



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Performance and Policy Plan

2006

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Introduction

The Government introduced a new duty of best value on town and parish councils with a budgeted income of more than £500,000 per annum from 1 April 2000. Dorchester Town Council, as a best value authority, is required to comply with the requirements of the best value regime. These have recently changed but we are required to consult local people, review all our major services, assess our performance and publish a Best Value Performance Plan by 30th June each year.

Consultation is not a new concept for this Council. We have an excellent track record of listening to residents' views, for example, in connection with the refurbishment of the Borough Gardens, the design of sports pavilions or improvements to facilities. This past year has also seen the Council undertaking a town wide consultation on all of the Council's major activities.

We continue to put into place arrangements that will secure continuous improvement in the way we deliver our services in order to make life better for people and for business in Dorchester.

This Plan sets out the Town Council's objectives, the services we provide to achieve them, the cost of these services, the progress which we have made so far on best value reviews, and our long term intentions on a variety of major issues.

Your views are very important to us as we strive to achieve our objectives so please help us to help you by sending in your comments and suggestions to the Town Clerk or by speaking to your local Town Councillor.

It is important for us to receive your comments, queries and complaints on the services provided by the Town Council so that we can continue to serve you well.

Thank you for your time in receiving and reading this; we look forward to receiving your response.



Town Mayor

June 2006

Consultation and Feedback

We want to know your views on the contents of this Plan and receive your comments, queries and complaints regarding the services provided by the Town Council.

This Plan is available on request to any resident.

We have provided a questionnaire at the end of this plan, and we should be grateful if you would help us by completing this and sending it to:

Dennis Holmes,
Town Clerk,
Dorchester Town Council,
19 North Square,
Dorchester,
Dorset. DT1 1JF

For specific help or advice on matters concerning the Town Council you can:

Telephone: 01305 266861

Fax: 01305 266085

e-mail: admin@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

Alternatively, contact one of your local Town Councillors - you will find their names and addresses in Section 19 towards the end of this document.

1 - Mission Statement

The Town Council will provide high-quality cost-effective services to meet the needs of residents and others and will promote and defend the best interests of the Town for the ultimate benefit of everyone.

1.1 Our Strategic Aims are -

- (a) To enable residents to enjoy high-quality social, recreational, and cultural facilities within the town and to seek the continual improvement and development of these facilities in accordance with the desires expressed by the residents.
- (b) To encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the town.
- (c) To preserve the unique identity of Dorchester and promote its heritage.
- (d) To consult with and take due regard of all comments received from other statutory bodies, voluntary organisations and individuals to ensure an improving standard of services to meet local needs.
- (e) To represent the views and wishes of the citizens of Dorchester.
- (f) To help to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, gender, culture, sexual orientation, income, race or religion, and which seeks to develop their well being, knowledge, understanding, and mutual co-operation.
- (g) To contribute to and support, wherever possible, those key issues and actions identified within the Community Strategy for Dorset, the West Dorset Partnership Community Plan, the Dorchester Area Partnership Local Action Plan and any other legitimate organisations such as 'Decorate Dorchester' and the Dorchester Business Improvement District.

All of our services contribute to one or more of these strategic aims. Details of how can be found in Section 3 – Town Council Services.

1.2 Our Key Objectives are -

- (a) To ensure that services continue to be provided as economically, effectively and efficiently as possible and in accordance with the principles of best value.
- (b) To ensure that the Council considers the impact of all its functions and decisions on crime and disorder in accordance with its obligations under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- (c) To ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- (d) To provide improved opportunities for the active and passive recreation of the townspeople:-

- (i) by the continued maintenance, improvement and extension of the Council's sports grounds, pleasure grounds, allotments and children's play areas, including the provision of appropriate safety surfacing and, in particular, to continue to pursue the creation of new sports facilities at Poundbury and the improvement of the Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground and the Borough Gardens;
- (ii) by the continued maintenance of the Municipal Buildings to the high standard set on refurbishment and taking all opportunities to increase the level of usage of the Buildings;
- (iii) by promoting appropriate events;
- (iv) to ensure that maximum advantage is taken of sources of financial assistance to improve the facilities which the Council provides and to reduce wherever possible the costs of projects falling to be met by the Council Tax payers of Dorchester;
- (v) to endeavour to ensure the sensitive future development of the town by commenting constructively on proposals both for works to existing buildings and for new development on whatever scale;
- (vi) to ensure that the resources at the Council's disposal are used to the most effective degree possible and to the greatest possible benefit of the town and its people subject to maximising the value for money obtained, if appropriate by employing outside consultants;
- (vii) to adequately consult the public at large, or representatives of appropriate sections of the community, before implementing significant developments or changes to the services provided;
- (viii) to ensure that the Council's activities are undertaken consistent with the principles of sustainable development and in the least damaging way to the environment by ensuring, wherever possible, that full advantage is taken of re-cycling facilities and re-cycled products, that energy is used as efficiently as possible and that any chemicals or pesticides used are environmentally friendly;
- (ix) to have discussions with representatives of other councils at all levels in an effort to ensure that Dorchester's best interests are served;
- (x) to actively support the preparation of a community strategy for Dorchester and the surrounding area;
- (xi) to ensure that all enquiries and complaints received from members of the public are dealt with courteously and expeditiously and that, in cases where reference to a Committee or the Council is required, the position and reasons for any delay are made known to the member of the public concerned.

2 - The Town Council - an overview

- 2.1 Dorchester Town Council is the parish authority for the town of Dorchester. The Town Council was created in 1974 as the successor to the former Dorchester Borough Council. There has been a history of local government in Dorchester dating back to Anglo Saxon times and Dorchester has been the County Town since 1305. It has elected a Mayor since 1629.
- 2.2 With a population of almost 16,000 it is the largest parish in the West Dorset District. The Town Council supplements the provision of local government services in Dorchester and provides a wide range of social and recreational facilities, while promoting the town in its representations to other bodies. The Town Council works in partnership with Dorset County Council, which covers the whole of Dorset except Bournemouth and Poole and whose main responsibilities include education, social services, highways, strategic planning and libraries and West Dorset District Council, whose main responsibilities include local plans and development control, environmental health, refuse collection, economic development, tourist information and major recreational facilities such as the Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre.
- 2.3 The Town Council has 20 Members, elected for a term of four years. The next Town Council elections are in May 2007. The Mayor, who also acts as Chairman of the Council, and the Deputy Mayor are elected annually by the Council in May. Town Councillors are, at present, unpaid, and with the exception of the Mayor, do not receive any attendance allowance or payments for their duties, which they undertake on a purely voluntary basis. Regulations have recently been made by Parliament to allow the payment of allowances to local councillors. This Council has agreed that, for the time being, Councillors should continue not to receive any attendance allowance or payment for their duties.
- 2.4 The Town Council operates a committee structure. Each committee has specific functions, meets regularly and submits reports and recommendations to Council. Agendas are available to the public three clear days before the meeting date at the Council Offices. Meetings are usually held in the Council Chamber (upstairs in the Corn Exchange building) and the public are encouraged to attend and may put questions or make statements on any matter in a public period at the end of every full Council meeting.
- 2.5 County, district and unitary councils have been required to introduce revised decision making structures. Town and parish councils were not subject to this requirement but the Council has adopted the underlying principles which are to separate strategic issues from the consideration of routine management matters and has revised its committee structure accordingly. The main committees now are:

Management
Planning and Environment
Policy

- 2.6 In addition the Council appoints a number of Panels and Working Groups which meet as and when required to discuss particular issues. Members of the press and public are welcome to attend these meetings unless there is a need to discuss confidential matters.
- 2.7 The Town Council employs a team of 21 full-time staff and 4 part-time staff headed by the Town Clerk. The Council's 'family tree' is reproduced on page 65.
- 2.8 The Council Tax paid by Dorchester residents includes the spending requirements of Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council, Dorset Police and Dorchester Town Council. The District Council is the charging authority responsible for collecting your Council Tax. Many people do not realise that the Town Council has until recently received no revenue support from Government, unlike the District and County Councils; neither does it receive any funding from local businesses and retailers through their Non Domestic Rate. In 2003, for the first time, the Council received a grant from central Government of £45,000 towards the cost of implementing the statutory requirement of best value. The grant this year and for future years will be £30,000.

3 - Town Council Services

The Town Council provides the following services to achieve its Strategic Objectives:

3.1 *Allotments*

252 Plots on 6 sites (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

3.2 *Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces*

Borough Gardens (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Sandringham Sports Centre (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

King's Road Playing Field (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Salisbury Field (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Fordington Green (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

The Walks (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Maumbury Rings (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

13 equipped and 1 unequipped children's play areas (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

3.3 *Municipal Buildings*

Corn Exchange (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Town Hall (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Magistrates Room (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Council Chamber (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Dressing Rooms (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Kitchen (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

3.4 *Council Offices and Support Services*

Council Offices (See Strategic Objectives 1.1(c), (d), (e) and (f))

Financial, Administrative and Committee Services (See Strategic Objectives 1.1(c), (d), (e) and (f))

Payroll (See Strategic Objectives 1.1(c), (d), (e) and (f))

Mayoral and Civic events (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

3.5 *General and Civic Services*

Commenting on planning applications and local plans (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Commenting on highway issues including traffic calming schemes, provision of bus shelters, public seats, notice boards and signs (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Environmental issues (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Town Twinning (See Strategic Objective 1.1(f))

Representing local views including liaison with other authorities and Agencies (See Strategic Objectives 1.1(d) and (e))

Christmas lighting schemes (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Grants to local organisations (See Strategic Objective 1.1(f))

Dorchester Arts Centre (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Teddy Bears Picnic (See Strategic Objective 1.1(f))

Supporting community events on Council land (See Strategic Objectives 1.1(a) & (f))

Casterbridge Christmas Cracker (See Strategic Objective 1.1(b))

Dorchester Carnival (See Strategic Objective 1.1(f))

War Memorial (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Thomas Hardy's Statue (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Dorchester Market ¹
 Cornhill Stalls ¹
 Dorchester Cemetery ²
 Fordington Cemetery ²
 Poundbury Cemetery ²

1 Jointly with the West Dorset District Council through the Dorchester Markets Joint Committee.

2 Jointly with Winterborne Herringston Parish Council through the Dorchester Joint Burial Committee.

3.6 In addition to the direct delivery of services the Town Council also works in partnership with other organisations and is involved in partnership or agency agreements with the County and District Councils. It manages highway grass cutting in Dorchester on behalf of the County Council; names streets on behalf of the District Council; is in partnership with the District Council on the Dorchester Heritage Committee and with both the County and District Councils in the scheme to look after the Town's highway trees; and with both other councils and the Environment Agency in a scheme to improve the maintenance of the River Walk.

3.7 The net cost of the Town Council's Services can be summarised as follows:

Actual 2004/2005 £	Original Target 2005/2006 £	Actual 2005/2006 £	Service	Target 2006/07 £
7,990	11,470	11,362	Allotments	10,909
361,380	454,953	350,142	Parks & Open Spaces	470,924
47,786	74,220	51,017	Administration	124,199
263,814	278,170	247,789	Municipal Buildings & Arts	268,002
2,325	7,541	5,226	Twinning	6,436
10,748	17,370	16,394	Other Activities	18,995
44,213	46,750	54,175	Burial Committee Costs	61,900
(88,687)	(70,000)	(117,599)	Less share of Market Surplus	(81,004)
649,569	820,474	618,506	Net Expenditure	880,361

3.8 A copy of the full Estimates can be obtained from the Council Offices.

3.9 The precept, which is the amount we raise to pay for the services provided by the Council, for the current year represents a Council Tax of £137.76 for the average property. An increase of 4.65% on last year. We managed to keep the rises to inflation for several years but the legislation which requires the production of this Plan and its associated reviews and other new legislative requirements has meant that we have had to increase the Council Tax by a little more this year.

- 3.10 The Government has recognised that best value has significant cost implications for all councils and announced in 2001 that they intended to make a grant of £30,000 a year to town and parish councils which are subject to the statutory duty. Unfortunately the grant was not backdated to when the regime was introduced in April 2000 but this has been acknowledged to a minor extent by giving a grant of £45,000 in the 2003/2004 financial year only. The grant for 2006/2007 will be £30,000.

4 - Review of Town Council Services

- 4.1 The previous requirement for all services, no matter how small, to be reviewed within five years has been removed to enable best value councils to make a proportionate response to reviewing very small services, where the cost of the review is likely to exceed any savings which might be made, either in terms of actual cash or improved efficiency.
- 4.2 This does not mean that reviews no longer have to be carried out and the Council has already completed a review of its Allotments, parks, gardens and open spaces and the Municipal Buildings Review. The review into Administrative Arrangements of the Council is underway.
- 4.3 Set out below is the Council's proposed schedule of best value reviews. The rationale behind this timetable is that the services which are most costly are reviewed first. Any opportunity for cross-cutting reviews will be taken, as with parks, gardens and open spaces.

Service	Year	Progress
Allotments	2001/02	Complete
Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces	2002/03	Complete
Municipal Buildings	2003/04	Complete
Administrative Arrangements	2004/05	In progress
Twinning	2005/06	To be commenced
Cultural Activities and Grants*	2006/07	To be commenced early 2007
Civic Services*	2006/07	To be commenced early 2007

* Provisional dates.

- 4.4 In reviewing its functions the Council will address the four key principles of Best Value, by:
- Challenging the way we deliver our services;
 - Comparing our performance to other Town Councils providing similar services;
 - Consulting users, potential users and key partners;
 - Demonstrating that our services are being delivered competitively.

Contracts

- 4.5 This Council recognises that good quality services depend on appropriately skilled and motivated workforces. As a part of this, the Council hereby certifies that all individual contracts awarded during the year which involve a transfer of staff comply, where applicable, with the requirements in the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts. It is not however, anticipated that any contracts of this nature will be awarded this year.

5 - Performance Indicators and Targets

- 5.1 The Best Value legislation requires the Council to establish ‘Local Performance Indicators’ which allow a balanced judgement to be made of performance. The performance indicators should be ‘easy to understand’, and the relevant information should be ‘easy to collect’. Performance indicators should measure dimensions such as, ‘cost, efficiency, quality, and access’.
- 5.2 The 41 Town and Parish Councils currently affected by Best Value have discussed at length how they can compare Performance Indicators amongst themselves but have been unable to do so as all such indicators for this tier of Council are locally determined by each Authority. The 41 Councils therefore welcome the research commissioned jointly by the DETR and NALC into the issue of local performance indicators and the opportunity for commonality and comparison. Fairlight Consultancy Services undertook the research and produced a report entitled ‘Performing Small Miracles’. The 41 local councils subject to best value considered the findings of the research and agreed that from 1st April 2003 every best value local council should attempt to adopt a number of performance indicators so as to allow comparison. A number of these indicators are included within this document.
- 5.3 We believe that we have set in train targets that will enable us to measure the level of improvement from year to year.
- 5.4 The following pages give details of the performance indicators and targets set by the Council used to monitor each service. However, the following performance indicators represent a measure of our corporate performance.

Corporate Performance Indicators	Actual 2004/05	Original Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Net cost of all Town Council services per elector per annum	£48.73	£61.55	£46.40	£66.04
Percentage of rooms in buildings provided or operated by the Town Council in which all public access areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of partnership agreements the Town Council is involved in.	7	7	7	7

Town Council Elections	Actual 1999	Target 2003	Actual 2003	Target 2007
Percentage turnout to local elections for the Town Council <i>Note – The turnout for the by-elections held for two casual vacancies during May 2005 was 70.45% (these by-elections coincided with a General Election).</i>	39.5%	42.5%	40.00%	42.5%

5.5 The Council has introduced a new complaints procedure which will ensure that any complaints that might be received from members of the public are dealt with courteously and expeditiously and that records can be kept and monitored.

Formal Complaints	Actual 2004/05	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Number of complaints dealt with through the Council's Complaints procedure	0	less than 3	0	Less than 3
Percentage of complaints dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant	-	100%	-	100%

6 – Allotments

6.1 The Council's strategic objective is

6.1.1 To provide the facility of leisure gardening.

6.2 The Council's policy is

6.2.1 To endeavour to secure the provision of land sufficient to meet the demand for allotments.

6.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks identified for the year commencing April 2005

Activity (<i>Action in italics</i>)	Target date
<p>To endeavour to ensure that the demand for allotment gardens is met.</p> <p><i>The take up of allotment gardening continues to grow at present having been static or falling for many years. A number of additional plots have been created at Alington Avenue but the waiting list still remains high. Discussions with the Duchy of Cornwall are taking place with a view to possibly creating a new site within the town.</i></p>	Ongoing
<p>To organise a programme of talks to existing and prospective allotment holders</p> <p><i>Regrettably, due to illness, the programme of talks did not take place this year. However a meeting to which all allotment holders were invited did take place and as a result a number of improvements to sites were identified.</i></p>	January 2006
<p>To undertake a further satisfaction survey of allotment holders</p> <p><i>Completed.</i></p>	April 2006
<p>To survey allotment holders with a view to establishing whether there is a significant interest in forming allotment associations.</p> <p><i>Completed – there was no interest in forming allotment associations.</i></p>	September 2005
<p>To continue to produce the monthly 'Allotments News'</p> <p><i>Allotment News is on hold pending a new author.</i></p>	Ongoing

6.4 Priority tasks identified for the year commencing April 2006

Activity	Target date
To endeavour to ensure that the demand for allotment gardens is met.	Ongoing

To organise a programme of talks to existing and prospective allotment holders	January 2007
To undertake a further satisfaction survey of allotment holders	April 2007
To survey allotment holders with a view to establishing whether there is a significant interest in forming allotment associations.	November 2006
To restart the monthly 'Allotments News'	August 2006

6.5 Performance indicators for this service are

Allotments	Actual 2004/05	Original Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Net cost to the Council per elector	59.94p	86.05p	85.24p ¹	81.84p
Rent charged to allotment holder per square metre	10pence	10.4pence	10.4pence	10.8pence
	Actual 2004/05	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Percentage take-up of allotment plots	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of plots uncultivated	0%	0%	0.4%	0%
Number of people waiting for an allotment (excluding those waiting for a specific plot)	50	15	63	15

1 The spend has increased due to work being undertaken to keep rabbits out of various allotment sites.

6.6 Comparison of cost charged to allotment holders:-

Council	Rent charged per square metre 2006/07
Swanage Town Council	30 pence
Weymouth & Portland Borough Council	16 pence
Wimborne Town Council	14 pence

Bournemouth Borough Council	12 pence
Dorchester Town Council	10 pence
Blandford Town Council	7 pence
Sherborne Town Council	7 pence
Sturminster Newton Town Council	5 pence

6.7 Current Position

6.7.1 The Council owns or leases six allotment sites, Alington Avenue, Hawthorn Road, St. George's Road, Louds Mill, Frome Terrace and Herringston Road. In past years overall supply and demand have been very closely matched although there were some local imbalances. The demand for and interest in allotments appears to be particularly resurgent having been fairly stable for a number of years. The situation was partially addressed by the creation of a number of new plots at Alington Avenue over and above those required for the gardeners being moved from the Louds Mill allotment site as a result of the proposed new depot. Additionally and more significantly discussions are ongoing with the Duchy of Cornwall regarding the creation of a new allotment garden to be included in the plans for the Lubbecke Way extension and housing development.

6.7.2 The Council undertook a review of its allotments service during 2001 in consultation with all allotment holders. The outcome revealed a high level of satisfaction with the current arrangements for service delivery, no volunteers have been forthcoming to form the nucleus of an allotments association to take over the future running of allotments and no significant changes will therefore be made during this year. The best value review did however make a number of recommendations all of which have been implemented or it has been agreed not to pursue further as follows:-

- An annual meeting with allotment holders and interested organisations is now held annually
- Information boards have been placed at all sites
- The Council's policy to secure land to match the demand for allotments was amended to make it more sustainable and achievable
- Allotment holders are given an opportunity to take over the day to day running of the allotments by the formation of an allotments association at least once a year
- Alternative methods of payments of rent were investigated but there was no demand for change

6.7.3 The Council also arranges a programme of talks to existing and prospective allotment holders in the early part of most years which have proved extremely popular. Unfortunately the talks scheduled for 2006 did not take place due to the illness of the person who would have presented the talks. The programme of talks will hopefully commence again in 2007.

6.8 Future

- 6.8.1 The Council will continue to provide and where appropriate develop sites and endeavour to ensure so far as possible that the demand for allotment gardens is met.

7 - Parks, Open Spaces and Playgrounds

7.1 The Council's strategic objective is

- 7.1.1 To provide improved opportunities for the active and passive recreation of the townspeople, including -
- (a) by the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities;
 - (b) by developing or supporting the creation of additional facilities;
 - (c) by promoting appropriate events.

7.2 The Council's policies are

- 7.2.1 To fix charges at a level which will, so far as possible, ensure the maximum usage and accessibility of the facilities provided commensurate with the Council's duty to minimise its net expenditure.
- 7.2.2 To liaise with all bodies responsible for the provision and promotion of recreational activities.
- 7.2.3 To provide, develop, maintain and encourage the use of the Borough Gardens and other formal and informal open spaces, amenity areas and sports pitches.
- 7.2.4 To provide, develop and maintain facilities giving opportunities for children to participate in mentally and/or physically stimulating activities and encourage social co-operation and interaction in a safe environment, whether such environment is formally designated as a play area or not.

7.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks identified for the year commencing April 2005

Activity (<i>Actions in italics</i>)	Target date
<p>To continue to implement the action plan arising from the best value review of the service</p> <p><i>See page 56</i></p>	Ongoing
<p>To implement the scheme to restore and refurbish the Borough Gardens following the successful resolution to the Council's bid for funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund</p> <p><i>Work is underway to restore and refurbish the Borough Gardens. The fountain has been restored and contractors are on site working on putting in new railings, restoring the Borough Gardens House, building a new kiosk and toilets, creating a new play area and landscaping.</i></p>	December 2006

To upgrade and refurbish Maumbury Rings <i>A draft Management Plan and a draft scheme for the refurbishment of Maumbury Rings have been drawn up with the scheme being put forward for public consultation shortly.</i>	December 2006
To be pro-active in the development and delivery of a permanent skatepark at Little Fairfield <i>Planning Permission has been granted and the Skatepark Steering Group is pushing forward with seeking funding for the build.</i>	September 2006

7.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2006

Activity	Target date
To continue to implement the action plan arising from the best value review of the service	Ongoing
To complete the scheme to restore and refurbish the Borough Gardens following the successful resolution to the Council's bid for funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund	December 2006
To upgrade and refurbish Maumbury Rings	December 2006
To be pro-active in the development and delivery of a permanent skatepark at Little Fairfield	Ongoing
To work with West Dorset District Council, the Duchy of Cornwall and others to progress the provision of facilities at the Great Field, Poundbury	Commence August 2007
In conjunction with Dorchester Cricket Club to assist in the provision of a new cricket score box and practice nets	April 2007
To ensure that by 2007 all play areas should have a minimum of five different play activities appropriate for their respective age groups and that the most popular play areas have a minimum of seven different play activities appropriate for their age groups.	December 2007
To complete the build of a new depot at land at Louds Mill.	April 2007

7.5 Performance indicators for this service are

Parks, Open spaces And Playgrounds	Actual 2004/05	Original Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Cost to the Council per elector	£27.11	£34.13	£29.10	£35.33
Income as a proportion of operating costs	13.85%	13.01%	15.61%	12.87%
	Actual 2004/05	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Number of items of play equipment	105	107	108	107
Number of items of play equipment out of use for more than 1 week	0	0	0	0
Percentage of 'Excellent or Good' taken from questionnaire in respect of play areas	39%	40%	45.3% ¹	50%
Number of pitches suitable for use for adult league football	2	2	2	2
Number of pitches available for junior or mini soccer	6	6	6	6
Number of football matches played	318	310	327	310
Number of cricket matches played	109	105	99	105
Number of tennis season tickets sold	18	25	39 ²	25
Number of casual user tennis tickets sold	1167	1350	896 ³	1000
Number of bowls season tickets sold	42	50	46	50
Number of casual user bowls tickets sold	2	10	9	10

- 1 It is pleasing to see a higher public perception in regard to the play areas. Work to improve all play areas has been undertaken in the past year and residents can see that work has commenced in regard to a new play area in the Borough Gardens.
- 2 Customer feedback indicated that the requirement for accompanying persons to pay a token charge was deterring the take up of season tickets. The scheme was amended to address this issue and it is pleasing to see that this has helped increase the sale of season tickets.
- 3 The number of casual tennis tickets sold shows a downturn due to the increased uptake of season tickets and because the token charge for accompanying persons was dropped (see note 2 above).

7.6 Current Position

Play Areas

- 7.6.1 The Council is responsible for the maintenance of many areas in Dorchester, including fourteen equipped and one unequipped children's play areas. We completed the installation of safety surfacing in the Town's play areas in 1997 and in the past few years we have turned our attention to improving the perimeter fencing of them in a way which is both more attractive and less expensive to maintain than the chain link which was used in most of them previously. Some of the play areas required refurbishment and this year has seen a number of improvements including purchase of new equipment, refurbishment of existing equipment and the introduction of thrice weekly checks on all play areas. In addition to making financial provision for these works, we shall take any opportunities which present themselves for any further enhancements, for example in connection with new developments. In addition to the above, the Council has taken over the responsibility of a second new play area situated at Poundbury which was provided by the developer as part of the ongoing development of the area. The Council will continue to take any opportunities which present themselves for any further enhancements or new provision, for example at Weymouth Avenue Recreation round.

Borough Gardens

- 7.6.2 Much has been done in recent years to improve the appearance of and facilities in the Borough Gardens to ensure that they continue to provide an attractive facility well into the twenty-first century and this process will be carried on. In particular, the clocktower was refurbished in 1993 and repairs to the bandstand were completed in 1995. Since then we have done a lot to thin-out overgrown shrubberies and to generally improve the planting. We also completed the repainting of the bandstand and clocktower in 2001.
- 7.6.3 The Council was successful in obtaining financial assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the costs of engaging consultant Landscape Architects to assist with the refurbishment of the Gardens along the lines identified following extensive public consultation a few years ago and their report forms the basis of an application for assistance with the refurbishment which has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This application was finally determined by the Fund late in 2000 with the award of a Stage One pass and a grant has been made to support developmental work on the project.
- 7.6.4 The grant, which was worth £52,300, met 75% of the costs of preparing a full bid for the restoration of the Gardens including an archaeological assessment, an options

appraisal for the repair and restoration of the Borough Gardens House, management and long-term maintenance plans and a project management structure. This was completed and a Stage 2 bid submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund the outcome of which was successful with the Council being awarded a grant of approximately £950,000.

- 7.6.5 Following the successful application to the HLF for a grant towards the cost of restoration of the Borough Gardens, work commenced on park landscaping in line with the original Victorian design, extensive refurbishment of the Borough Gardens House to provide new facilities for community groups and a self contained flat to provide a revenue stream. The current dormant fountain has already been returned to its former (working) glory, a new children's play area is being created and a refreshment kiosk and toilets provided. The original boundary railings have been reinstated to further preserve the historic character of the park and improve security. A requirement of the HLF grant was that the Council appointed a Head Gardener with specific responsibility for the Gardens and this appointment was made some while ago. A part time temporary Project Administrator has also been appointed to assist the Town Clerk in managing the implementation of the refurbishment.
- 7.6.6 Another outcome of the public consultation exercise was the creation of a steering group to explore the feasibility of creating a 'Friends of the Borough Gardens' to work in partnership with the Council to enhance public appreciation of the excellent facility provided by the Borough Gardens and this organisation was formally created in the Spring of 1996.
- 7.6.7 The Council actively encourages the use of the Borough Gardens for entertainment and community events and this will continue. They are already used for a wide variety of functions and fulfil a very valuable role within the social life of Dorchester and the surrounding area. The programme of events for this Summer have had to be severely reduced due to the refurbishment of the Gardens. The Council has however managed to keep an entertainment programme for the summer utilising Maumbury Rings, the programme includes Teddy Bears Picnic and two weekends of music.
- 7.6.8 On the 12th November 2001 the Borough Gardens were included by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England as Grade II.

Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground

- 7.6.9 The new pavilion at the Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground is continuing to be well received by all and is being further utilised for meetings and other community activities such as a collection and sorting venue in respect of the Tsunami disaster. The Council is committed to improving the playing surface at the Recreation Ground and it was thought that this could not be done until additional facilities were provided elsewhere to accommodate in the short term the teams which would be displaced whilst the work was carried out.
- 7.6.10 However, in conjunction with Dorchester Cricket Club the Council took advantage of a scheme operated by the English Cricket Board and has obtained specialist advice on ground maintenance and received financial assistance towards levelling the cricket square which has been completed using specialist equipment and contractors without

the need to displace any teams. The Council this year worked with Dorchester Cricket Club in respect of the provision of improved practice nets and a covered scoreboard which will complement the new pavilion and improve the facilities for cricket within the Town. This year the Council is to create a fenced area in the far corner of the site which will improve the security of sports equipment such as football posts and cricket sight screens as well as providing a screened area for outside materials.

7.6.11 In response to the increasing demand we have laid out two pitches for mini-soccer at the Recreation Ground.

7.6.12 The Recreation Ground is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and is leased to the Council until 2061. The Council has entered into a Service Agreement with Dorchester Cricket Club which gives it a security of use for a number of years. This enables the Club to apply to the English Cricket Board for grants.

King's Road Playing Field

7.6.13 The usefulness of the football pitch at King's Road Playing Field is severely hampered by the fact that there are no changing rooms. A scheme has been designed following consultation with users but the cost was found to be prohibitive at the present time. Following consultation with football representatives the area was laid out as a junior pitch. Use had increased significantly but this year saw particular problems with moles creating holes in the playing surface and digging up items from beneath the surface making the pitch unsafe. A considerable amount of effort has been put in to try and control the mole activity and to make the pitch playable next season. The Council has also provided, with financial support from West Dorset District Council, new sports arena equipment which is a further facility for free recreation within the Town. This facility is very well used and the Council hopes to extend the arena in due course.

Sandringham Sports Centre

7.6.14 The pitches at Sandringham Sports Centre were developed in the early 1990s and continue to be a well-used, popular facility. During 1999 we also laid out two mini-soccer pitches on an area of land next to Sandringham adjacent to the new housing.

7.6.15 The main football pitch at Sandringham is fenced and has a small covered area for spectators, these facilities were provided by Dorchester United Football Club. The Council for its part had the pitch deep verti-drained with one hundred tons of sharp sand incorporated to aid drainage with the pitch then seeded and fertilised to provide a significantly improved playing surface for the 2005/06 season.

7.6.16 The indoor bowls facility at Sandringham Sports Centre was provided by a partnership between the Council and the Dorchester Bowling Club and it continues to go from strength to strength. The Club has constructed an extension to provide a further three indoor rinks, bringing the total to six, and the Council supported this extension by granting the lease of the additional area of land free of charge and guaranteeing the bank loan which the Club required.

7.6.17 There is an active boules club based at Sandringham and children's play equipment and picnic facilities provided there are extremely popular. The Council is working

with the Boules club to make improvements to the playing surface and surrounding area. Picnic benches have been added during this past year and the playing surface has been compacted and the weeds treated.

- 7.6.18 Building work on an up-to-date rifle and pistol shooting range was completed in 1993 and the Dorchester Rifle and Pistol Club, who provided the facility, intend to extend it and have recently provided a club room for members. The Club continues to operate successfully following the introduction of Government controls on the private ownership of firearms.

Future Sports Provision

- 7.6.19 The requirement for football and cricket pitches already exceeds the present level of supply and, with the expansion of the Town into Poundbury, will continue to grow.
- 7.6.20 The Duchy of Cornwall owns virtually all the substantial areas of undeveloped land on the periphery of the Town and has, therefore, a significant role to play. We have frequent discussions with the Duchy about how we can meet Dorchester's increasing need for sports facilities but, as yet, we have not been able to finalise a scheme. However, an area of land north of Bridport Road to be known as The Great Field is earmarked for informal sports pitches and the Council is actively working with The Duchy to progress this amenity. It is anticipated that work will commence on site during August of this year. There are also proposals for a leisure centre at Poundbury to be funded in part from the formal recreation provisions contained in the Section 106 Agreement for Phase II of the Poundbury Development.

The Walks

- 7.6.21 The Council in part owns and wholly maintains the Town Walks.
- 7.6.22 The Walks have been included by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England as Grade II.

Maumbury Rings

- 7.6.23 The Council has recently secured a thirty year lease of Maumbury Rings from the Duchy of Cornwall. Maumbury Rings is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the Town Council is leading a project to upgrade and enhance this special site. Working with the Heritage Committee and West Dorset District Council, it is anticipated that the project will be completed or well underway within the life of this plan. The Old Police Station site adjacent to the Rings is being developed for residential use. As part of that development the developer is providing a pavilion to include an area for serving light refreshments, a disabled toilet and an external power supply which will face onto the Rings. This facility will be completed by the end of the 2006 summer.

Staffing

- 7.6.24 The Council employs eight full-time, three part-time and occasional casual members of staff on the maintenance of recreational areas.

New Developments

- 7.6.25 The Council is aware of the pressure for new residential, industrial and commercial development in Dorchester and we shall take all possible and necessary steps to ensure that both public and private development proposals make proper provision for the active and passive recreation of everyone living and working in the town including the provision of sufficient areas of both formal and informal open space.

Public Art

- 7.6.26 The Council was pleased to be able to contribute to the replica roman Fountain installed in Princes Street. The Council has now taken responsibility of maintaining it for the foreseeable future. During this past year a large brass plaque has been set into the pavement at the foot of the fountain explaining its relevance.

Highway Trees

- 7.6.27 The Council values Dorchester's trees highly and was instrumental in creating a partnership with the County and District Councils to ensure that the Town's highway trees receive proper care and maintenance to ensure that the outstanding amenity which they represent is maintained.

Best Value

- 7.6.28 The Council has completed its best value review of parks, gardens and open spaces which has resulted in an action plan for improvement of the service. The full action plan can be found at page 56 and will make significant changes to the way the service operates. As a result of the Best Value Review the Council has already entered into a new partnership arrangement with West Dorset District Council in respect of cleaning of the Walks. The review also identified the need for additional storage space for equipment. This has been compounded by the fact that West Dorset District Council has given us notice to quit on the storage accommodation rented at Poundbury Depot. Following a review of possible accommodation solutions, it was felt that the most cost effective and practical solution was to build a new depot on land already owned by the Council. A planning application has been approved and work on the new depot will commence during the life of this plan.

7.7 Financial Table

Item	Actual 2004/05	Original Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
	£	£	£	£
Play Areas – New Equipment/Replacements	15,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Play Areas – Fencing	-	-	-	-
Borough Gardens	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000
Sports Grounds - Fencing	-	-	-	3,900
Public Seats/Litter Bins	4,250	4,395	4,395	4,500
Maintenance of Highway Trees	11,200	11,200	11,540	11,540
New Depot	9,000	20,750	20,750	20,000

8 - The Municipal Buildings

8.1 The Council's strategic objective is

8.1.1 To provide improved opportunities for the active and passive recreation of the townspeople –

(a) by ensuring the external and internal maintenance of the Municipal Buildings to the high standards set on refurbishment to enable the greatest practicable future use of the Buildings.

(b) by ensuring that whenever practicable energy saving alternatives are adopted.

8.2 The Council's policies are

8.2.1 To fix charges at a level which will as far as possible ensure the optimum usage of and accessibility to the facilities provided.

8.2.2 To let the Municipal Buildings whenever possible consistent with the objective of providing and promoting entertainment, use by local organisations, commercial use and leisure-related activities.

8.3 Progress on priority tasks identified for the year commencing April 2005

Activity (<i>Action shown in italics</i>)	Target date
To implement the action plan arising from the best value review of the service <i>See page 61</i>	March 2007
To increase lettings income by 3% <i>This has been achieved this year through significantly increased bookings of the Municipal Buildings.</i>	March 2006
To increase income as a proportion of operating costs by 3% <i>This has been achieved this year through significantly increased bookings of the Municipal Buildings.</i>	March 2006
To improve the acoustics of the Corn Exchange - <i>Completed</i>	August 2005
To refurbish the Corn Exchange floor - <i>Completed</i>	December 2005
To approve a strategy for replacement/refurbishment of the Corn Exchange audio infrastructure <i>To be undertaken when financial provision is made, most likely 2007/08</i>	December 2005

8.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2006

Activity	Target date
To implement the action plan arising from the best value review of the service	March 2007
To increase lettings income by 3%	March 2007
To increase income as a proportion of operating costs by 3%	March 2007
To approve a strategy for replacement/refurbishment of the Corn Exchange audio infrastructure	2007/08

8.5 Performance indicators for this service are

Municipal Buildings	Actual 2004/05	Original Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Cost to the Council per elector	£19.41	£18.19	£16.39	£18.01
Income from lettings as a proportion of operating costs	25%	20%	28%	21%
	Actual 2004/05	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Number of lettings of the Corn Exchange	246	256	368 ¹	350
Number of lettings of the Town Hall	211	230	280 ¹	275
Number of lettings of the Magistrates Room	225	255	337 ¹	315
Number of lettings of the Council Chamber	75	80	98 ¹	90
Number of lettings of the Dressing Rooms	31	35	58 ¹	35
Number of civil weddings	23	25	30 ¹	30

1 Bookings of all rooms have increased substantially over this past year due mainly to the competitive charging regime and the improvements made to the appearance and acoustics of the building.

8.6 Current Position

8.6.1 The Municipal Buildings comprise of three letting rooms, the Corn Exchange, the Town Hall and the Magistrates Room with basic capacities of 300, 120 and 40 respectively together with all ancillary facilities including kitchen accommodation. In addition the Buildings accommodate the Council Chamber which is occasionally let on an ad-hoc basis. A stair climber is available to assist disabled people to reach the first floor of the Buildings. Both the Corn Exchange and the Town Hall have induction loop systems installed to assist hearing aid users and the Council Chamber

has an infra-red hearing reinforcement system. A portable infra read hearing reinforcement system is now available for use in the Magistrates Room. The Town Hall, Corn Exchange and Council Chamber are licensed for Civil Wedding Ceremonies and were the first premises in Dorchester to be so licensed. They are also licensed for civil partnership services, the first of which was held in December 2005 shortly after the new legislation became enacted. The car park at the rear of the Buildings is available for the organisers of events and access is gained via radio controlled gates.

- 8.6.2 The Council embarked on a programme of refurbishment of the Municipal Buildings in 1983 and the final phase of this programme, the refurbishment of the ancillary accommodation at the rear of the building, to provide improved dual-purpose dressing room facilities and a meeting/seminar room was completed in 1997. However work continues to maintain high standards in the Building with the re-decoration of the Town Hall having been completed and the Town Hall staircase having been re-decorated recently. This year has seen the Corn Exchange floor being stripped and sealed. The curtains in the Town Hall have also been replaced, new staging purchased and work to significantly improve the acoustics in the Corn Exchange were completed at the end of last summer. The sound facility infrastructure in the Corn Exchange is coming towards the end of its useful life and the Council will be considering how best to move forward with this matter in due course.
- 8.6.3 A routine maintenance schedule has been drawn up with the assistance of outside consultants which will enable most if not all future maintenance activities to be scheduled and budgeted for in advance.
- 8.6.4 The Council employs two full-time and two part time Town Hall Keepers, all of whom work flexibly to provide cover in the Buildings whenever it is required under the direction of a member of the administrative staff who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Buildings.
- 8.6.5 The Council has completed its best value review of the Municipal Buildings which has resulted in an action plan for improvement of the service. The full action plan can be found at page 60 and will make changes and improvements to the way the service operates.

8.7 Financial Table

Item	Actual 2004/05	Original Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
	£	£	£	£
Major Repairs	12,500	12,875	12,875	13,261
Redecoration Programme	3,200	3,300	3,300	3,399
TOTAL	<u>15,700</u>	<u>16,175</u>	<u>16,175</u>	<u>16,660</u>

9 - Planning and Environment

9.1 The Council's strategic objective is

9.1.1 To protect and improve the physical environment of the town.

9.2 The Council's policies are

9.2.1 To adopt a sensitive and constructive approach to development proposals which are put to the Council for comment and, in particular, to take into account all possible implications for the townspeople as a whole or particular groups.

9.2.2 To seek to ensure that proposed developments are appropriate to the size and character of the town, that any potential benefits to the town are maximised and that all developments take account of the principles of sustainable development.

9.2.3 To try to minimise the number of features arising from developments which appear to be out of character with the history and appearance of the town; for example the Council as a matter of policy objects to the erection of internally-illuminated signage in conservation areas.

9.2.4 To take account of the desirability of reducing dependence on private motor cars and to seek to ensure whenever possible that all major projects protect and promote accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and by public transport.

9.2.5 To actively support the Dorchester Heritage Committee and assist in the continuation of the excellent work being undertaken by it.

9.2.6 To adopt policies to protect, enhance and preserve sites of archaeological, historical and environmental interest and their settings so far as the Council is able to do so.

9.2.7 Not to name new streets within the Town after people who are still alive.

9.3 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2006

Activity	Target date
To continue to respond constructively to invitations for comments on planning applications and other matters.	Ongoing
To comment on planning applications and other matters within the time scales laid down by West Dorset District Council and Dorset County Council.	Ongoing
To encourage and contribute towards the preparation and implementation of a popular and achievable Traffic and Environment Plan for the town.	Ongoing
To encourage the earliest possible creation of residents parking schemes in Fordington, parts of Victoria Park and the Icen Way / Linden Avenue / Wollaston Road area.	Ongoing

To seek to achieve improved public transport facilities.	Ongoing
To encourage the extension of 20mph speed restrictions into appropriate areas of the town.	Ongoing

9.4 Performance indicators for this service are

Planning and Environment	Actual 2004/2005	Original Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Cost to the Council per elector	£0.81	£1.30	£1.23 ¹	£1.43
	Actual 2004/2005	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Number of planning applications commented on	276	N/A	284	N/A
Percentage of planning applications commented on within time limits	99.6%	100%	100%	100%
Number of recommendations to refuse an application that were endorsed by the District Council	7	5	18	5
Number of tree consultations commented on	29	N/A	8	N/A
Percentage of tree consultations commented on within prescribed time limits	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of traffic consultations commented on	12	N/A	11	N/A
Percentage of traffic consultations commented on within prescribed time limits	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of other consultations commented on	11	N/A	8	N/A
Number of street naming exercises undertaken	2	N/A	11 ²	N/A

1 The spend was artificially low in 2004/05 as the grant to the Heritage Committee was not taken from that financial year.

2 The number of streets named this year is high due to the amount of new street names required for the old brewery site development.

9.5 Current Position

- 9.5.1 The Council is consulted on all planning applications submitted affecting properties in the town.
- 9.5.2 The West Dorset District Council has delegated Street Naming and Numbering functions to this Council and all matters arising from the operation of the delegation are dealt with by the Planning and Environment Committee.
- 9.5.3 It is Council policy to obtain the suggestions of developers prior to this Committee's consideration of street names provided that developments are not named after living persons and that names used are in keeping with the surrounding area.
- 9.5.4 The District Council has introduced arrangements whereby representatives of town and parish councils are permitted to attend meetings of its area planning committees to speak on matters of concern on particular applications and the Committee takes advantage of this opportunity in appropriate cases.
- 9.5.5 From time to time the Council also facilitates liaison between the developers responsible for major projects and local residents in an effort to ensure that developments proceed as smoothly as possible and with minimal disturbance to those living nearby.
- 9.5.6 With effect from 2001/02 the Committee has had its own Estimates and a sum of £5,000 has been made available to it to enable it to make financial contributions towards projects which it wishes to support.
- 9.5.7 The Estimates also include the Council's contribution to the Dorchester Heritage Committee. Until recently the Heritage Committee was made up of members of the Town, District and County Councils who sat with representatives of other organisations interested in the built environment of Dorchester. Regrettably, due to financial constraints, Dorset County Council withdrew from the Committee in April 2004. The Town and District Councils have decided that the Committee should continue and it is hoped that the County Council will be able to return to the fold sooner rather than later. In order for the Committee to continue functioning following the withdrawal of funding from the County Council, the Town Council undertook to manage the Committee and now provide the clerk and treasurer as well as the meeting venue. The Heritage Committee promotes (usually small) projects to improve both the appearance of the Town and its interpretation. Recent examples include the erection of plaques on historically significant buildings, ongoing improvement of the River Walk and the introduction of a series of 'Town Trails' which are a series of four walks around the Town giving an indication of Dorchester's heritage from prehistory and Roman through to the modern day.

9.6 Future

- 9.6.1 The existing practice will continue unless there is some change in legislation. The District Council has introduced arrangements whereby representatives of town and parish councils are permitted to attend meetings of its area planning committees to speak on matters of concern on particular applications and the Committee takes advantage of this opportunity in appropriate cases.

- 9.6.2 West Dorset District Council has also agreed to consult this Council at an earlier stage than hitherto on major residential developments so that better account can be taken of the need for community facilities.
- 9.6.3 The Council's policy to support the Dorchester Heritage Committee is set out in paragraph 9.2.5 above. The Committee is not however a statutory requirement and in the case of its dissolution the Council will consider how the funds presently earmarked for the work of the Heritage Committee can be diverted to ensure that maximum benefit to the environment of the town is achieved.

10 - Twinning

10.1 The Council's strategic objective is

10.1.1 To support and develop the existing twinning links with Bayeux, Lübbecke and Holbæk.

10.2 The Council's policies are

10.2.1 To establish and maintain formal links between Dorchester and its twin towns in an effort to promote increased international understanding and friendship.

10.2.2 To support informal links between local organisations in Dorchester and their counterparts in the twin towns in all appropriate ways including financial assistance when applicable.

10.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks for the year commencing April 2005

Activity (<i>Action shown in italics</i>)	Target date
To increase the number of exchange visits between Dorchester and its twin towns with particular emphasis on young people. <i>The Council was once again involved with youth football teams from Lübbecke being invited to participate in the Dorchester Town Youth Football Club football tournament at Sandringham Sports Centre held in May, 2006</i>	May 2006
To arrange a programme of events for a visiting group from all of the Council's twin towns to celebrate the 700th anniversary of Dorchester being the County town of Dorset. <i>Completed</i>	June 2005

10.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2006

Activity	Target date
To increase the number of exchange visits between Dorchester and its twin towns with particular emphasis on young people.	Ongoing
To ensure that the 15th anniversary of the twinning with Holbæk in 2007 is properly celebrated.	2007

10.5 Performance indicators for this service are

Twinning	Actual 2004/2005	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Cost to the Council per elector	17.44p	56.57p	39.21 ¹	48.28p

1 The spend on twinning was higher in 2005/06 due to groups from all the Councils twin towns being invited to Dorchester to celebrate the towns 700th anniversary.

10.6 Current Position

10.6.1 The links with Bayeux were established in 1959, those with Lübbecke in 1973 and those with Holbæk in 1992. All are thriving and there are successful twinning societies in support of all three twinings in Dorchester.

10.7 Future

10.7.1 The Council will in future seek to increase its involvement in and support for twinning including the encouragement of voluntary bodies, although no further formal twinings will be entered into for the foreseeable future. The recent demonstrable increase in its commitment will be maintained and it will continue to deal positively with any requests or suggestions which are put to it to further the spirit of international friendship, co-operation and understanding which the twinning movement engenders.

11 - Cultural Activities and Grants to Organisations

11.1 The Council's strategic objectives are

11.1.1 To provide improved opportunities for the active and passive recreation of the townspeople -

(a) by promoting appropriate events and activities, on occasion in co-operation with other local bodies and individuals;

(b) by encouraging the expansion of cultural activities in the town.

11.1.2 To support the work of local organisations by making financial grants and, where appropriate, providing assistance in kind.

11.2 The Council's policies are

11.2.1 To continue to support Dorchester Arts Centre and other organisations delivering arts-related events in the Town.

11.2.2 To continue to promote public entertainment events of the widest possible appeal and accessibility including assistance with the bi-annual Dorchester Festival, participation in the Dorchester Arts Forum and representation on the Dorchester Arts Centre's Management Committee.

11.2.3 To provide financial and other assistance to deserving local organisations subject to their need being demonstrated.

11.3 Progress on implementing priority task for the year commencing April 2005

Activity (<i>Action shown in italics</i>)	Target date
<p>To ensure that the benefit of this expenditure extends as widely as possible, with the greatest possible impact and appeal to a wide cross-section of Dorchester's residents.</p> <p><i>The Council again supported a wide range of cultural activities and events in the Town. A number of grants were given to deserving local organisations and publicity given to them through the Mayor holding presentation evenings.</i></p>	Ongoing

11.4 Priority task for the year commencing April 2006

Activity	Target date
<p>To ensure that the benefit of this expenditure extends as widely as possible, with the greatest possible impact and appeal to a wide cross-section of Dorchester's residents.</p>	Ongoing

11.5 Performance indicators for this service are

Cultural Activities and Grants to Organisations	Actual 2004/2005	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Cost to the Council per elector	£1.07	£2.96	£2.50 ¹	£2.37
	Actual 2004/2005	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Number of events directly organised by the Council	11	5	3 ²	11
Number of events assisted by the Council	14	20	15	20
Number of grants to organisations made	26	30	33	30

1 The spend in 2005/06 is increased due to some significant commemorations or anniversaries such as the Trafalgar Commemoration and the 700th anniversary of Dorchester.

2 The number of events organised by the Council is reduced this year due to the refurbishment of the Borough Gardens.

11.6 Current Position

11.6.1 The Council has been a long-time supporter of the Dorchester Arts Centre and affords financial assistance to it, both in respect of its general running costs and in respect of particular projects. The Council has formalised its support to the Arts Centre with the creation of a three year Service Level Agreement which clearly sets out what the Arts Centre can expect from the Council and the Council from the Arts Centre. It also fully supports the Dorchester Festival both financially and in kind and makes grants in respect of other arts-related events not connected with the Arts Centre, for example the premiere performance of a new opera 'Far From the Madding Crowd' held at St Mary's Church.

11.6.2 The grants which are available to local organisations are usually fairly small, the Council taking the view that the limited resources which are available for this should benefit as many people as possible.

11.6.3 The Council inaugurated a programme of Council-sponsored free concerts in the Borough Gardens in 1996 and these continue to be extremely popular and well-supported. One very welcome result of this initiative is that local organisations are now using the Gardens for their own community and charitable events and the Council is happy to make them available for such purposes free of charge. The same is true of other areas such as Maumbury Rings, King's Road Playing Field and Fordington Green which are all used for public events at various times of the year.

12 - Dorchester Markets

12.1 The Council's strategic objective is

12.1.1 To administer the operation of Dorchester Markets jointly with the West Dorset District Council through the Dorchester Markets Joint Committee.

12.2 The Council's policies are

12.2.1 To take all action necessary to secure the continuing viability of Dorchester markets in the interests of maintaining Dorchester's position as a focus for the rural hinterland;

12.2.2 Consistent with this policy to maximise income from the operation of the markets to be offset against the Council's total expenditure;

12.2.3 To encourage the taking of appropriate action by the Dorchester Markets Joint Committee to prevent the holding of rival markets within the area of Dorchester's charter market rights.

12.3 Priority task for the year commencing April 2006

Activity	Target date
To take whatever actions and decisions are necessary to ensure the continuing viability of Dorchester's markets and to monitor closely the effects on Dorchester's markets of other markets in the area, including Farmers Markets.	Ongoing

12.4 Performance indicators for this service are

Dorchester Markets	Actual 2004/2005	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Income to the Council (excluding net income from car boot sales)	£88,687	£70,000	£81,000	£81,004
Car boot sale net income (donated to local charities)	£24,000	£30,000	£0 ¹	£67,000

1. An external review of procedures in 2005/06 highlighted an issue with regard to the power required by the Committee to distribute grants. This resulted in the Committee being unable to donate to local charities in that year. The money has been rolled forward for 2006/07.

12.5 Current Position

12.5.1 The ownership of Dorchester's market rights was a matter of considerable contention following the reorganisation of local government in 1974 and was only resolved by agreement in 1984. As a consequence of that agreement a Joint Committee was established with eight representatives from the West Dorset District Council and six from the Town Council and it is this Joint Committee which considers most matters

relating to the operation of the market rights and area. Matters concerning the market which fall for consideration by the Town Council in its own right are dealt with by the Management Committee.

- 12.5.2 The agreement finalised in 1984 gives the Town Council 35% of the net proceeds of the operation of the market rights and the Council's share is estimated at £81,004 in 2006/07. This reflects increased spending by the Joint Committee on the maintenance of the fabric of the Market.

12.6 Future

- 12.6.1 The Council will continue to participate fully and positively in the operation of Dorchester markets and will ensure that any future developments which might affect part or all of the current location of the market do not have an adverse impact on the viability and vitality of the market operation.
- 12.6.2 The Council will continue to encourage enforcement action against the operators of unauthorised markets within Dorchester's market area.
- 12.6.3 The Sunday Car Boot Sales held at the market and organised by the Market Franchisee on behalf of the Joint Committee yield a considerable income to the Committee (see paragraph 12.4 above), which has said that the net proceeds from the sales will be disposed of by way of charitable donations to qualifying organisations within Dorchester's market area which extends for a radius of $\frac{2}{3}$ miles from the market site.

13 - Office Administration

13.1 The Council's strategic objectives are

- 13.1.1 To determine the level of spending by the Council to ensure adequate funding for the many commitments and projects of the Council including staffing costs but having regard to the effect on present and future Council Tax payers.
- 13.1.2 To provide administrative support to enable the Council to function in an efficient and effective manner.

13.2 The Council's policies are

- 13.2.1 To ensure that the necessary administrative support is available and trained to keep abreast of changing circumstances for all Council, Committee and Panel meetings and to assist Members in the discharge of their duties.
- 13.2.2 To formulate and keep under review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to ensure the appropriate use of estimates and budgets so as to continue effective control over Council spending.
- 13.2.3 To arrange the Council's civic and ceremonial duties in order to uphold the status of the County Town.
- 13.2.4 To support and encourage community organisations in the town, financially or otherwise.

13.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks for the year commencing April 2005

Activity (<i>Action taken shown in italics</i>)	Target date
To implement the principles of Best Value. <i>Following the Best Value Audit by the Audit Commission in December 2005 it was confirmed that this Council was complying with all the appropriate legislation and regulations regarding Best Value.</i>	Ongoing
To obtain the granting of Quality Council status. <i>Due to a number of competing pressures it has not been possible to meet this target. Quality Status is still an aspiration and will be included as a target for next year. Both the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk have registered for the Certificate in Local Council Administration.</i>	November 2004 (New target January 2007)
To respond positively to Government initiatives and requirements. <i>A number of timely responses have been made to Government consultations over the past year.</i>	Ongoing

To implement a Stress Management Policy <i>Completed</i>	October 2005
To implement the action plan to arise out of the Best Value Review into the Administrative Functions of the Council <i>Ongoing</i>	Ongoing
To fully implement the draft Risk Management Strategy <i>Underway – A Risk Management Strategy has been presented to Council</i>	November 2005
To implement the principles of Corporate Governance where required by legislation <i>A Scheme of Corporate Governance has been adopted by the Council</i>	Ongoing

13.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2006

Activity	Target date
To implement the principles of Best Value.	Ongoing
To obtain the granting of Quality Council status.	January 2007
To respond positively to Government initiatives and requirements.	Ongoing
To implement the action plan to arise out of the Best Value Review into the Administrative Functions of the Council	Ongoing
To fully implement the draft Risk Management Strategy	November 2006
To embed the Risk Management, Corporate Governance and the Performance Management Framework within the Councils processes and the Best Value Plan for 2007	June 2007

13.5 Performance indicators for this service are

Office Administration	Actual 2004/2005	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Cost to the Council per elector	£17.05	£21.09	£21.28 ¹	£19.30
	Actual 2004/2005	Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Percentage of correspondence acknowledged within 14 days	83% ²	95%	81% ³	95%

Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	96.6% ⁴	98%	95% ⁵	98%
Proportion of working days lost to sickness absence.	6.43	7	19.5 ⁶	7
Voluntary leavers as a percentage of staff	4.76%	0%	4.76%	0%
Early retirements as a percentage of the total workforce	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ill-health retirements as a percentage of the total workforce	0%	Less than 5%	0%	Less than 5%

Notes: 1 – The cost of office administration has increased this year due to the Finance Officer being absent due to sickness for a significant period of time and the consequent need to contract resources to undertake those specialist duties.

2 – Based on September - November, 2004 3 – Based on random samples throughout the year

4 – Based on September – November, 2004 5 – Based on random samples throughout the year

6 – The proportion of working days lost due to sickness has increased during this past year due to there being three instances of long term sickness absence all of which are now resolved.

13.6 Comparison

13.6.1 The following table gives a comparison of this Council against the average for District/Borough authorities country wide. Information obtained from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website as at 22 June 2006.

Activity	District/Borough Average	Dorchester Town Council 2005/06
Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	93.2%	95%
Proportion of working days lost to sickness absence.	9.8	19.5*
Early retirements as a percentage of the total workforce	0.7%	0%
Ill-health retirements as a percentage of the total workforce	0.3%	0%

* See explanatory note 6. above.

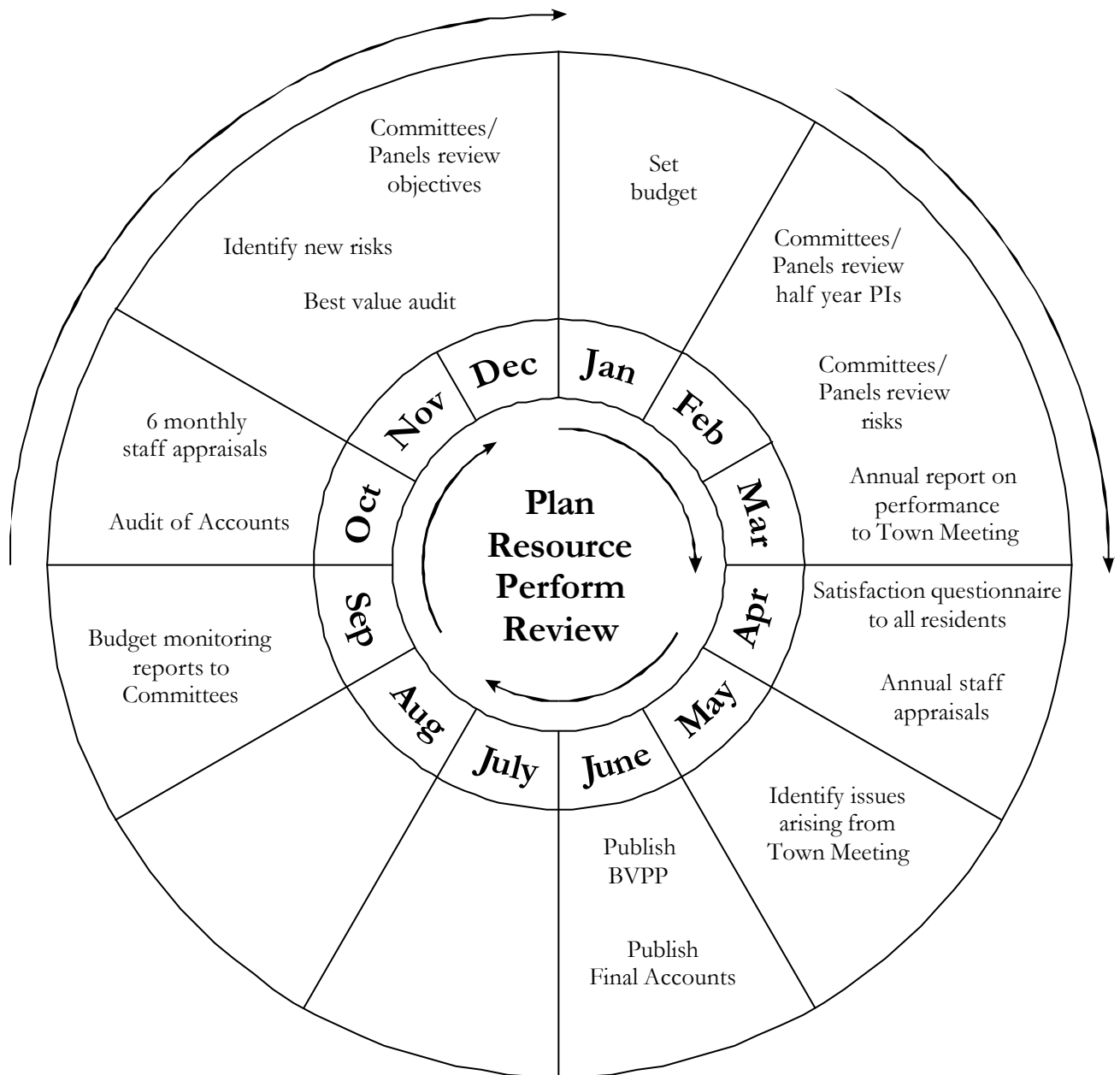
13.7 Current Position

13.7.1 Following a review of the Council's office staffing arrangements in 2002 conducted by independent advisers from South West Provincial Employers an additional post of Deputy Town Clerk was created in addition to the then other five permanent full-time

members of staff - the Town Clerk, the Finance Officer (see paragraph 13.7.7), the Senior Administrative Assistant, the Administrative Assistant and the Clerk/Typist.

- 13.7.2 The appointment (which is almost entirely funded from the direct grant which the Government has said it will pay to those town and parish councils subject to a statutory duty of best value) means that the Council will be able to meet the considerable work arising from best value as well as various other Government initiatives.
- 13.7.3 One of the Council's long standing employees, the Outdoor Services Officer, retired at the end of 2003. Following deliberation the Council concluded that the funding for this post would be best served through the appointment of a Compliance Officer who could deal with the contract and monitoring work arising from the best value review and overall management of the Outdoor Services team. This appointment was made in December 2003 and the revised staffing arrangements have been working well.
- 13.7.4 Through prudent financial management over a number of years the Council has accumulated reserves to assist in the funding of the various major projects which are referred to elsewhere in the Plan which would otherwise not happen at all or require enormous increases in Council Tax.
- 13.7.5 The Council, until December 2004, employed a Community Partnership Development Worker whose fixed term contract post was funded jointly by the Town, District and County Councils and whose job it was to prepare a community strategy for Dorchester and the surrounding area as required by the Local Government Act 2000. The Community Plan was completed and during this past year a part time community support worker has been appointed to support the actions proposed in the plan. The Town Council provides office accommodation for this officer.
- 13.7.6 A requirement of the successful Heritage Lottery Bid in respect of the Borough Gardens was that the Town Clerk had a staffing resource to assist him in managing the refurbishment project. A part time temporary project administrator was appointed to this position recently and is based in the Council Offices at North Square.
- 13.7.7 This past year saw the Council's full time Finance Officer resign his post following a lengthy period of sickness. His absence highlighted the fact that the Council did not have sufficient specialist staffing resources to cover any prolonged absence of this post holder. To address this matter the Council agreed to contract out the finance function to an organisation that did have sufficient back up resources and the required specialist local government expertise. Following a tendering procedure West Dorset District Council was appointed as the Town Council's financial services provider as from 1st April, 2006.
- 13.7.8 The Council has recently adopted a performance management framework which formalises the arrangements for how the feedback of decisions regarding the reaching and setting of targets and objectives within the Plan was to be achieved. The framework formalises this process together with a wider structure that can be used to bring together all the various management elements into a continual cycle of performance management. The cycle of performance management can be seen below:-

13.8 The Performance Management Framework



13.9 Future

13.9.1 The Council will continue to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of its administration and continue to seek to maximise the benefit of its investment in new technology which is yielding substantial benefits in terms of both presentation and, more importantly, efficiency. It will also do everything possible to ensure that civic and ceremonial occasions continue to be conducted with all due dignity.

14 - Civic Services

14.1 The Council's strategic objective is

14.1.1 To preserve the town's identity and promote its heritage through the Town Mayor's attendance at Civic and other local organisations' events.

14.2 The Council's policy is

14.2.1 To arrange the Council's civic and ceremonial duties in order to uphold the status of the County Town.

14.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks for the year commencing April 2005

Activity (<i>Action taken shown in italics</i>)	Target date
To organise events which add to the richness of life in the Town as and when	Ongoing
To organise the Mayor Making Ceremony <i>Completed</i>	May 2006
To organise the Mayor's Civic Service <i>Completed</i>	July 2005
To organise the Thomas Hardy Wreath Laying <i>Completed</i>	June 2006
To assist in the organisation of the Crown Court Ceremonial Service <i>Completed</i>	October 2005
To assist in the organisation of Remembrance Day <i>Completed</i>	November 2005
To organise a commemoration in respect of the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II <i>Completed</i>	August 2005

14.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2006

Activity	Target date
To organise events which add to the richness of life in the Town as and when	Ongoing

To organise the Mayor Making Ceremony	May 2007
To organise the Mayor's Civic Service	July 2006
To organise the Thomas Hardy Wreath Laying	June 2007
To assist in the organisation of the Crown Court Ceremonial Service	October 2006
To assist in the organisation of Remembrance Day	November 2006
To be involved in the commemoration in respect of Veterans Day	June 2007

14.5 Performance indicators for this service are

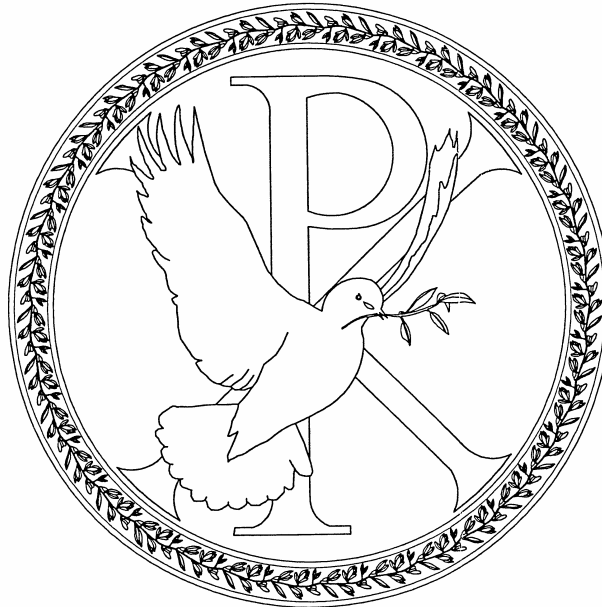
Civic Services	Actual 2004/2005	Original Target 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07
Cost to the Council per elector	£2.78	£2.78	£2.74	£2.62

14.6 Current Position

- 14.6.1 The Town Council is very proud of its traditions and of the role which the Mayor and Councillors have played in the life of the town over the centuries. Length of service on the Council is a factor which is used to guide the Council on a number of ceremonial issues and this section sets out some of the practices which the Council uses to help guide its decisions on this sort of issue.
- 14.6.2 A Mayoral Selection Committee, which is chaired by the current Deputy Mayor and is comprised of all past Mayors for the time being serving on the Council, meets in January each year to receive a list of Members' seniority for Mayoral purposes and to give instructions on it. It meets again, usually in February or March, to agree on a recommendation as to the selection of the next Mayor.
- 14.6.3 In allocating seniority to newly elected Members of the Council those with the highest percentage of poll receive the highest place. In the event of a Member being re-elected after a period off the Council that person's previous service will be taken into account in the allocation of seniority.
- 14.6.4 The Council organises or is involved in a variety of civic events on an annual basis, the Mayor Making Ceremony, Mayor's Civic Service, Wreath Laying at Thomas Hardy's Statue, the Crown Court Ceremonial and Remembrance Day and also arranges events on an ad-hoc basis such as the service to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and a commemoration of the London bombings to be held July.

15 - Dorchester Cemeteries

- 15.1 Dorchester's Cemeteries are owned and managed by the Dorchester Joint Burial Committee, which is separate from the Town Council and also includes a representative of Winterborne Herrington Parish Council. It is, therefore, not included in the statutory best value régime but the principles of best value will be applied by the Joint Committee. The Town Council appoints the majority of the Joint Committee's members and contributes most of its precept.
- 15.2 The Joint Burial Committee identified a site for the development of a new cemetery on a site fronting Poundbury Road and the work was substantially completed towards the end of 2001. The construction was funded by the Council on behalf of the Joint Burial Committee and the cemetery has now opened.



16 - Response to Audit and Inspection's Report

- 16.1 The District Audit Service, the Council's independent external auditors, are required to complete an audit of the Council's Best Value Performance Plan by 31 December 2006. The auditor will provide local people with an assessment of whether the Plan complies with legislation and guidance, and is robust and challenging.
- 16.2 The Auditor's recommendations, together with the Council's response and the action it proposes taking to implement any recommendations, will be included in next year's Plan.
- 16.3 Following the audit of last year's Plan District Audit said "In my opinion, Dorchester Town Council has prepared and published its Best Value Performance Plan in all significant respects in accordance with Section 6 of the Local Government Act 1999 and statutory guidance issued by the Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions."
- 16.4 They also produced an Action Plan which made a number of recommendations for the Council to consider. The recommendations made by District Audit and the Council's response to them appears below. This Plan has endeavoured to address those issues set out below.

It is recommended that progress should be recorded against each action eg date completed, date of decision not to proceed, revised target date for implementation. Only actions which may be progressed should be monitored in future.

Will incorporate the recommendation into future plans.

It is recommended that the reasonableness of the sampling approach is tested in future.

A different approach based on random sampling throughout the past year will be undertaken.

Efforts should continue to base PIs on final outturn figures in future BVPPs. The proposal to publish an addendum to the BVPP of any PIs found to be significantly different from those in the published BVPP should be implemented when PIs based on outturn information are available.

An addendum of any PI's found to be significantly different from those published will be implemented.

All options for the future of services under review should either be referred to in BVRs or otherwise documented.

Noted for Best Value Review process.

It is recommended that there should be analysis of the extent to which services would be impacted by alternative delivery mechanisms in future BVRs

Noted for Best Value Review process.

<p>As part of future consultations, groups should be offered information on which to base replies eg through advice on where to access information or provision of a summary BVPP.</p>	<p>Consideration will be given as to how this can be achieved.</p>
<p>There should be comparisons of expenditure, income and net cost as well as prices in future BVRs</p>	<p>This information will be included in future reviews.</p>
<p>It is recognised that the cost of proposed actions will not always be known but recommended that some indication of cost is included in future action plans.</p>	<p>Some indication as to cost will be included in future action plans.</p>
<p>It is recommended that BVRs should conclude whether the services under review are provided in an economic, efficient and effective method.</p>	<p>A conclusion of this nature will be included within future reviews.</p>
<p>The proposed revision to performance management arrangements is commended and should be introduced.</p>	<p>New Performance Management arrangements are being considered by the Council in March 2006.</p>

17 - The Council's Approach to Efficiency Improvements

- 17.1 The Council has always striven to provide its services economically, efficiently and effectively. We welcome the introduction of the Best Value régime as a way of demonstrating this and are committed to achieving the continuous improvement which Best Value calls for. We shall continue to respond positively and constructively to the outcomes of service reviews and to other initiatives which help to increase the quality and efficiency of the various services which we provide.
- 17.2 The Council has adopted a number of performance indicators which give an indication to performance and targets for improvement. These indicators are monitored by the Council on a six monthly basis.
- 17.3 The Council has recently overhauled its staff appraisal system so as to provide all employees with an opportunity to discuss their job role and performance development needs in relation to Council objectives. This will enable staff to work more effectively and ensure that training needs are met.
- 17.4 Where appropriate the Council will consider seeking to adopt externally accredited quality schemes e.g. obtaining Quality Council status.

18 - Public Consultation

- 18.1 The Town Council acknowledges its duty to consult the public as part of the Best Value process and will be undertaking this work in a number of ways. As well as the opportunity afforded to the public during the 30 minute public session at the end of every ordinary full Council meeting the public have the opportunity to ask questions and comment at the Annual Town Meeting which is held in March every year.
- 18.2 We have carried out a survey of users to gauge customer satisfaction. In addition we are in discussion with the West Dorset District Council on how best to link in with their 'citizens' panel'. Local Councillors have and will continue to take an active role in the consultation process and will be speaking to residents in their wards.
- 18.3 Dorchester Town Council is committed to the delivery of Best Value and the consultation process. It is only by consulting the users and the non-users of our services that we can test that our performance meets with their satisfaction, that we can demonstrate continuous improvement, respond to their wishes and plan for the future.

19 - Councillors of Dorchester Town Council

Councillor Andy Canning, 11 Alfred Road, Dorchester, DT1 2DW	261592	North Ward
Councillor Martin Graham 9 Cornwall Road, Dorchester, DT1 1RT	268052	North Ward
Councillor Kate Hebditch, 8 Friary Hill, Dorchester DT1 1JG	268603	North Ward
Councillor Les Phillips, MBE 17 West Mills Road Dorchester, DT1 1SP	264030	North Ward
Councillor Roland Tarr, 70 Monmouth Road, Dorchester, DT1 2DG	262359	North Ward
Councillor Carolyn Biggs, 20 Bridport Road, Dorchester, DT1 1RS	260156	South Ward
Councillor Susie Hosford, 66 Monmouth Road, Dorchester, DT1 2DG	265869	South Ward
Councillor Robin Potter, 22 D'Urberville Close, Dorchester, DT1 2JT	264416	South Ward
Councillor Molly Rennie, 13 Alington Road, Dorchester, DT1 1NS	268572	South Ward
Councillor Paul Scott, 31 Rothesay Road, Dorchester, DT1 2DX	267479	South Ward
Councillor Tim Harries, 9 Brookhouse Street, Poundbury, Dorchester, DT1 3GL	07970 653796	East Ward
Councillor Stella Jones Syward Cottage, Syward Road Dorchester, DT1 2AJ	264335	East Ward
Councillor Fiona Kent-Ledger, 28 Olga Road, Dorchester, DT1 2LX	250253	East Ward
Councillor Tony Lyall, 13 St. George's Road, Dorchester, DT1 1PA	266254	East Ward

Councillor Louise Taylor, 50 Kings Road, Dorchester, DT1 1NJ	261054	East Ward
Councillor David Barrett, 41 Holmead Walk, Poundbury, Dorchester, DT1 3GE	259269	West Ward
Councillor Richard Biggs, 20 Bridport Road, Dorchester, DT1 1RS	260156	West Ward
Councillor Trevor Jones, OBE, Syward Cottage, Syward Road Dorchester, DT1 2AJ	264335	West Ward
Councillor Peter Mann 13 Beech Court, South Walks Road Dorchester, DT1 1DX	266796	West Ward
Councillor Tom Parsley, 15 Crofton Park, Yeovil BA21 4EA	01935 848740	West Ward

20 – Representation on Outside Bodies

The Council appoints representatives to a variety of other bodies in the Town. These are set out below:

Ashley Churchill & Thorner Trust	P.G. Mann R.B. Potter
Dorset Playing Fields Association and Sports Council	A.J. Canning
Age Concern Dorchester	D.J. Barrett R.M. Biggs
Dorchester-Bayeux Society	Miss C.M. Hebditch
Dorchester-Lübbecke Society	T.C.N. Harries
Dorchester-Holbæk Society	Mrs. E.S. Jones
Dorchester Youth and Community Centre Management Committee	L.M. Phillips
RELATE - Dorset Marriage Guidance Council	T.A. Parsley
The Thomas Hardy Society Limited	T.A. Parsley
Citizen's Advice Bureau Management Committee	Mrs. F.E. Kent- Ledge
Dorchester Association for Research into Local History and Archaeology	Miss C.M. Hebditch
Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils	D.J. Barrett
Dorchester Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Tourism Town Promotion Sub-Committee	Mrs. M.E. Rennie
Footpaths Liaison Officer	R.G. Tarr
Dorchester Arts Centre	A.J. Lyall
Dorchester Community Nursery School	Miss C.M. Hebditch
Dorchester Crime Prevention Panel	M.L. Graham T.C.N. Harries
Dorchester Volunteer Bureau Management Committee	Mrs. C.S. Biggs
Dorchester Municipal Charities	M.L. Graham L.M. Phillips Mrs. M.E. Rennie P.A.A. Scott
Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre Management Committee	Mrs. E.S. Jones
St Osmund's Community Sports Centre Sub-Committee	Mrs. E.S. Jones
The Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership	R.G. Tarr
West Dorset Broadcasting Action Group	R.M. Biggs

**PARKS, GARDENS AND OPEN SPACES BEST VALUE
REVIEW
ACTION PLAN**

Issues	Action	Timescale / Action Taken	Outcomes	Resourcing	Lead Officer	Resources against impact 1 = high 3 = low
Areas for more efficient working	Outsource walks maintenance – contract/ partnership	Complete	To provide a more efficient service	Self financing/ savings	DTC/OSO	1
	Propagation of flowers/ greenhouse prepare schedule for costing purposes – seek expressions of interest	Requirement of HLF funding to keep in house	To provide a more cost effective service	Self financing/ savings	DTC/OSO	1
	Routine maintenance of non- specialist areas, grass, hedge cutting etc – partnership working	Ongoing Discussions taking place with the County Council with regard to reciprocal working.	To provide a more cost effective service and to free up staff time for other duties	Self financing	DTC/OSO	1
	Introduce work spec- ifications for each site and procedure for monitoring including new performance indicators	Complete	To ensure a high quality maintenance regime and to allow for benchmarking /monitoring	Within existing resources	CO	2

Opportunities for increasing income	Seat repairs/maintenance – investigate taking on maintenance for other seats	Investigations proved that there was no benefit to this.	Increase income/maximum staff time	Self financing	CO	2
	Investigate of expanding the laying of safety surfacing for other organisations in the surrounding area	Some work has been done with other organisations but insufficient staff resources to do much more.	Increase income/maximum staff time	Self financing	CO	2
Staffing Arrangements	Review staffing structure in light of actions proposed for more efficient working	Review completed and a Compliance Manager appointed.	Ensure appropriate staffing levels	Self financing	DTC/OSO/CO	2
	Review working patterns	Completed and revised working patterns introduced	Ensure most appropriate working patterns	Self financing	CO	2
	Staff training	Ongoing	Ensure that staff have access to training to improve performance/productivity and compliance with legislation	From within existing resources	DTC/CO	1
	Introduce a Risk Management Strategy	Risk Assessments for all jobs completed	To ensure staff avoid risk	From within existing resources	CO	2

Adding value	Customer care surveys	Ongoing	To ensure the service is providing what the community desires	From within existing resources	DTC	2
Plant and Machinery	Prepare an up to date inventory	Complete	To be aware of values and future budgeting requirements	From within existing resources	DTC/OSO	1
	Review storage facilities	Complete – new depot being built in 2006	To have improved storage and access	From within existing resources/savings	DTC/CO	2
	Investigate sharing plant and machinery maintenance	Reciprocal arrangements being put in place with Dorset County and West Dorset Councils	More economical maintenance through shared approach	From within existing resources/savings	DTC/CO	2
	Investigate sharing procurement arrangements for plant and machinery	Memorandum of Understanding being pursued with the County Council	More economical procurement through shared approach	From within existing resources/savings	DTC/CO	2
	Investigate sharing of equipment	Memorandum of Understanding being pursued with the County Council	To allow use of specialist equipment that does not warrant being purchased or leased	From within existing resources/savings	DTC/CO	2
	Investigate equipping one van as a 'rapid response' vehicle	Investigation complete not best value no further action.	To decrease response times for urgent work and save staff time from driving between site and store/shops	£20,000	TC/DTC/CO	2

Various issues identified as priority through consultation process	Children's play area at Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground	To be considered should 106 monies become available	To complement the facilities for adults/older children at this area	From Section 106 monies	TC/DTC	3
	Review administration of pitch bookings	June – Oct 03 Yet to be undertaken	To streamline the bookings system	From within existing resources	DTC/AO	3
	Changing facilities at King's Road Playing Fields	Scheme costed and proved not to be financially viable	To increase pitch use and available facilities	Significant funding implications due to Duchy requirements	TC	3
	Open dialogue Sandringham Bowling Club regarding pitch users using its catering facilities	There is no willingness for this to happen - NFA	To improve facilities for pitch users and spectators	From within existing resources	TC	3
	Improvement to Borough Gardens Bowling Club facilities	Underway with refurbishment of Borough Gardens House – to be completed Dec 2006	To improve facilities for users and spectators	Subject to HLF funding	TC	2
	Service delivery method of Borough Gardens bowls to be reviewed following refurbishment of facilities	Dec 2006 – April 2007	To enable the club to develop	From within existing resources	DTC	3
	Regular liaison meeting with Borough Gardens Bowls club	Ongoing	To improve communications between club and Council	From within existing resources	DTC	3

	Regular maintenance of Boules ring	Ongoing	To ensure facilities always in good order	From within existing resources	DTC/OSO	3
	Regular liaison meeting with Boules club	Ongoing	To improve communications between club and Council	From within existing resources	DTC	3
	Litter containers by the Sawmills car park	Complete	To help keep area clear of litter	From within existing resources	OSO	2
	New signage at the entrance to the Sawmills site	Complete	To raise profile of the site and make it easier to find for visitors	From within existing resources	TC	2
	Increase play area inspections/ litter removal to twice weekly	Completed	Increased safety and cleanliness of play areas	From within existing resources subject to implementation of improved working practices measures	DTC/OSO	2
	That by 2007 all play areas have a minimum of five different play activities and that the most popular play areas have a minimum of seven appropriate for the target age group	June 03 – Dec 07	To provide a wide range of outside play provision suitable to the targeted age groups	Continued investment of £15,000 per year required	DTC/OSO	2

TC - Town Clerk

OSO - Outside Services Officer

DTC - Deputy Town Clerk

AO - Administrative Officer

CO - Compliance Officer

MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS BEST VALUE REVIEW ACTION PLAN

Issues	Action	Timescale / Action taken	Outcomes	Resourcing	Lead Officer	Resources against impact 1 = high 3 = low
Areas for more efficient working	Review room booking procedures and investigate on line booking and electronic diaries	To be linked with the possible introduction of on-line bookings through the website	More efficient and flexible service to users and those operating the system	From within existing resources although the implementation of computerised room bookings will require resourcing	DTC/AA	2
	Additional signage/ information board / reception point (particularly important when more than one event being held)	August 2005 Investigation into appropriate signage is underway	To provide a better service to hirers and their guests	Budget provision required	DTC/AA	2
	Review policy of 'session bookings' only	Complete – Sessions to continue but requests for shorter period to be considered on their merits	To be more flexible and to attract regular bookings from organisations that only require rooms for hour long periods of time	Self financing/ additional income	AA	2
Opportunities for increasing income	Review hire rates	Completed	To ensure that hire rates are pitched at the correct level	Increased income to the Council	Management Committee	1
	Investigate the possibility of a catering / tea and coffee franchise	To be undertaken at the end of the bar franchise contract in 2007	To provide an additional service to hirers and to maximise kitchen use	Increased income to the Council	DTC	2

	Review the method of payment for the Bar Franchise	To be undertaken at the end of the bar franchise contract in 2007	To ensure the Council receives appropriate recompense	Increased income to the Council	DTC/FO	1
	Review hiring possibilities e.g. tablecloths, crockery etc	Complete	To provide additional facilities to hirers	Self financing	AA	2
	Modernise the website	Website has been updated, consideration is to be given to online bookings during 2007	To help market the buildings and increase bookings	From within existing resources	DTC/AA	1
	Advertising opportunities on the Website	Not considered appropriate	To help fund a quality website, increase opportunities for local businesses	Self financing	DTC	2
	Review Marketing and advertising of the venue, including wedding days	Ongoing	To maximise use of the venue	Additional budget requirement maybe required	AA	2
	Investigate the opportunities for the Council to put on its own events	Insufficient staff resources to pursue at present	To encourage use and bring new events to the Town	Self financing/ profit making	AA	2
Staffing Arrangements	Review working patterns	Review of staffing complete	Ensure most appropriate working patterns	Self financing	DTC/AA	2
	Staff training	Ongoing	Ensure that staff have access to training to improve performance/ productivity and compliance with legislation	From within existing resources	AA	1

	Introduce a Risk Management Strategy	The completion of risk assessments remains outstanding	To ensure staff avoid risk	From within existing resources	DTC	2
Adding value	Customer care surveys	Ongoing	To ensure the service is providing what the community desires	From within existing resources	DTC	2
Various issues identified as priority through consultation process	Ongoing review of acoustics and PA system	Consideration to be given by the Property Management and Maintenance Panel 2006/07	To ensure the acoustics and sound systems are suitable for hirers requirements	From within existing budget allocation	DTC	1
	Investigate the possibility of having available internet access and facilities for power point presentations	Consideration to be given by the Property Management and Maintenance Panel 2006/07	To provide those facilities expected by hirers	Budget provision to be allocated	AA	2
	Review liaison arrangements with Bar Franchise operator	Ongoing	To ensure that customers wishing to use the bar receive a quality service	From within existing resources	DTC/AA	2
	Portfolio of room layouts with photos	Complete	To encourage bookings and to help hirers make best use of the rooms and PA equipment	From within existing arrangements	DTC/AA	2
	To investigate the fitting of a ramp on the step between the North Square entrance and the foyer		To help access for the disabled	Budget provision required	Property Management and Maintenance Panel	3

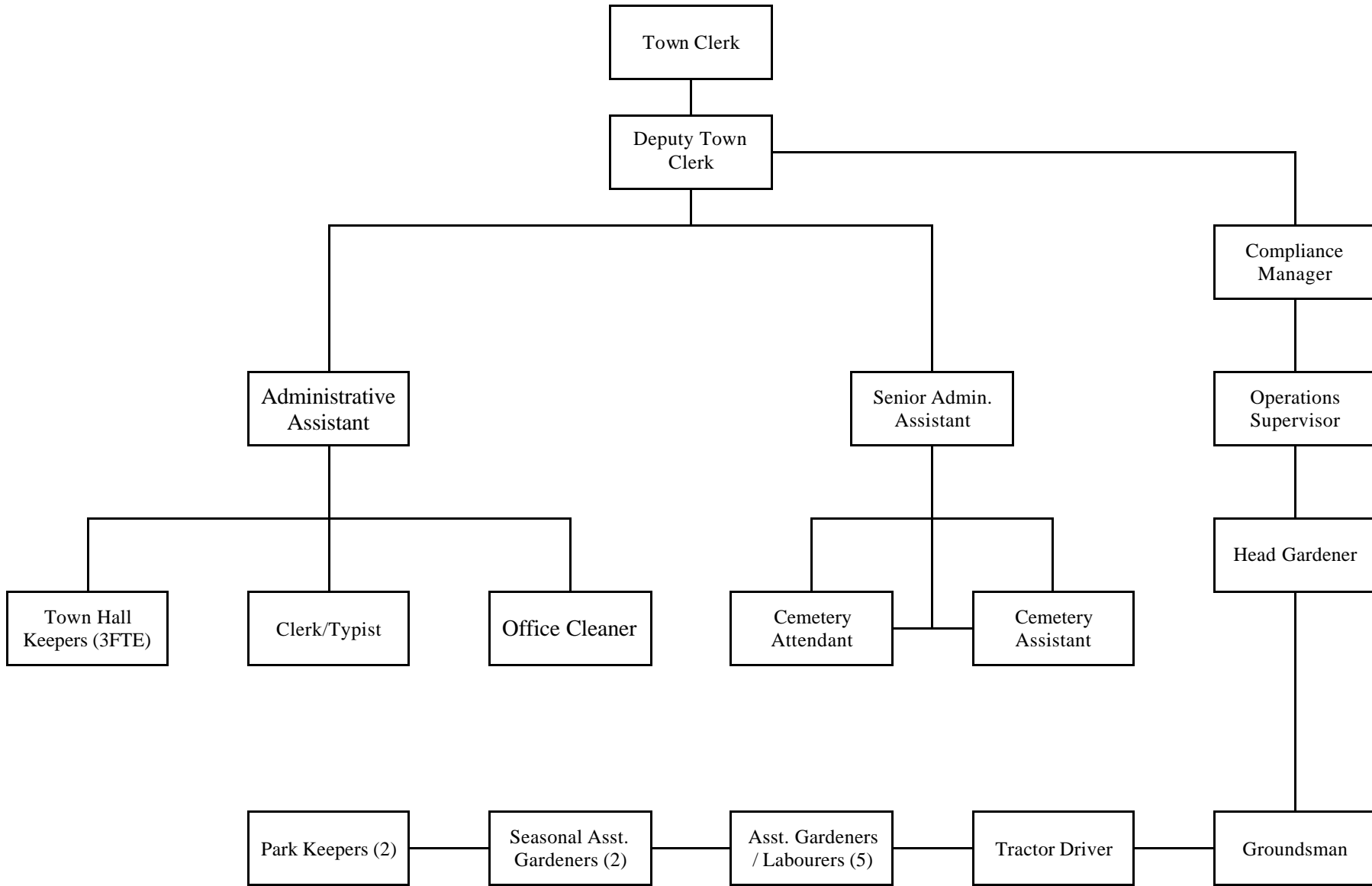
	Review of utilities, boiler etc	Complete – boiler replacement fund established	To ensure value for money	From within existing resources	Property Management and Maintenance Panel	3
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TC - Town Clerk

FO - Finance Officer

DTC - Deputy Town Clerk

AA - Administrative Assistant



Staffing Structure

The Council also employs a person placed through the County Council's Social Services Directorate.