground floor bar and is looking to appoint a bar operator (subject to negotiation).

We will

- Develop workshops programme for children and adult learners
- Develop the programme with non-professional arts providers
- Develop partnerships with professional arts providers, especially for disadvantaged groups
- Seek to improve and expand the sound and lighting installations in the Ballroom
- Recruit a bar franchisee following installation of the new downstairs bar facility
- Complete a benchmarking study with comparable venues in Gloucester and Worcester.

A-Z OF SERVICES

Abandoned Vehicles	01453 754379	Green Burials	01453 754425/05
Benefits Fraudline	01453 754870	Health & Safety at work	01453 754477
Berkeley Vale Leisure Centre (evenings/weekends)	01453 511617	Homelessness	01453 754078
Bonfires	01453 754478	Houses (non-Council) – renovation grants, overcrowding	01453 754478
Building Control	01453 754516/8	Housing Benefit	01453 754054
Business Rates – enquiries	01453 754865	Land Charges	01453 754245
Bus Tokens etc.	01453 754379	Landlord and Tenants problems	01453 754368
Careline Alarms – older/disabled people	01453 754149	Legal Services	01453 754388
Car Boot Sales – Council car parks	01453 754436	Leisure Enquiries ONLY	01453 754333
Car Parks – management	01453 753412	Litter complaints	01453 754424
– fines/season tickets	01453 754436	Loop Hire (portable) – deaf/hard of hearing	01453 760993
Chief Executive	01453 754290	Maidenhill Recreation Centre (evenings/weekends)	01453 824366
Community Safety Officer	01453 754280	Markets (Stroud)	01453 753412
Complaints line	01453 754444	Minicom	01453 754949
Conservation	01453 754204/6/21	Museum in the Park	01453 763394
Council/Committee meeting arrangements	01453 754351/5/8	Nailsworth Recreation Centre	01453 836951
Council Houses – management	01453 754186	Old Town Hall, Stroud (booking)	01453 753412
– rent	01453 754163/67	Payment of accounts	01453 754126
– repairs	01453 754852	Pest Control – rodents, insects, etc.	754919/4459
– sales	01453 754074	Planning Helpline	01453 754442
– sheltered schemes	01453 754173	Pollution – air, noise, bonfires, etc.	01453 754478
– waiting list	01453 754078	Public Relations Officer	01453 754646
Council Tax	01453 754865	Public Toilets	01453 754424
Council Tax Benefit	01453 754054	Raffles, Draws – registration	01453 754389
Dangerous Structures (office hours) (outside office hours, contact your local Police Station)	01453 754516/8	Recycling	01453 754424/35
Disabled People – grants for house	01453 754478	Right to Buy	01453 754074
Dog Warden Service	01453 754491/7	Rubbish collection	01453 754424
Dursley Pool	01453 546441	Stratford Park Leisure Centre & Outdoor Pool	01453 766771
Dursley Sports Centre (evenings/weekends)	01453 543832	Street Cleaning	01453 754424
Economic Development/Regeneration	01453 754306/25	Street naming/numbering	01453 754516/18
Electoral Registration	01453 754886	Subscription Rooms	01453 760999
Energy Efficiency Advice	01453 754445	Taxi Licensing	01453 754379
Environmental Management System/ Sustainable Development	01453 754289	Thomas Keble Leisure Centre (evenings/weekends)	01452 770617
Entertainment Licences	01453 754478	Tourist Information Centre	01453 760960
Flood Prevention	01453 754454	Trade Waste Advice	01453 731283
Food Safety	01453 754477	Trees	01453 754329
Grants to voluntary groups	01453 754303	Visitor Accommodation	01453 760960
Grass Cutting	01453 754424	Wotton under Edge Sports Centre (evenings/weekends)	01453 842626
		Wotton under Edge Pool (Outdoor) (evenings/weekends) (evenings/weekends)	01453 842626

CONTACT DETAILS

Tel/fax: Switchboard 01453 766321
 Emergencies 01453 766321 (24 hrs)
 Fax 01453 750932

Website: www.stroud.gov.uk
Best.Value@stroud.gov.uk

Address: Stroud District Council, Ebley Mill
 Westward Road, Stroud, Glos GL5 4UB

Opening times: Mon - Thurs 8.45am - 5.00pm; Fri 8.45am - 4.30pm

We do not provide information on: Careers Advice, Education, Libraries, Public Transport, Roads, Social Services, Strategic Planning, Trading Standards

These are Gloucestershire County Council services.
 Contact at www.gloscc.gov.uk or call 01452 425000.

FEEDBACK FORM – YOUR VIEWS

We would like to know what you think about this booklet.

Please take a minute to answer the questions below, cut along the dotted line, and send the form to:

Stroud District Council, Ebley Mill, Stroud, Glos GL5 4UB

Alternatively, comments can be made to:

Mark Sharwood, Policy & Review Manager

Tel: 01453 754289. Fax: 01453 754934. Email: best.value@stroud.gov.uk

You can give your name and address if you wish.

Do you think this Best Value Performance Plan is easy to read?

Yes No

Do you think it is informative?

Yes No

How could we improve the Best Value Performance Plan?

Do you have any further comments on the services provided by Stroud District Council or the information in this plan?

Your name

Your address

Telephone Email

TECHNICAL ANNEX REQUEST FORM – available on disc or paper (photocopied)

In addition to this performance plan, there are a number of technical annexes that include detailed information on each service. The information available includes:

Technical Annex

- A Local Performance Indicators
- B Consultation
- C Benchmarking
- D Review/Audit Activities
- E Service Action Plans

To order a PC disk or paper copy of any of this information please complete the form below.

Please provide me with the following technical annexes

Please tick appropriate box

Local Performance Indicators	<input type="checkbox"/> PC Disk	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper
Consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> PC Disk	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper
Benchmarking	<input type="checkbox"/> PC Disk	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper
Review/Audit Activities	<input type="checkbox"/> PC Disk	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper
Service Action Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> PC Disk	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper

Your name _____

Your address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Please fill in the form below, cut along the dotted line, and send to:

Stroud District Council, Ebley Mill, Westward Road, Stroud, Glos GL5 4UB