



# Kettering Borough Improvement Plan and Annual Report 2010/2011

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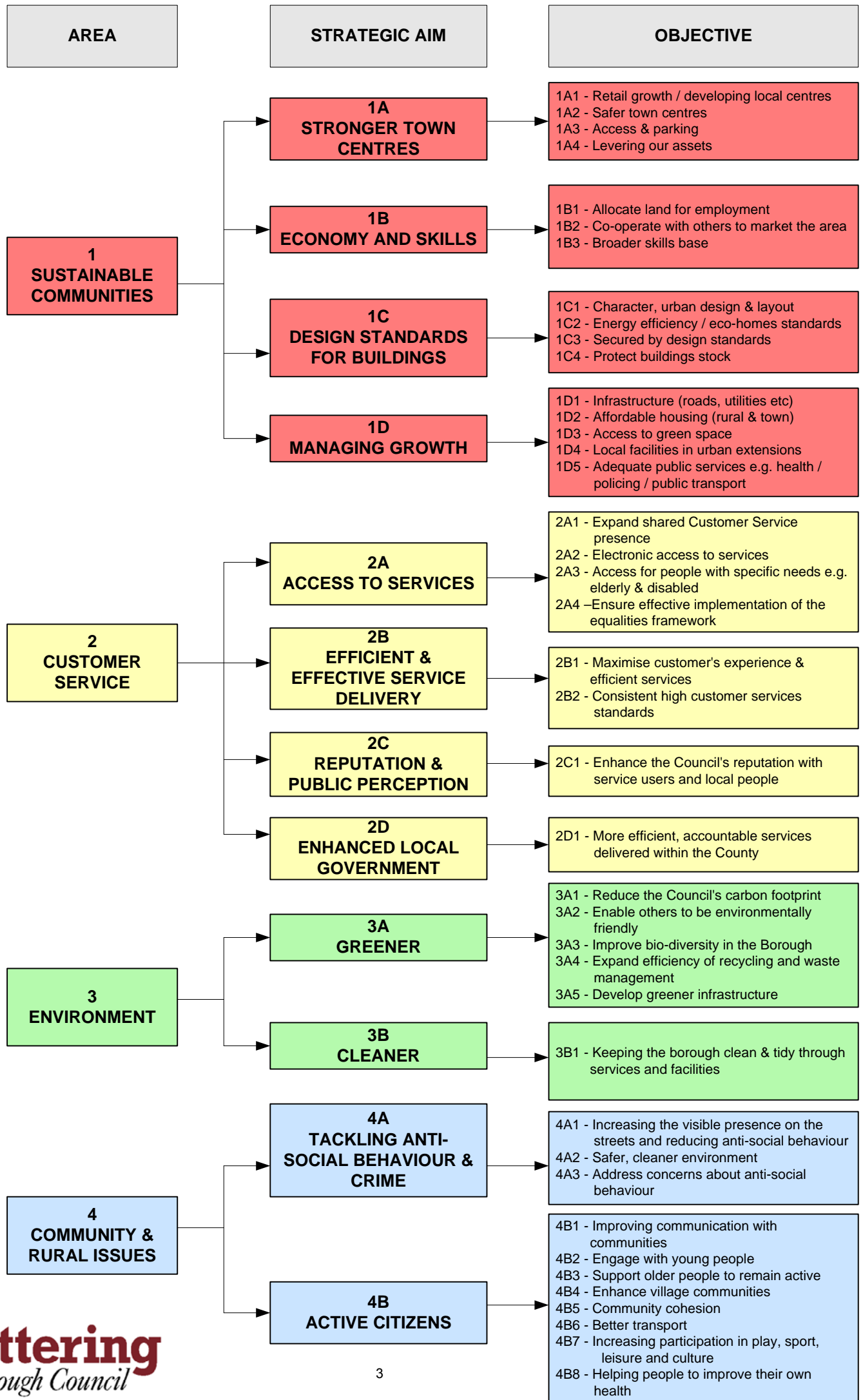
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**SUSTAINABLE PLACE MAKING**



# **2009/2010 Key Achievements**

# Sustainable Communities

## Suite 16 programme:

### Redevelopment of Market Place

Works to turn the old Market Place into a focal point for the town's upcoming restaurant quarter were completed in August 2009. Local company Weldon Plant Ltd put the final touches to the new Market Place on Friday 7th August and removed the barriers to reveal a space that was quickly filled by people sitting on the granite benches; watching as the water fountains were tested.



The project, which saw £2.2 million of investment attracted from outside of the borough was completed on schedule and within budget. The project highlights the commitment that Kettering Borough Council and its partners, such as the North Northamptonshire Development Company (NNDC) have to invest in the area, both helping its regeneration and supporting the local economy.

The summer celebration which marked the official opening of the space was attended by over 3,500 people.

### Chesham House Design and Technology Centre

Chesham House was the first of the Suite 16 projects to be finished, with the first occupants arriving in March 2009. Chesham house is a good example of how the Borough Council approaches and will approach the Suite 16 Projects:

- ◆ It has been 80% funded through external bid funding, totalling some £800,000.
- ◆ The Borough Council has used £200,000 of local taxpayers money to pump prime that investment.
- ◆ Chesham House is a listed building, which has been refurbished as part of the project.
- ◆ Chesham house will bring design and technology based employment to Kettering.
- ◆ The project has been delivered in partnership with the University of Northampton.

The centre offers flexible terms on units, hot desking facilities, training rooms, virtual office support and a range of free business support through Business Link.

### Planning Approval Secured for Market Place Restaurants



Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2010 saw the Market Place Restaurants secure planning approval. The new buildings will see restaurants and possibly cafes coming to the Market Place giving people in the town somewhere to enjoy a bite to eat and sit and catch up with friends and family. New high quality apartments will be built above the restaurants, with resident parking provided at basement level.

Formal consultation on the scheme received the support of English Heritage, whose comments were considered as key, due to the proximity of the new buildings to the Grade 1 Listed Parish Church.

The planning approval means that work on the new buildings can start in earnest in time for completion in the Spring 2011.



The scheme is being funded through Growth Fund from the Homes and Communities Agency with support from Northamptonshire County Council and North Northants Development Company.

### **Executive Approval for the Next Phase of Public Realm works**

Following two periods of comprehensive consultation, the next phase of public realm works were approved by the council's Executive on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010. The scheme will see Horsemarket, Market Street, Sheep Street and the western edge of the Market Place transformed into a pedestrian friendly space. The removal of through-traffic and relocation of bus stops will provide the opportunity for high-quality paving materials to be used in creating an area that increases footfall to shops and the overall enjoyment of the area.

The scheme is being funded through external bid-funding, despite a cut in the original grant allocation, the Council is pushing ahead with this priority project.

### **Market Place Events**

The new Market Place has seen a number of events and activities take place since its official opening in August 2009. Entertainment has included Kettering by the Sea, circus skills, live music and street entertainment. The Northampton Morris Men have used the Market Place for their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, Diabetes UK and National Apprenticeships have held road shows on the Market Place and it has also hosted an Italian market. Further information can be found at [www.kettering.gov.uk/marketplace](http://www.kettering.gov.uk/marketplace)



### **Increasing the Supply of Affordable Homes**

We have been working in partnership with housing associations and the Homes and Communities Agency to provide more affordable homes. We have provided increasing numbers of affordable homes from 116 completions in 2007/ 8 to 243 completions in 2008/9.

#### **Introduction of HomeMove**

HomeMove was launched in June 2009 to help tenants who are under-occupying their homes to move into smaller properties. Since HomeMove was launched, 15 households have been assisted to downsize into a smaller property thus increasing the amount of family accommodation available for letting through Keyways.



**HomeMove**

#### **Introduction of LifePlan**

LifePlan, our new service to help homeless people and vulnerable tenants get access to employment training and educational opportunities was launched in June 2009. Since June, 62 customers have received advice and support from our LifePlan Advisor.

### **Move On, Move In**

'Move On, Move In' is a joint venture between Kettering Borough Council and partner agencies which aims to provide life skills training for young people looking for their first home. Since Move On, Move In began in May 2006 we have held 10 courses which 81 young people have successfully completed. In September 2009 we undertook a client tracking exercise and found that only two of these young people had either lost or given up their tenancies.

### **99% of Council's Housing Stock Meeting the Decent Homes Standard**

The Council has been working hard to meet the Governments target that by 2010, all Local Authority Housing has to meet the Decent Homes standard. 99.85% of Kettering's Council housing stock now meets the Decent Homes standard.

### **Reduction of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation for Homelessness**

We have reduced our use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households by implementing a preventative approach to homelessness. Expenditure on bed and breakfast accommodation in 2009/10 has been driven down to £44,906 at the end of January. This compares to £178,112 at the same time last year.

### **Shop Front Improvements**

Working with shop owners and landlords in the town centre, we have improved shop frontages to make empty properties look more attractive to potential investors and shoppers. The Council will begin the next phase of enhancing shop frontages by working with partners on an additional 4 shops within the town centre.

### **Residents Parking Scheme**

In collaboration with Northamptonshire County Council, the Council have moved forward the residents parking zones. Legal work in preparation for the launch of the first zone on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 has been completed and there is a timetable for the delivery of the remaining zones throughout 2010/11.



### **Audit Commissions Green Flag for Regeneration**

North Northamptonshire received a 'Green Flag' from the Audit Commission for regeneration in December 2009. A Green Flag signifies exceptional performance and innovation that others can learn from. Kettering Borough has made sound progress on regeneration which no doubt will have contributed to the Audit Commission assessment.

# Customer Services

## Enhanced Partnership Working Including HMRC in the Customer Services Centre

The Customer Service Centres enable Kettering Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council, Police and Fire services to develop and bring together front line services to the residents of Kettering Borough. The last 12 months has seen the successful integration of the HMRC Tax Office into the Customer Service Centre and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) are now working out of each of the centres. Job shadowing between the Police and KBC employees has taken place and will continue into next year.

## Improving Online Services

Our [www.kettering.gov.uk](http://www.kettering.gov.uk) website has again been commended for its easy and effective use (and has remained a transactional website for the third year in a row) according to the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) Better Connected. The site has also been listed in the top 24 of Shire council websites. The website continues to be one of most used access channels with an average of over 1.68 million page requests per month in comparison to just over 1.61 million this time last year. Further enhancements to the website this year have included online land charges, the inclusion of a Moving to Kettering and Young Persons area on the site.

## Better Customer Information

We have successfully sent out four editions of our resident's newsletter 'Voice' which has been well received by members of the public. Voice is distributed to every household within the borough and positive comments are often received from our residents. Impact on how this affects council perception will be measured during the course of the year.



## Customer Engagement

### ◆ Town Centre Shop

For the second year in a row, the Council have used the Town Centre Consultation Shop, encouraging residents to discuss their ideas and views on the proposed improvements to Market Street and Sheep Street. Further consultations around the budget setting process, the greener borough service and town centre improvements were also showcased in the shop.

### ◆ Promoting Benefit Take / Debt Advice

The Council have improved communication and consultation by going out into the community and identifying areas where help and assistance is required to combat social exclusion to all.

### ◆ Residents Parking

In collaboration with Northamptonshire County Council, the Council have prepared the legal work for the launch of the first residents parking zone (by the hospital) for the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.

## Customer Service Excellence Award

The Council has retained its customer service excellence award for the third year in a row. The Customer Service Centres were first awarded the cabinets office Customer Service Excellence Award in 2008 and was the first local authority in the country to receive it.

## Trailblazer for Customer Services - 'Getting it right and righting the wrongs' project

Kettering Borough Council was selected as one of nine regional trailblazers to test the 'Getting it right and righting the wrongs' customer service practitioner's toolkit. The six month pilot has seen Kettering Borough Council focus on four partnership themes of anti-social behaviour, vulnerable people, debt advice and highways.



Throughout the course of the trailblazer we have engaged with customers, councillors and staff to gain their views and knowledge, and to help us ensure that the customer is at the heart of our service.

## **Staff Capacity**

### **◆ Staff award ceremony**

Kettering Borough Council's second staff award ceremony took place in June to celebrate training achievements and to give recognition to employees who have achieved excellence by going the extra mile. This proved to be a huge success and will be replicated again in 2010/11.

### **◆ Reduced sickness**

Corporate sickness throughout the authority has improved. It has reduced from 10.25 days in Jan 2007 to 7.24 days in January 2010.

## **Successful Completion of European and County Council Elections**

The Council has successfully completed the election process for the European and County Council elections and the assessment of the service by the Electoral Commission as the best in Northamptonshire.

# Environment

## **Kleensweep**

Over the past 12 months, five Kleen Sweeps were held in the five Safer Community Teams. The Council also worked in partnership with the probation service providing large quantities of paint for graffiti removal and worked alongside the Youth Offending Team on a variety of clean up projects around the Borough.

The Council established the Natural-Ise community group to support local volunteers on taking a long term management of the Ise Valley Green Space and we have also supported several Rivercare clean up's of the River Ise.



## **Kettering Borough Council and E-On and Smart Meters trial**

In September 2008, Kettering Borough Council and E.ON launched an innovative Smart Meters pilot programme. The pilot saw 475 homes in the Borough having new Smart Meters and In-home Energy Monitors installed.

The Smart Meters remove the need for meters to be read with the meters sending meter reading directly to E.ON, resulting in more accurate billing and the end to estimated bills.

The In-home Energy Monitors provide customers with real time information about the amount of energy they are using and the cost of this. The simple display includes a traffic light system shows immediately if the energy consumption is high (red), medium (amber) or low (green).

In addition to the new technology customers on the trial were offered an Energy Saving Reward if they reduced their energy consumption over the year the pilot was running for. Customers reducing their consumption by 5% would receive a £50 reward, and customers saving 10% would receive a £100 reward.

The pilot has been a great success and has seen significant numbers of customers taking part reducing their energy consumption, bringing to them the dual benefits of financial savings and a reduction in their carbon footprint.

## **Burton Wold Community Fund**



In 2009/2010 Kettering Borough Council continued to promote and deliver the Burton Wold Community Fund in Burton Latimer. We are receiving more requests for information and the amount of applications to the fund is increasing.

The community fund will run for the operational life of the wind farm with the aim of promoting energy efficiency and energy efficiency education in the community, through grants and loans to individuals and community groups.

Several organisations looking to establish community funds have visited Kettering Borough Council to find out more about how the fund operates.

### **Greener Borough Service**

Working with Groundwork Trust, the Council has continued to promote the Greener Borough Service which can help save the average household up to £1000 a year. The service aims to make it easier for our residents to access advice, assistance and grants to help people live a greener life and save money. Further information can be found online at [www.kettering.gov.uk/greenerborough](http://www.kettering.gov.uk/greenerborough)

### **Capital investment to London Road and Desborough cemetery**

Investment to improve facilities to London Road and Desborough Cemeteries such as better drainage and roadways so relatives can use the areas more easily and safely.

# Community and Rural

## Crime reduction

Over the past 12 months, a number of crime reduction initiatives have been introduced including:



- ◆ 88 new Neighbourhood Watch Schemes were set up in the Kettering Borough. We now have 330 active schemes.

- ◆ Through Partnership activities, there has been a 53% reduction in secondary fires in refuse containers throughout the Kettering Borough.

- ◆ Through funding secured from the Community Cashback Initiative 800 personal household CCTV cameras have been distributed to people of repeat victimisation.

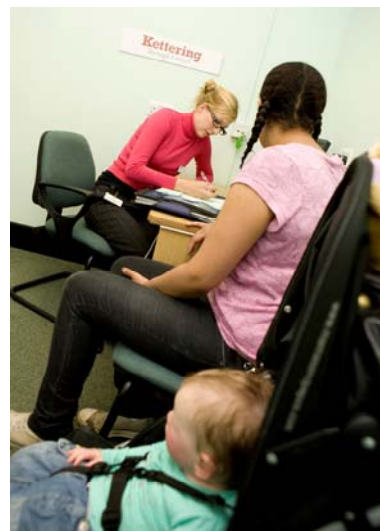
- ◆ Since September 2009 Groundwork have provided targeted outreach youth work at 8 hotspots, working with 227 young people and diverting them away from crime and ASB.

- ◆ To reduce repeat victimisation in both Domestic Burglary & Domestic Violence, during 2009/2010 using Partnership funding, security has been upgraded in 122 homes and 8 communal alleyways have been gated and made secure. A Domestic Abuse event for both professionals and public was held in the Corn Market Hall on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Good feedback was received.

- ◆ 3 Partnership Alcohol Awareness sessions have been delivered at KBC by CAN & Aquarius. The sessions were very well attended by a wide range of agencies and good feedback was received.

## Supporting Vulnerable People

In supporting vulnerable people, the Council has undertaken a number of initiatives including the introduction and promotion of the new 10 day deal. The promise is that if the customer provides all the relevant documents, we will action their benefits claim within 10 working days.



## Reducing Homelessness

Our Housing Options team has developed a preventative approach to homelessness. Homelessness applications have been reduced from 206 in the first 10 months of 2008/9 to 112 in the first 10 months of 2009/10. Homelessness acceptance has been reduced from 115 in the first 10 months of 2008/9 to 69 in the first 10 months of 2009/10. Use of temporary accommodation has been reduced from a peak of 52 units in February 2007 to 15 units in February 2009.

## Expansion of the Housing Options Service for People at High Risk of Homelessness

A project to improve Housing Options for ex-offenders was completed in March 2009. Following on from this project several service improvements have been made: a Housing Options Advisor now holds weekly surgeries at Probation, several training sessions on Housing Options and law have been arranged for partner agencies and Housing Officers now deliver training sessions at HMP Woodhill. A second project to improve the Housing Options service for people with poor mental health was completed in May 2009.

## Reducing Health Inequalities

The Council have embarked on a number of projects over the last 12 months to help reduce health inequalities within the borough including:

- ◆ **Delivery of the MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, DO it) and 10% challenge.**

The programme is delivered across Northamptonshire which aims to educate children and their parents about the benefits of healthy eating and staying active. The 10% challenge educates adults on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle with the intention of losing 10% of their bodyweight.

- ◆ **Activity referral programme**

In line with the NHS tender, the Kettering Activity Referral Scheme offers discounted gym and pool access to those referred by their GP for medical reasons on a 12 week programme. Over 200 per year access this scheme.

## Opening of the national volleyball centre in Kettering

A grant of £30,000 was given to Volleyball England to lever in additional funding from EMDA, NEL and Phoenix Leisure. This enabled the development of the National Volleyball Centre in Kettering. The Centre will attract national and international competition to the borough, increase opportunities for community involvement, enhance the Borough's 2012 offer and attract additional investment.

## Free swimming

The Council implemented the first year of the free swimming initiative which meant that free swimming was offered to people aged 16 and under and people aged 60 and over. 12,779 visits by people ages 16 and under and 6,176 visits from people aged 60 and over were made by people accessing free swimming at the Kettering Swimming Pool in the first six months of the scheme.





# **2010/2011 Key Priority Actions**

# Sustainable Communities

## Development of the Suite 16 programme including:

### Continuing to Support a Programme of Family Events on the Market Place

The Council's vision is to create town centres that are Characterful, Distinctive, and Fun. These three key words help to ensure that the town centre is more than just a place to shop. The completion of Kettering Market Place now gives the Council a better opportunity to deliver this vision and a number of successful events have already taken place since the new Market Place was opened. The regeneration works have started to provide a better opportunity to bring more events to the Town Centre including the Cycle Tour Series, proposals to stage World Cup screenings and a programme of summer activities for families.

### Market Place Buildings



The vision for the Market Place area is to create a Restaurant Quarter that allows high quality dining from morning through to night, both inside and outside. The new Market Place restaurants will bring an enhanced eating offer to the Market Place, with diners being entertained by performances under the canopy.

The project has been funded through Growth Area Funds and will see a total of 9,000sqft of restaurant space and 10 high quality apartments built on an old car park site next to the newly refurbished Market Place. The scheme received planning approval in February 2010 and the project will be complete by March 2011.

### Next Phase of Public Realm

The Town Centre will become more than just a place to shop; it will have a varied offer that encourages visitors to spend more time in, and enjoy, our town centre. Market Street will be traffic free and will encourage shoppers to meander through the area and Sheep Street will be a shared space where access traffic will be allowed, but where the pedestrian takes priority. This new area of public realm will link the Market Place to the Yards area, where niche and independent shops stay open into the evening and allow a safe and relaxed browsing experience; and to the High Street where big brand shopping can take place on a larger scale.



The project is part-funded by Growth Area Funds (GAF), although the Council has been required to gap-fund a portion of the scheme as GAF funds were reduced part-way through the scheme. The scheme was approved by the Council's Executive in February 2010 and the project will be completed by March 2011.

### Wadcroft

Feasibility work on the Wadcroft scheme has seen the development of two options which will house a department store and accompanying high street units. These options will be market tested and discussions with developers and retailers will continue. The Wadcroft development will bring around

12,000sqm of retail floor space to the High Street and will help to ensure that Kettering maintains its role as the retail focus of North Northamptonshire.

### **Supporting New Business Parks**

The plans to bring forward a new office park will continue to develop over 2010/11, with an agreement already in place signed with the Police to test the feasibility of a joint back-office. This will act as a catalyst for new offices which will raise the quality of jobs on offer in the town. The relocation of the Borough Council's offices will include a new One Stop Shop within the town centre, this will be developed in conjunction with our partners from the voluntary and public sectors.

### **Bringing forward the regeneration of the Bowling Green Road sites**

The redevelopment of the Council-owned sites (currently used as car parks to serve the town and the Council offices) will see new use(s) brought to the southern end of the town centre. These uses will bring jobs and footfall to the town, over and above that achieved by the current council offices.

### **Station Quarter**



Work will also continue with the progression of the Station Quarter masterplan and associated transport proposals. Key stakeholders and landowners will be consulted and the plans will continue the route to adoption through the Town Centre Area Action Plan. Improvements to Station Road include a new transport interchange to the east of the train station, a new linking footbridge to connect routes and two new car parks to the west and east are also part of the proposals. This work will build on the successful Green Links project developed over 2008/09 with the County Council using external bid funding.

### **Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan**

A strong policy framework for Kettering town centre is an important tool in delivering the Council's vision. The Kettering Town Area Action Plan has made significant progress towards adoption and will be submitted to the Secretary of State in the autumn of 2010 with the Examination in Public planned for February 2011.

### **Rothwell and Desborough Urban Extension Area Action Plan**

The Rothwell and Desborough Area Action Plan is well advanced and will provide a sound policy basis for achieving regeneration and planned growth in these two market towns. Adoption of the plan, following submission to the Secretary of State and an Examination in Public is planned for early 2011.

### **Site Specific Development Plan Document**

The site specific development plan document will provide an important policy framework for areas outside Kettering, Desborough and Rothwell. It is in early stages of development with Options planned to be published late in the year.

### **Maximise the Effectiveness of Development and Contributions and other Funding to Kettering Borough**

In the climate of reducing public funding and significant development proposals, it is essential that opportunities to secure contributions from developments and to secure other sources of funding are maximised.

## Progress Delivery of Major Development Projects, Including for Housing, Employment and Town Centre Regeneration

Resolutions to grant planning permissions have been made for a number of significant developments in the district, including residential development at Polwell Lane, Barton Seagrave (450 homes) and the sustainable urban extension at East Kettering (5,500 homes, employment development, district centre, schools etc).

Delivery of these will contribute to realising the growth and vision for Kettering Borough. Achieving delivery will require the drafting and completion of S106 agreements and discharge of pre-commencement conditions. In some cases these are issues requiring significant resource input and partnership working with the community, other public sector agencies and landowners/developers.

## Supporting Local Businesses

Looking to increase the take up of business support within Kettering, the Council will be:

- ◆ Creating and implementing a 'Spread the Word campaign'
- ◆ Building on successful improvement with the University of Northampton (start up)
- ◆ Building awareness locally of Business Link
- ◆ Establishing local partner links
- ◆ Working with Business Link to obtain and assess feedback from businesses about the service



## Shop Front Improvements

The next 12 months will see the Council working with shop owners and partners within Kettering Town Centre to help improve the frontages of empty properties, making them more attractive to both shoppers and potential investors. The Council will be focusing on improving four shop fronts initially to act as both a template and to help let properties in high priority areas of the town centre.

## Increase the Skills Level of the Borough

The Council will be working on a number of projects over the next 12 months to increase the skills level of the Borough, including:

- ◆ Work with the Train to Gain programme to increase take up within the Borough
- ◆ Support young people through provision of apprenticeships
- ◆ Hold an annual career fair for secondary schools
- ◆ Submission of graduate placement programme with University of Northampton, Corby Borough Council and NNDC
- ◆ Work with partners to support future delivery of Higher Education / University Campuses
- ◆ Work with NEL, HR, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector on delivery of Future Jobs Fund
- ◆ Implement action plan from Education Task and Finish Group

## Housing Repairs



The Council will aim to make our repairs service more focused on the needs of the customer by offering appointments for repairs, providing better information for tenants and improving the diagnosis of repair requests. This will involve the introduction of simplified working practices and mobile-working technology for our repairs staff. As well as improving the customer experience, we intend to enhance the effectiveness of the repairs service and achieve better value for money.



### **Local Lettings Plans**

The Council will be working with its housing association partners to develop local lettings plans for new housing developments that provide more than six homes. The plans will set out the allocation arrangements for the new homes and describe the liaison arrangements with other agencies such as town councils, the police, health service, schools and social services. The plans will help to ensure that new housing developments become an integral part of existing communities.

### **Funding Council Housing**

The Government has announced a radical overhaul of the system for funding local authority housing. The key proposals are to abolish the current HRA housing subsidy system and introduce a self-financing system in which local authorities would retain all rent income and RTB receipts. This would require a one-off adjustment in which housing debt is distributed between local authority landlords.

The Department for Communities and Local Government have indicated that they will make an offer to each local authority in Spring 2010. This will include a statement of how much of the national debt will be given to each local authority.

The Council will need to consider its response to the Government in the light of its medium term financial strategy.

### **Private Sector Housing**

The Council will review its private sector housing services so that we can move from the traditional position of a regulator and enforcer of standards to an approach where we work in greater partnership with landlords and their managing agents. Our ambition is to assist private landlords to provide good quality housing for households in housing need.



### **Strategic Approach to disabled adaptations**

We intend to carry out a comprehensive review of our housing services for disabled people. In particular, we will be looking to improve the way that we carry out adaptations to the homes of people with a disability. Currently, we have different policies and procedures depending on the tenure of the applicant. This is an overly bureaucratic and costly approach. Our ambition is to develop a service that focuses more on the needs of people and enables them to live independent and fulfilling lives.

### **TSA Regulatory Framework for Social Housing**

The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) assumes responsibility for regulating council housing from 1 April 2010. The TSA is currently finalising a set of national standards for all social landlords. In addition, landlords will be expected to agree local standards with their tenants. The TSA will have the power to ask the Audit Commission to carry out inspections of local authority landlords. We are working closely with our tenants in preparing for the new regulatory regime and hope to increase participation by tenants in the management of their homes.

### **Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings**

We are working with Corby Borough Council and the Borough Council of Wellingborough to introduce a sub-regional choice based lettings scheme. Customers in all three authorities will have the opportunity to bid for vacant properties across all three local authority areas. This will build on the success of Keyways, Kettering's own choice based lettings scheme, which was launched in January 2009. The sub-regional choice based lettings scheme is scheduled to go live in September 2010.



### **Extend LifePlan and HomeMove**

The Council has been selected by the Government as one of 12 authorities across the country to be an enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer.

LifePlan, one of our trailblazer projects is helping homeless people to gain access to training, educational and employment opportunities, thereby maximising their life chances.

HomeMove, another Trailblazer project provides practical help to council tenants who want to move to a smaller home that is more appropriate for their needs. This helps to free up larger properties that can then be let to families in housing need. The next 12 months will look at developing both of these initiatives.



### **Completion of the New Residents Parking Scheme**

The Council will continue to work with Northamptonshire County Council to take forward and implement the additional six residents parking zones.

### **Transport Improvements**

A Transport Strategy for Kettering town centre has been developed that will ensure the area can accommodate growth without it having a negative impact on the ability of people to access the town centre. This will be achieved with improvements in: the road network and highway junctions; parking; public transport; pedestrian and cyclists routes; and enhanced public realm. The Council is already implementing the Strategy, through land acquisition for future junction improvements at Northampton Road/ Northfield Avenue and by delivering public realm improvements in the area of the Market Place.

The Council is also working with Network Rail and East Midlands Trains to secure an enhanced rail timetable for Kettering. The Highways Agency has also agreed to increase lane capacity and improve accessibility between junctions 7 and 9 of the A14.

Planning permission has been granted for a sustainable urban extension incorporating 5,500 dwellings at East Kettering. This scheme will contribute to transport infrastructure through off-site junction improvements, £18million pooled contributions to town centre improvements, £20million towards general town centre improvements (including public realm), a public transport subsidy to improve and add to services, and enhanced footpath and cycleway routes.

# Customer Services

## Further Partnership Working

To enhance partnership working with external advisory groups such as Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), JobCentre Plus and Accommodation Concern. To continue close partnership working with agencies that work out of our Customer Service Centres. Look to develop and identify new partnerships with agencies that could potentially hold surgeries from our Customer Service Centres.



## Closer Working and Integration with the Police Authority

Ensure that the Police continue to have a presence within our Customer Service Centre and A6 Towns Customer Service Centres and to continue with job shadowing between Council and Police employees.

## Attain 'Achieving' Status Under the Equality Framework for Local Government

Carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) throughout the whole organisation and ensure that equalities is embedded throughout the whole authority. This will mean that all action points arising from an Equality Impact Assessment will be embedded into each area's Service Plan. We are currently entering into the third year of the 3-year programme.

## Better Customer Information

Continue to produce three resident's newsletter 'Voice' a year. This will focus on communicating information about Council services and priority issues that we are working on. In addition, the Council will continue to provide timely, up-to-date and relevant information to our customers.

## Managing Risks and Providing Services

The Council is working with its insurance company to refresh its corporate risk register and develop its mitigation plans. Performance clinics all provide risk updates on an individual basis and member training will be provided to assist in meeting their responsibilities.



## Enhance the Council's Website to Further Develop Online Capability

Further develop the Council's website and to promote channel shift for customers interacting with us.

## 2010 General Election in the Kettering Constituency

To prepare and manage the General Election 2010 in the Kettering Constituency and manage all non scheduled by-elections or referenda arising within the Borough.

## Maintain and Improve Sickness Levels Within the Authority

Continue to maintain and improve sickness levels within the authority by introducing a new sickness absence policy alongside reviewing the training needs of new / existing managers in absence management issues.

# Environment

## Further Develop Operation Kleen Sweep and Ward Walkabouts to Create a Greener, Cleaner and Safer Borough

Continue to develop Operation KleenSweep and Ward Walkabouts to align with other agencies and initiatives both at a local and national level. This will result in action plans being developed to improve coordination which will result in focused outcomes that are timely and will benefit all stakeholders. The Council will ensure that five KleenSweeps are undertaken next year.

## Household Recycling Centre

The Council and Northamptonshire County Council are working together in partnership to develop the new Household Recycling Centre off Garrard Way in Kettering. The new site will replace the existing facility in Cunliffe Drive which is too small to accommodate the number of visitors who wish to use it. The new £2m household waste recycling centre is scheduled to be open by October 2010.



## Desborough Green Space: Develop and Agree a Feasible Project Plan

Work is starting on the development of a draft master plan for the maintenance and management of the site by August 2010. Consultation with the local community will take place by the end of September 2010.

## Further Promotion of the Greener Borough Service



Working in partnership with Groundwork Trust to further develop and promote the Greener Borough Service to residents, schools and the business community helping them to access advice and support which will help them save money and also help save the planet at the same time.

## Burton Wold Community Fund

The Council continue to promote and deliver the community fund, working with individuals and community groups to deliver environmental improvements. We will also be looking to extend the principles of the scheme to help other newly developed wind farms within the borough.



# Community and Rural

## Supporting Vulnerable People

Work will continue around the services that we offer vulnerable people including: further promotion of the leisure pass, promoting and sustaining free swimming to under 16's and over 60's and additional promotion of holiday activities, activity referral schemes, health walks healthy lifestyles and sport for people with disabilities.

The Council will work with other agencies to address the issues caused by domestic abuse looking to improve the service to high risk victims through multi-agency working and high-risk service provision. The Council will help coordinate awareness raising campaigns locally on domestic abuse for victims and help to promote the range of services available.



The Building Communities Project will be consolidated into a joint partnership as a signposting vehicle to increase two-way information for people from within hard-to-reach communities in Kettering. The initiative has a neighbourhood focus and widens the potential to make contact with the residents who would benefit most from agency services. The initiative also seeks to support and encourage residents to become more proactive and engaged in their local community.

## Reduction in Crime



Through the Community Safety Partnership plan, the Council will aim to reduce violence in Kettering associated with the night time economy by encouraging every licensee to join the Kettering Pubwatch Scheme alongside the development of transportation schemes. This will help to disperse the public from the town centre, taking action against those premises caught selling alcohol to under age drinkers.

The Audit Commission issued a 'Red Flag' to Northamptonshire for alcohol harm. A Red Flag is an area for which the Audit Commission has significant concerns and where action is needed. The Council has

been proactive working with partners in the area on tackling alcohol related issues and this will remain a priority over the forthcoming year.

In addition, the Council will work to help reduce the number of repeat victims of domestic burglary by delivery of the burglary reduction initiative offering victims and potential victims on priority areas, crime prevention advice, survey and security upgrades and making secure communal alleyways when appropriate.

## Improve the Health of People in the Borough

Working with NHS Northamptonshire, the Council will look to deliver joint health improvement outcomes around alcohol and drug use, smoking, obesity reduction and active lifestyles. Working with partners, the Council will be looking to promote participation by targeting individuals in the cardiac rehabilitation phase IV Scheme, exercise on referral scheme, health walk, the MEND programme and the 10% challenge.

### **Third Sector Support**

Kettering Borough Council has Service Level Agreements in place with a number of Third Sector organisations to provide services on its behalf. These include services for older people, debt and money advice, support to victims of crime & ASB and domestic abuse victims. These specifications run until March 2013 and reflect local priorities as identified through our Sustainable Community Strategy and Council Objectives.

We are also in the process of jointly commissioning a Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO) with Northamptonshire County Council and Corby Borough Council. The successful organisation will help support local Third Sector groups. This will help to create a thriving Third Sector and increase the opportunities for volunteering for local people which are both National Indicators and important to Kettering Borough.

### **Improving the Benefit Service**

The Council will be out and about in the community identifying areas where help and assistance is required to help combat social exclusion. In order to provide faster customer access to benefits services, the Council has launched the 10 day deal which promises customers that if they provide all the relevant documents necessary to process their claim, we will action their claim within 10 working days. Further promotion of the service will take place over the next 12 months.

### **Community Cohesion**

The Council will be promoting stronger and cohesive communities in the neighbourhood coordination areas. The Council will be supporting activities at a local level which will promote positive relationships between all communities alongside undertaking activities to highlight the diverse cultures which make up the borough. The Council will be supporting principles of the Strategy for Community Cohesion in Northamptonshire and will work within Neighbourhood Coordination areas to foster improved community cohesion.



# Key Performance Information

Ref No.	Description	Year end 2008/09	2009/10 Target	Latest data 2009/10+	Top Quartile*	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target^
<b>Sustainable Communities</b>								
<b>NI 154</b>	Net additional homes provided	426	642	<b>Annual</b>		642	774	TBC
<b>NI 155</b>	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	243	150	<b>160</b>		150	150	150
<b>NI 157a</b>	Processing of major planning applications	72.73%	75%	<b>76%</b>	88.90%	80%	80%	TBC
<b>NI 157b</b>	Processing of minor planning applications	89.92%	90%	<b>92.37%</b>	86.50%	90%	90%	TBC
<b>NI 157c</b>	Processing of other planning applications	95.75%	94%	<b>94.85%</b>	93.50%	94%	94%	TBC
<b>NI 159</b>	Supply of ready to develop housing sites	102%	100%	<b>Annual</b>		110%	110%	TBC
<b>NI 170</b>	Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years	0.17%	0.15%	<b>Annual</b>		<0.1%	<0.1%	TBC
<b>Customer Services</b>								
<b>NI 14</b>	% of customer contacts that are assessed as avoidable	21%	20%	<b>16.76%</b>	12.9%	19%	18%	TBC
<b>NI 182</b>	% of businesses satisfied with local authority regulation services	78%	TBC	<b>79%</b>		TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>NI 184</b>	% of food establishments in the area broadly compliant with food hygiene law	93%	93%	<b>93.27%</b>		94%	95%	TBC

Ref No.	Description	Year end 2008/09	2009/10 Target	Latest data 2009/10+	Top Quartile*	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target^
<b>Customer Services</b>								
<b>NI 179</b>	Value for money – total net value of on-going cash-releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the 2008-09 financial year	£649,000	£460,000	<b>Annual</b>		TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>NI 156</b>	Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation	26	25	<b>12</b>		15	12	10
<b>NI 158</b>	% non decent council homes	0.7%	0%	<b>Annual</b>		0%	0%	0%
<b>NI 160</b>	% of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by KBC	80%	N/A	<b>N/A</b>		81%	N/A	82%
<b>NI 187i</b>	% of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a <u>low</u> energy efficiency rating	3%	3%	<b>6%</b>	6.6%	5%	4%	3%
<b>NI 187ii</b>	% of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a <u>high</u> energy efficiency rating	41%	41%	<b>42%</b>	35.2%	43%	44%	45%
<b>LPI 66a</b>	% of rent collected	98.03%	98.4%	<b>97.61%</b>	98.63%	98.5%	98.6%	98.7%
<b>LPI 204</b>	% of appeals against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications	21.4%	25%	<b>16.7%</b>	26.7%	25%	25%	TBC
<b>LPI 212</b>	Average time to re-let local authority housing	41 days	30 days	<b>36 days</b>	25 days	25 days	25 days	25 days
<b>LPI 46</b>	% of urgent repairs completed within KBC time limits	87.78%	98%	<b>97.07%</b>		98%	98%	98%

Ref No.	Description	Year end 2008/09	2009/10 Target	Latest data 2009/10+	Top Quartile*	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target^
<b>Customer Services</b>								
<b>LPI 12</b>	Days sick per member of staff	7.61 days	8 days	<b>7.27 days</b>	8.33 days	8 days	8 days	TBC
<b>LPI 2a</b>	Equality Standard for Local Government Level	Level 2	Achieving	<b>Achieving</b>		Achieving	Excellent	TBC
<b>NI 180</b>	Number of changes in circumstances that affect Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit entitlements within the year	N/A	85	<b>219.7</b>		85	87	88
<b>NI 181</b>	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	14.6 days	10.3 days	<b>6.9 days</b>		8.9 days	8.5 days	8 days
<b>LPI 9</b>	% of Council Tax collected	97.81%	97%	<b>97.42%</b>	98.5%	97.5%	98%	98%
<b>LPI 10</b>	% NNDR collected	98.94%	97.5%	<b>97.98%</b>	99.36%	98%	98.5%	98.5%
<b>LPI 78a</b>	Average time taken for new claims	26.9 days	20 days	<b>18.9 days</b>	21.2 days	18 days	16 days	14 days
<b>LPI 78b</b>	Average time taken for change in circumstances	10.6 days	7.25 days	<b>5.2 days</b>	7 days	6 days	5 days	5 days
<b>LPI 79a</b>	% of cases processed correctly	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>	99.6%	99.5%	99.5%	99.5%



Ref No.	Description	Year end 2008/09	2009/10 Target	Year end 2009/10+	Top Quartile*	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target^
<b>Environment</b>								
<b>NI 185</b>	% year on year CO <sub>2</sub> reduction from Local Authority operations	Baseline	N/A	<b>Annual</b>		TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>NI 186</b>	Per capita reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> emissions in the LA area	Baseline	N/A	<b>Annual</b>		TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>NI 188</b>	Adapting to Climate Change framework	Level 1	Level 2	<b>Annual</b>	Level 1	Level 3	Level 4	TBC
<b>NI 194</b>	Level of air quality – reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations	Baseline	N/A	<b>Annual</b>		TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>NI 191</b>	Residual household waste per household	494.17kg	550kg	<b>417.34kg</b>	512kg	525kg	525kg	525kg
<b>NI 192</b>	% of household waste recycled and composted	46.83%	48.5%	<b>45.44%</b>	43.18%	47%	47%	47%
<b>NI 195a</b>	% of land & highways that have below acceptable levels of litter	2%	5%	<b>11%</b>	3%	11%	9%	7%
<b>NI 195b</b>	% of land & highways that have below acceptable levels of detritus	5%	5%	<b>8%</b>	6%	8%	7%	6%
<b>NI 195c</b>	% of land & highways that have below acceptable levels of graffiti	6%	5%	<b>3%</b>	1%	4%	3%	2%
<b>NI 195d</b>	% of land & highways that have below acceptable levels of fly posting	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>NI 196</b>	Effectiveness of enforcement action taken against fly tipping	Grade 2	Grade 2	<b>Grade 1</b>	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2	TBC

Ref No.	Description	Year end 2008/09	2009/10 Target	Latest data 2009/10+	Top Quartile*	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target^
<b>Community &amp; Rural Issues</b>								
<b>NI 35</b>	Assessment of building resilience to violent extremism	Level 1	N/A	<b>Annual</b>		Level 2	TBC	TBC
<b>NI 17</b>	% of people who perceive ASB to be a very or fairly big problem in their local area	16.3%	N/A	<b>11%</b>		19.5%	TBC	TBC
<b>LPI 42</b>	The average time taken to remove fly-tips	0.34 days	1 day	<b>0.44 days</b>		1 day	1 day	TBC
<b>LPI 80</b>	Average length of time in working days that it takes to remove abandoned cars	0.1 days	2 days	<b>0.2 days</b>		TBC	TBC	TBC

+ Please note due to the lead times of committee deadlines year end data was not available, so the latest in year data has been provided.

\* Top quartile information is based on 2007/2008 data for local indicators (LPI) and where available 2008/2009 data for national indicators (NI).

^ Future targets are signed off as part of the year end audit process and will be confirmed during April 2010.

 The indicators highlighted in blue are included in the 30 Local Area Agreement priority targets that we are delivering on and are reported to the Local Strategic Partnership Board.

 The indicators highlighted in green represent additional indicators that are reported to the Local Strategic Partnership Board.

# Key Budget Information

## Financial Overview

Each year the Council is required to produce a Statement of Accounts showing its financial position and income and expenditure for the year. The format and content of the accounts is largely set by Financial Reporting Standards and Accounting Code of Practice, resulting in a complex technical document which can be difficult for the non-financial reader to understand. These summary accounts are a simplified version of the accounts to provide more meaningful and useful information to non-technical users.

## General Fund

With regard to the day to day expenditure in providing services to our customers, the Council budgeted for a deficit of £65,000 to occur in the year. At the year-end it was slightly higher at £125,000. The main variances resulted from reduced income for Planning Fees, Building Control Fees and car parking income; this was offset by additional income from investments and licences.

## Housing Revenue Account

This is a separate account that we need to maintain to record the on-going management and maintenance costs of our housing stock. We experienced a higher level of spend during the year than we had anticipated, namely £31,000, mainly caused by increased general management expenditure.

## Capital Programme

The Council spent nearly £10.9m on capital projects during the financial year. The main area of expenditure was on the acquisition of commercial property within the town centre to assist in our regeneration plans, together with improving and enhancing existing Council assets.

## Financial Position

The Council's General Fund balance stood at £1.361m at the end of 2008/09. Given we have been able to make significant contributions to our reserves, together with maintaining a healthy working balance, the Council's financial standing continues to remain strong. This will assist the authority in ensuring it protects itself from the impact of any future financial uncertainties.





# The Cost of Council Services

The table below shows how much the Council spent on its services during 2008/09 compared to 2007/08

<b>Service</b>	<b>Net Exp 2007/08 £'000</b>	<b>Net Exp 2008/09 £'000</b>
Central Services to the Public	1,878	1,991
Cultural, Environmental and Planning Services	7,683	12,964
Highways, Roads and Transport	661	1,500
Housing Services	7,026	39,165
Corporate & Democratic Core/Non-Distributed Costs	2,632	2,165
<b><i>Net Cost of Services</i></b>	<b>19,880</b>	<b>57,785</b>
Surplus on Trading Undertakings	(402)	(557)
Interest and Investment Income	(434)	(230)
Other adjustments (pension costs, parish precepts, pooled housing receipts)	2,691	1,652
<b><i>Net Operating Expenditure (met by local taxes and Government grants)</i></b>	<b>21,735</b>	<b>58,650</b>
Revenue Support Grant	(974)	(855)
Non-Domestic Rates Redistribution	(5,805)	(6,145)
Demand on Collection Fund	(5,333)	(5,800)
Transfer Surplus from Collection Fund	(128)	(157)
<b><i>Deficit/(Surplus) for the year</i></b>	<b>9,495</b>	<b>45,693</b>
Net amount credited to General Fund as per statute	(9,365)	(45,568)
<b><i>Decrease/(Increase) in General Fund Balance for the year</i></b>	<b>130</b>	<b>125</b>
General Fund Balance brought forward	(1,616)	(1,486)
<b><i>General Fund Balance carried forward</i></b>	<b>(1,486)</b>	<b>(1,361)</b>

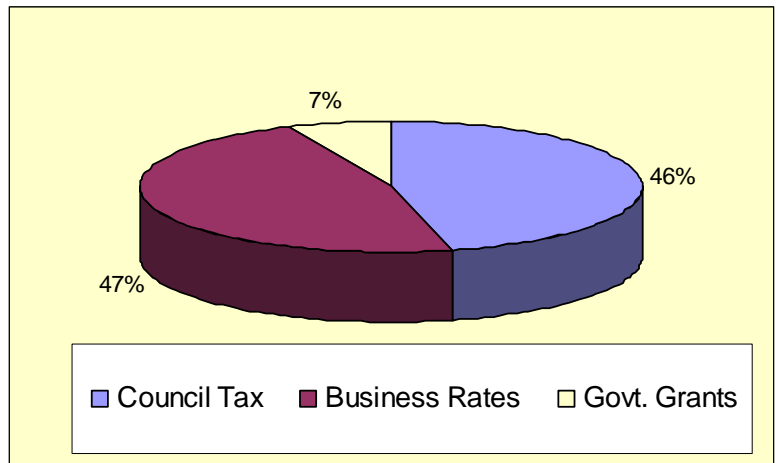
# The Funding of General Fund Council Services

## How did we pay for the services we provide?

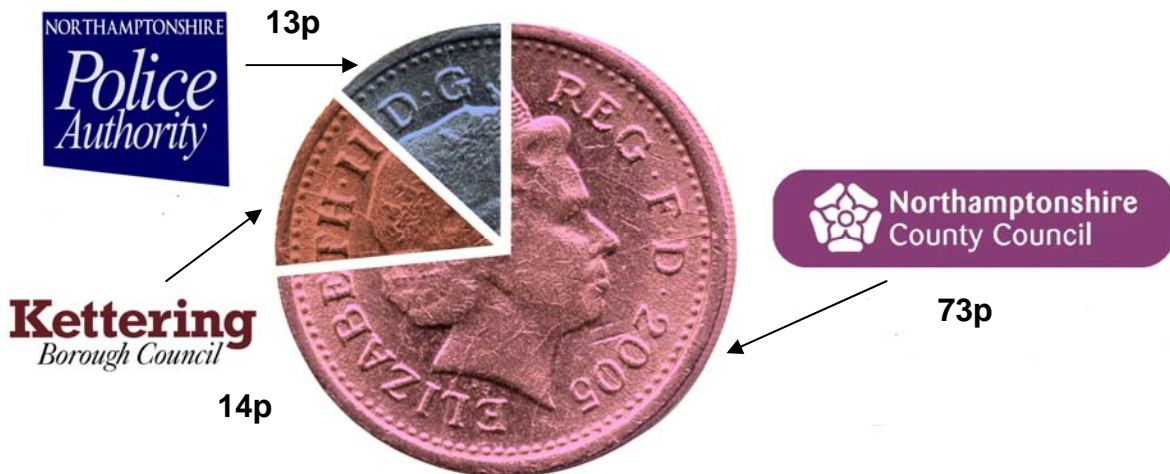
The Council predominately receives its day to day funding from three sources, namely

- Council Tax
- Government Grants and
- Business Rates

An ever increasing element is that collected from local businesses. Kettering Borough Council has strived to argue the case for businesses to locate to the borough bringing jobs, economic regeneration and increased revenue.



However, of the £31.1m collected last year from local businesses for rates, only £6.1m was retained by the Council. The rest was handed over to the Government to be re-distributed.

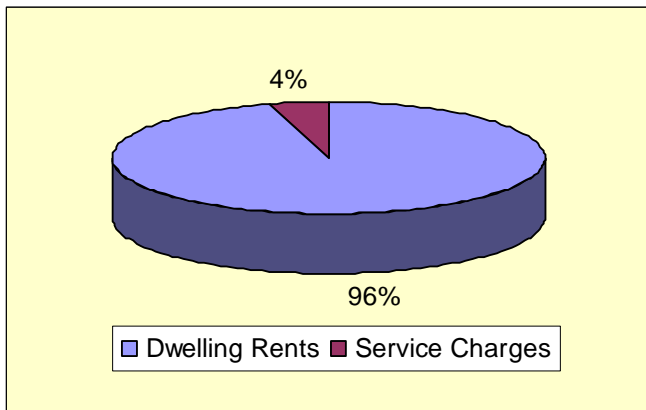


During 2008/09 for every £1 collected from Council Tax (Band B property), Kettering Borough Council was only entitled to receive 14p as a contribution towards providing its services.

The rest, 86p, went to both the Northamptonshire Police Authority (13p) and Northamptonshire County Council (73p). Therefore, our share of the total Council Tax burden remains relatively small.

# The Funding of the Housing Revenue Account

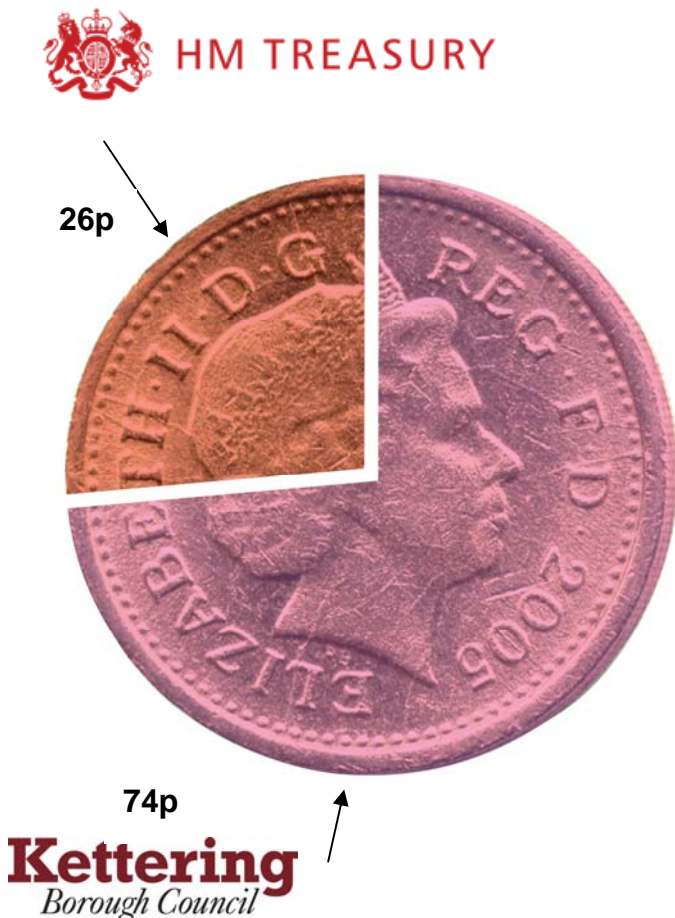
## How did we pay for the services we provide?



The Council in carrying out its functions as an affordable housing landlord must account for this separately within what is known as the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The rents we can charge are determined by the government and the income we subsequently receive from our tenants as a result, is not wholly retained by the Council to spend on maintaining and managing Kettering Borough Council's housing stock.

Through the government's "subsidy" mechanism Council tenants paid back to the government in excess of £2.9m (26%) of the rent due for the year. So for every £1 raised in rental income, 26p is going back to the Government as expressed in the diagram below.

The Council managed and maintained 3,821 properties as at 31 March 2009 of which 1,773 were houses and the rest were flats/bungalows. The total value of these assets were £152m at the 31 March 2009.

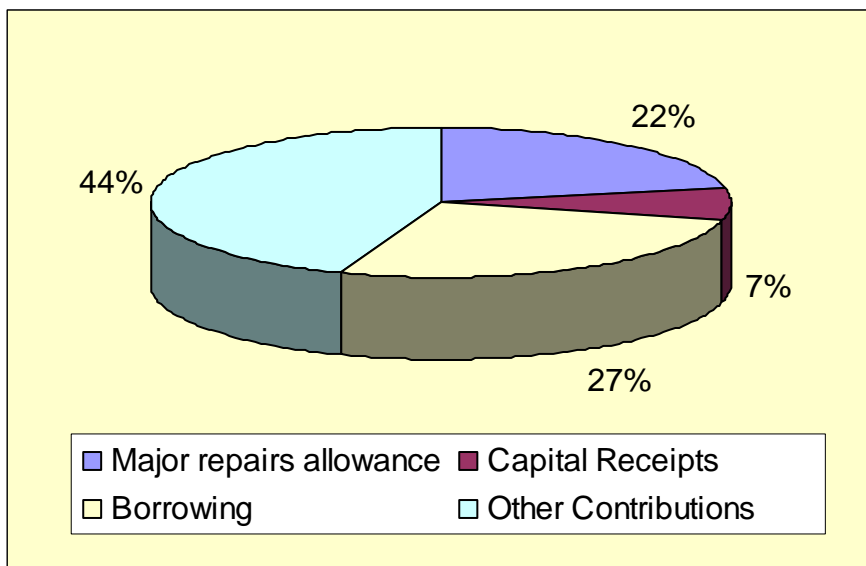


Housing Revenue Account	2008/09 £'000
<b>Income</b>	
Rents	11,503
Services & Facilities	461
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>11,964</b>
Repairs & Maintenance	3,287
Supervision & Mngmt	2,854
Depreciation & Impairment	40,477
Bad Debt Provision	152
Interest & Amortisation	489
HRA Subsidy Payable	2,980
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>50,239</b>
<b>Deficit for the year</b>	<b>38,275</b>
Other Statutory adjustments	(38,081)
<b>Decrease/(Increase) in balance for the year</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Balance c/fwd</b>	<b>(105)</b>

# The Council's Capital Programme

The Council in addition to the day-to-day income and expenditure it receives and spends during the financial year also delivers a Capital Programme.

This relates to works predominately to acquire, create, purchase or enhance the value (in life expectancy or financial worth) of Council assets in the pursuance of delivering the Council's strategic aims and objectives.

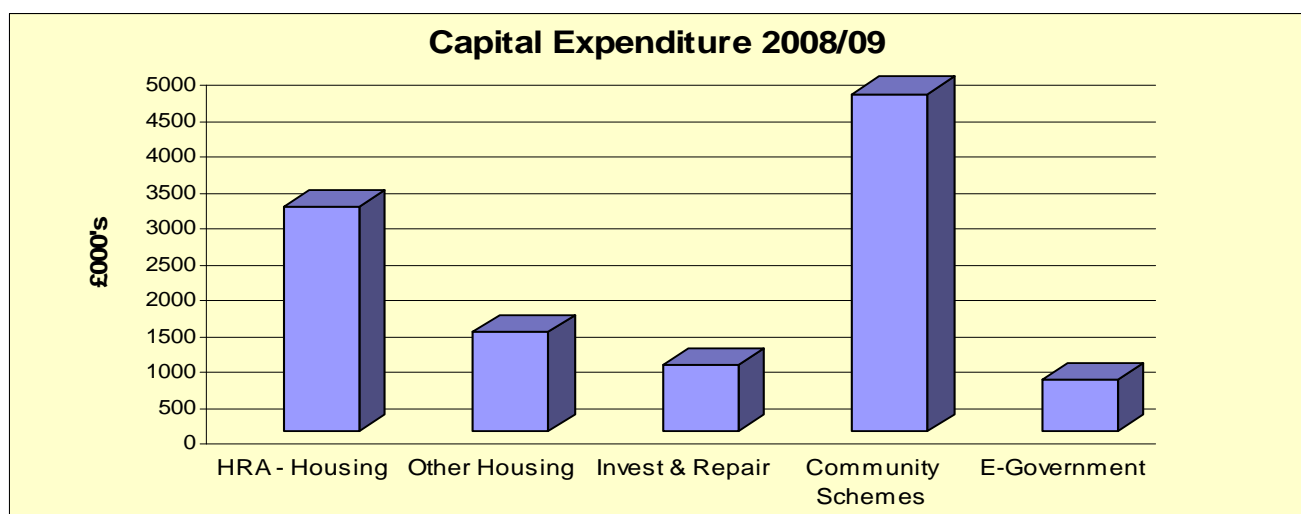


Capital expenditure therefore tends to be project based, relate to one off schemes, be significant in financial terms and could span several years.

The Council's capital programme is separately financed as well. The primary sources being capital receipts (generated from the disposal of current assets e.g. Right to Buy house sales), government grants for specific projects, developers contributions and borrowing.

## How did we fund our 2008/09 Capital Programme?

The above graph highlights the main areas of capital spend for the year. Improvements to our HRA housing stock included replacement windows, refurbished bathrooms and kitchens as well as replacement doors. Also support to the private housing sector via Disabled Facilities Grants and other social housing grants were undertaken. The Community Schemes spend mainly related to Chesham House improvements and our contribution to the new Theatre. Whilst there was £5.06m spent on the Kettering Town Centre Masterplan acquiring properties as part of the overall regeneration strategy. Expenditure within E-Government centred around our rolling programme of improvements to infrastructure and remote working as well as our corporate GIS scheme and Document Management System.





# Council Cash Flow and Balances

The Council handles significant amounts of cash during the financial year and holds resources in a variety of balances, accounts and reserves at the year-end.

<b>Cash Flow Statement</b>	<b>2007/08 £'000</b>	<b>2008/09 £'000</b>
Cash outflow – day to day activities	113,799	123,180
Cash received – day to day activities	(113,378)	(127,315)
Net Interest earned	(469)	(235)
Cash outflow – major projects	11,880	11,068
Cash received – disposal of assets	(5,005)	(10,008)
Short-term investments/Loans	(8,159)	3,003
<b>(Increase)/Decrease in cash for the year</b>	<b>(1,332)</b>	<b>(302)</b>

The Council's cash balances at year-end were;

<b>Bank and Cash Holding at Year End</b>	<b>2007/08 £'000</b>	<b>2008/09 £'000</b>
Cash/(Cash Overdrawn) at 1 April	(501)	831
Cash received during the year	127,011	140,058
Cash paid during the year	(125,679)	(139,756)
Cash/(Cash Overdrawn) at 31 March	831	1,133

# What We Are Worth

At the end of each financial year, we draw up a balance sheet that represents how much Kettering BC's land and buildings are worth (i.e. the value of our assets), what Kettering BC is owed (this includes amounts from taxpayers, housing tenants and central government) and what we owe (for goods and services received but payment has still not yet been made), together with how much cash we have.

<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>2007/08 £'000</b>	<b>2008/09 £'000</b>
Land and Property	233,582	193,066
Cash Investments and cash at bank	837	1,142
Current assets - money owed "to" Kettering Borough Council	11,488	6,657
Current liabilities - money owed "by" Kettering Borough Council	(12,635)	(10,941)
Long term assets and liabilities	(38,444)	(40,116)
<b>Total Assets less Liabilities</b>	<b>194,828</b>	<b>149,808</b>
Earmarked Reserves	3,934	4,156
General Fund Balance	1,486	1,361
Pension Reserve	(26,639)	(25,135)
Collection Fund Balance	302	163
HRA Balance	299	105
Deferred Credits-Mortgages	46	32
Capital and Other Accounting Reserves	215,400	169,126
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>194,828</b>	<b>149,808</b>

# **Access to Services & Equalities Summary**

# Access to Services & Equalities Summary

## Access to Services

Following feedback from last years 'Direction of Travel' assessment by the Audit Commission, the Council has focused on developing its approach to access to services across the Council. Progress includes:

The Council completed an internal assessment against the Audit Commission 'Access to Services' standard. This helped identify areas to focus on.

Kettering has achieved the Customer Service Excellence award for a third consecutive year. A large part of this award focuses on staff professionalism and attitude, demonstrated through our recruitment, training and development of staff.

Kettering has been the lead authority on the CLG Trailblazer programme 'Getting it Right and Righting the Wrongs'. The programme included a Health check visit by senior managers from Peer authorities at Solihull and Lewisham as well as a representative from Tesco. The very positive feedback included comments such as 'that Customer Service was hardwired into the DNA of the organisation'.

The programme has enabled us to fully evaluate the effectiveness of our service delivery at a customer level and score our services from a Customer perspective. This has led to a council wide service improvement programme which has resulted in measurable Customer benefits. In addition we have worked with our partners in the Police, County and voluntary sectors to develop far better working relationships, shared service standards and service promises enabling a seamless Customer experience.

The Council has also targeted services such as Planning, Environmental Health and the Benefits service which have a high degree of interaction. The number of unavoidable contacts have been reduced and improvements to the ease of accessing services have been implemented, such as the Councils Self Serve facility.

## Equalities Summary

Kettering Borough Council has a commitment to maximise the equality of opportunity and improve access to services.

The Equality Standard for Local Government has provided a framework to benchmark the Council's performance in relation to equality and diversity and in 2008 the Council achieved Level 2 of the Standard.

The Standard has been revised and now the benchmark for performance on equality and diversity is set out in the Equality Framework for Local Government.

A baseline assessment was conducted by an external specialist, which has identified areas to focus on in order to reach the next level of the Framework - Achieving. This will guide the development of an action plan to be implemented over the forthcoming year to help the Council progress further with equal opportunity and improving access to services.

Kettering Borough Council was re-accredited with the "Positive about Disabled People" award, in recognition of the Council's commitment to employing disabled people and thereby enhancing its reputation as an employer.

The Council signed the Skills Pledge and undertook activities to raise awareness of basic skills training and assess skills levels within the Council.



Facilities for young people to learn and improve their employment opportunities are offered by Kettering Borough Training. It provides apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships, helping young people to fulfil their potential by increasing their skills and employability. Ofsted found the service to be satisfactory and also reported that, overall, equality and diversity was effectively promoted within Kettering Borough Training.

# Consultation and Engagement Summary

## Consultations undertaken during 2009/2010

Consultation	Activity undertaken during 2009/2010
Sustainable Community Strategy	Local Strategic Partnership Annual Stakeholder event. The first Annual event took place on 2 October 2009 and brought together key partners and stakeholders to review the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) to ensure that it remains relevant and focused on the needs of residents and reflects Partners' priorities.
Specification for a service for voluntary and community sector support	Consultation was carried out with Northamptonshire County Council and Corby Borough Council to agree a new joint three year specification and procurement and monitoring process with devolved funding from the County Council.
Joint Community Cohesion and Equalities specification	This Service Level Agreement (SLA) was consulted on for an 8 week period to ensure that all aspects of Community Cohesion and Equalities were considered. Comments received help shape the Specification which is now being delivered.
Safer Community Teams	The Community Forums meet quarterly to discuss the community's priorities for interventions by the Police together with other partners. These then influence the priorities of the safer Community Teams.
Buckleuch Academy	A community consultation plan was developed and delivered by the Borough Council with the objective to consult on two options for the rebuilding of the Buckleuch Academy. This covered an extensive area around the boundaries of the school and Weekley Glebe Playing Fields. The consultation included a mail out to approximately 640 local residents and existing users of Weekley Glebe Playing Fields. The mail out included an invitation to 'drop in' sessions to consider the two options and to vote for the one that was preferred. In addition, Building Communities delivered a door-knocking exercise targeting residents on the boundaries and closer to the proposed rebuild. Media releases were also issued to raise awareness. 138 questionnaires were completed. Responders were asked to view two plans depicting the base option and an extended option. The extended option attracted the highest percentage of votes at 65.95% (91) whereas the base option attracted 25.08% (36) votes. 5.07% (7) stated they would be happy with either option. This information will now be used to inform appropriate planning applications.
Customer Suggestions for events within the borough	Customers are encouraged to let us know what they think about the events we put on and to give us ideas for future programmes of events. There has been a particular focus in 2009 about events on the Market Place. We have used this to rebook popular acts for Kettering by the Sea 2010.
Building Communities	A doorstep approach to customer access for the most vulnerable people in the community, delivered by Groundwork Trust as part of the local Healthy Living Centre – Keephealthy@Kettering, of which

	<p>Kettering borough Council are the lead and accountable body. The volunteers on the doorstep are seconded officers from Kettering Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire NHS and other partners. In 2008/9 the Building Communities project made 2263 household visits in the most deprived areas of the Kettering Borough. Of this number, 736 households responded with 1674 referrals to partner agencies.</p>
Playbuilder – Spring Rise Park	<p>Year 2 Playbuilder granted £49,000 to Spring Rise Park in Kettering. Consultation highlights included an event at the park followed by a ‘Play Tour’ – a group of 8-13 year old children were taken to three other play areas in other towns to decide what they wanted. The project was then designed in accordance with the consultation outcomes. Three items were installed by contractors with the remainder of the landscaping and planting delivered ‘in house’.</p>
Changing Spaces Award – Mill Road Park	<p>The ‘Picnic in the Park’ event was used to consult with children and local residents to transform the park in line with an agreed vision. This consultation focused on the equipped play area and included the relocation of the play area to another area within the park, the removal of an aerial runway and the provision of a dog exercise area. The outcomes of this consultation informed the tender specification. Four different visual designs were then voted on by St Mary’s School and the community by way of drop in sessions. Raising awareness of the drop in sessions was by way of a mail out to all residents bordering the park and wider. The preferred design was then considered by St Mary’s School and William Knibb Community forum alongside the contractor to allow a little tweaking. The project will be delivered early April 2010.</p>
Keephealthy@Kettering - Healthy Lifestyles	<p>Periodically, those participants at ‘Healthy Lifestyles’ physical activity sessions/courses, as part of Keephealthy@Kettering the local healthy living centre, are asked to evaluate the session and its contribution to encourage a more active lifestyle. In 2009 over 90% of participants responded that they had improved their health as a direct response to one or more of these sessions/courses.</p>
Sports Facilities Strategy	<p>Individuals, clubs, operators, National Governing Bodies of Sport, Schools and Sport England were consulted on the draft Sports Facilities Strategy prior to its adoption.</p>
Customer Services Consultation	<p>This year the Council have attended pre organised events such as Kettering Carnival, Sackville Street Fun Day and KRISP Multicultural Day. This has enabled staff to interact with many sectors of the community who we may not necessarily come into contact with. Views of people attending these events have been sought with regard to the services we provide and what they expect of us. Relationships are also being established with groups in the community, for example DELOS Community, which exists for the well being of people with learning difficulties. This is with a view to attending group meetings to discuss access needs for different groups of vulnerable people.</p> <p>The Council have also started the Mystery Shopper Protocol with neighbouring local authorities to have</p>

	<p>reliable and robust information from practitioners; these results are published on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>The Council undertakes exit surveys of customers using the Customer Service Centre and this will be extended to customers using the telephone to contact us.</p> <p>Complaints are monitored daily with the aid of a complaints record log. This log has shown a significant downturn towards the end of the year specifically on the section covering lack of response to customers.</p> <p>Earlier in the year telephone and postal surveys were carried out. The resulting analysis from these surveys is being used to assist us in identifying areas where we can make service improvements, in particular where we can enhance the customer experience.</p>
Task and Finish Group – Community Engagement on Planning Applications	Development Services completed an Action Plan based on the outcomes of the task and finish group findings and feedback relating to the service offered by the team. The Action Plan details comments relating to each area of concern or action that needs to be taken. Significant progress has been made to date and almost all of the identified action points have already been implemented or delivered. We will continue to deliver the action points in the Action Plan and ensure customer focus throughout.
Residents Parking	Door to door surveys were undertaken with properties in the existing and proposed controlled parking zones to ascertain whether or not residents actually wanted controlled parking. The Council committed to only provide controlled parking zones where 60% of residents were in favour of the scheme. The favourable schemes are now being implemented.
Business Satisfaction	The Council undertaken customer satisfaction surveys with business who have had interactions with the Council's regulatory services. For example, after a food premises received an Environmental Health inspection it then receives a questionnaire in order to provide feedback on the service provided. is carried out in accordance with government guidance.
Public Satisfaction	Developed in response to the requirements of NI182 (Business Satisfaction) Environmental Health Services have also implemented a similar consultation with residents who have had interaction with the Council's regulatory services.
Tenants Forum	Council tenants are consulted formally by Kettering Borough Council through the Tenants Forum. The Forum, which meets every month, comprises of councillors and representatives from tenants associations across the Borough. During the past year, the Tenants Forum has been consulted on a variety of housing-related topics including the housing repairs project, service charges and the Government's review of council housing finance.

Tenants Monitoring Group	This group meets on a monthly basis to review the Council's performance as a landlord. Topics that are examined include our performance on voids, rent arrears and repairs. During 2010, the remit of the tenants Monitoring Group is being reviewed in order to strengthen its monitoring and scrutiny role, and clarify its links with the Tenants Forum. This will assist tenants in monitoring the Council's performance in relation to the TSA standards and in working with us to develop our local service offers.
Silver Service Forum	Tenant representatives from our sheltered housing schemes meet regularly to review the service and to discuss their needs and aspirations.
Housing Repairs Project	<p>We have consulted residents extensively to gauge their views about the effectiveness of the existing repairs service and to ascertain their needs and wishes about developing the service further. During autumn 2009, we sent a questionnaire survey to tenants and held a road show and a number of 'speed-dating' events. A total of 1025 tenants gave us their views.</p> <p>The key findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 86% of tenants are happy with the current service overall.</li> <li>• 60% of tenants prefer to phone Customer Services with their repair requests, with personal visits next at 21%.</li> <li>• 71% of tenants said reporting a repair was easy.</li> <li>• 88% of tenants were satisfied with our Out of Hours service.</li> </ul> <p>A number of areas for improvement were highlighted by tenants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 69% of tenants did not know what our repair timescales were, or where to find that information.</li> <li>• 55% of tenants said they were not given an appointment when reporting a repair.</li> <li>• 55% of tenants did not receive a receipt or tenant survey after reporting a repair.</li> </ul> <p>This information is being used to help design a new appointments service for repairs.</p>
Tenant Profiling	During 2009, we undertook a tenant profiling exercise in order to understand our tenants better and to ensure that future service improvements were built around their needs and requirements. A detailed questionnaire was sent to all 3,821 tenants and a response rate of 48% was achieved by the end of January 2010.
Income and Debt	A considerable amount of work with regards to community consultation has been undertaken and continues to grow and expand. The benefit take up officer employed within the Income and Debt team works with internal and external partners throughout the community gaining confidence from ethnic minorities and hard to reach groups. A customer forum has also been introduced to review leaflets and correspondence within the service, forum members consist of internal and external customers along with members of voluntary organisations.



## Consultations to be undertaken in 2010 / 2011

Consultation	Activity to be undertaken in 2010 / 2011
Local Strategic Partnership Annual Stakeholder event	This event will be used to review the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) by bringing together key partners and stakeholders. It will ensure that the SCS continues to reflect local needs and Partner priorities.
Sustainable Community Strategy public consultation	The current SCS runs until March 2011 and public involvement with the emerging priorities will begin later this year.
Tour Series 2010	This annual town centre cycle race is coming to Kettering for the first time in June 2010. There will be consultation with town centre businesses and funding partners to maximise the benefits for the town centre.
Joint Action Group	A partner consultation aimed to improve the structure and process for responding to Safer Community Team priorities.
Sports Facility Strategy	Partner and public consultation on the final draft of the sports facility strategy.
Community Infrastructure provision	Consultation on the policy for the provision of infrastructure such as community centres, community development workers and community funds to evidence needs for sustainable communities and the resources required.
Customer feedback on events	To shape the programming of the Events on the Market Place
Renaissance East Midlands Volunteering Flagship programme	Consultation with other flagship organisation to share best practice and maintain high standards in volunteering and learning in the museum and gallery.
Customer Services Consultation	We shall consult with residents using a variety of methods. We shall continue to undertake exit surveys with customers visiting our Service Centres and will be introducing telephone surveys for customers who contact us using this channel. We will continue our work with specific group, such as the Muslim Association and KRISP. We shall also attend specific events such as Kettering Carnival and seek new avenues of engagement for example having displays and stands in local supermarkets'
Democratic and Legal Services	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 require every local authority which operates a Leader and Cabinet Model of Executive to change its executive arrangements. These

	<p>changes must be put to public consultation. The process must be completed by December 2010.</p> <p>It is the Governments intention to increase public participation in local democracy. The Democratic Services Team will respond to any statutory requirements and, where possible, develop strategies to improve public participation in elections and Council meetings.</p>
Development Services	<p>We will continue to hold an Agent's Forum series that we will use in part to receive general feedback on our service provision and comments on specific initiatives.</p> <p>We will develop interaction with the users of the local land charge service to inform service development in this area</p> <p>We will continue to develop use of on-line consultation and develop it in response to feedback that we will collect with each series of consultation.</p>
Residents Parking Zones	<p>Further consultation will be undertaken as part of the formal introduction process for Residents Parking Zones, this consultation being phased across 2010 as each zone is brought forward. The consultation will be on the detailed design of each of the controlled parking zones, and the actual road traffic order.</p>
Dog Control Orders	<p>Consultation will take place during 2010 regarding the introduction of Dog Control Orders. These will replace the existing controls regarding dog fouling under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996, and will allow the Council to provide education and enforcement support to new development areas where existing designated spaces do not exist, and cannot now be implemented under the 1996 Act.</p>
Housing	<p>From 1 April, the Tenant Services Authority will regulate and monitor social housing landlords including Kettering Borough Council. We will have to meet new national performance standards and develop a set of local performance standards with our tenants.</p> <p>The advent of the new regulatory framework for social housing provides a valuable opportunity for us to consult tenants on a wide range of customer service issues.</p> <p>A working group, including staff from Housing, Environmental Care, Corporate Development and Customer Services has already been set up to co-ordinate our approach to the new regulatory system and to ensure that our tenants are actively involved in the process.</p>
Equalities	<p>The statutory Equality Schemes and action plans (relating to Gender, Disability and Race Equality) set out within the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme are due for review during 2010/11. This review</p>

	<p>will involve consultation with relevant community groups on what priorities the Council should be focusing on to address customer needs and facilitate equal access to services.</p>
Income and Debt	<p>Work with regards to performance will continue during 2010/11 to ensure the progress made within the Income and Debt Team is maintained and improved upon whilst taking into account the current economic climate and increased case loads.</p> <p>The work undertaken with regard to understanding the needs of our customers will also be enhanced and built upon during 2010/11 using data technology available.</p> <p>The Income and Debt team will continue to consult with our customers in variable ways, trying to understand the needs of both internal and external customers in this ever changing economic climate.</p> <p>Partnership working is already in place with the Northamptonshire Benefit Partnership and this will continue to be developed during 2010/11 whilst continually looking for new opportunities for partnership working ensuring our vision of value for money.</p> <p>2010/11 will see many changes happening within Income and Debt, some of these due to government legislative changes and some due to the continued economic down turn and the continuing movement in the needs of our customers throughout the borough.</p>