

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

DECISION SCHEDULE



Monday 16th October 2006

at 9.00 am

**in Training Room 2, Municipal Buildings,
Church Square, Hartlepool**

Councillor Jackson, Cabinet Member responsible for Performance Management will consider the following items.

1. KEY DECISIONS

1.1

2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 2.1 View point – Citizen's Panel Results – Assistant Chief Executive
- 2.2 Customer Charter – Chief Personnel Services Officer
- 2.3 Attendance Management – Chief Personnel Services Officer
- 2.4 Half Yearly Diversity Report – Chief Personnel Services Officer
- 2.5 Postal Arrangements – Chief Personnel Services Officer
- 2.6 Procurement Strategy Update – Head of Procurement and Property Services
- 2.7 Land between 1 and 5 Studley Road – Head of Procurement and Property Services

3. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

None

EXEMPT ITEMS

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

4. KEY DECISION

None

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

5. **OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

- 5.1 Home Thermal Insulation and Energy Efficiency Project – Head of Public Protection and Housing
- 5.2 Land at Lancaster Road (North) Release of Covenant – Head of Procurement and Property Services
- 5.3 Partnering Arrangements for Corporate Planned Maintenance and Minor Works – Head of Procurement and Property Services

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder
16th October 2006



Report of: Assistant Chief Executive

Subject: **VIEWPOINT – CITIZEN'S PANEL RESULTS**

SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To inform the Portfolio Holder of the results of the 19th phase of Viewpoint, Hartlepool Borough Council's Citizen's Panel that was distributed in April 2006.

2.0 SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 A report of the results achieved in the latest Viewpoint questionnaire that included The Internet & You; Preparing for Emergencies; Foster Caring; and Community Strategy.

3.0 RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

- 3.1 The Portfolio Member has responsibility for consultation issues.

4.0 TYPE OF DECISION

- 4.1 Non-key.

5.0 DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 5.1 Portfolio Holder meeting 16th October 2006

6.0 DECISION (S) REQUIRED

- 6.1 Results of the survey be noted.

Report of: Assistant Chief Executive

Subject: **19th PHASE OF VIEWPOINT – CITIZEN'S
PANEL RESULTS**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Portfolio Holder of the results from the 19th phase of Viewpoint that was distributed to panel members in April 2006.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Viewpoint, Hartlepool Borough Council's Citizen's Panel, is one of the ways that the Council consults and involves local people in the governance of Hartlepool. It is a statistically balanced panel of local people who receive questionnaires at regular intervals throughout the year, asking for their views on a variety of local issues facing the Council and Hartlepool as a whole.
- 2.2 The aim of Viewpoint is to ensure that the Council listens to the community and involves local people in the Council's decision making. There are often important issues on which the Council needs to consult with the local population and discover what the community's priorities are for the future.
- 2.3 Each phase of Viewpoint covers various topics and within this phase there were questions on:
- The Internet & You;
 - Preparing for Emergencies;
 - Foster Caring;
 - Community Strategy.
- 2.4 The results have been reported back to the relevant departments within the council and will be reported back to Viewpoint members via a regular Viewpoint newsletter. A copy of the overall report has also been placed in the members' library, in all public libraries across the Borough for public access and has been placed on the Council's website.
- 2.5 This report includes a summary of the main results and, attached as appendix A, is the full results report.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN RESULTS FROM THE LATEST PHASE OF VIEWPOINT

- 3.1 The latest survey was carried out in April 2006, using a self-completion questionnaire returned via the Royal Mail postal system. Panel members had four weeks to complete the questionnaire and return it in the post paid envelope provided. A reminder letter was sent out to those who had not returned their questionnaire after a set period of time.
- 3.2 A questionnaire was sent out to all active members of the panel, which in this instance equated to 1236 individuals. A response rate of 70.9 per cent was achieved with 864 questionnaires being returned.
- 3.3 A small number of cases (17) were excluded from the sample because they were ineligible, due to either the panel member having moved away from the area or having died. A further group indicated that they no longer wished to participate in the Viewpoint initiative, often due to ill health.

The Internet & You

- 3.4 In March 2006, the Council launched a new website. It was decided to ask Viewpoint members whether they had seen the Council's new website and where they access the Internet. Two questions asked in this section have been asked in previous Viewpoint surveys, which allows comparisons to be made with 2002 and 2004 survey results.
- 3.5 Members were asked if they have a computer with internet connection in their home, and over seven out of ten (72%) members said they do. This is an increase from just over six out of ten (61%) members in 2004, and less than half (45%) of Viewpoint members in 2002.
- 3.6 The Council was interested in finding out where people use the Internet for personal reasons, such as banking, shopping or contacting friends. This question was repeated from 2002. In 2006, Viewpoint members were most likely to say they have used the Internet for personal reasons in their home (66%). Three out of ten participants said they had used the Internet for personal reasons at work (31%) or at a friend's or neighbours (29%).
- 3.7 In 2002, 46 per cent of Viewpoint members said they had never accessed the Internet, compared with only 15 per cent in 2006.
- 3.8 Viewpoint members were told that Hartlepool Borough Council had launched their new website in March 2006, and members were asked whether or not they had seen the new website. Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents said they had seen the new website. However,

two thirds (64%) had not, and one in ten members said they did not know it existed.

- 3.9 The last question in this section asked respondents who had seen the website how would they like to use the Council website. Nearly nine out of ten members (87%) said they would like to use the Council website to get information about Council services, such as planning, recycling or Council jobs, and eight out of ten members said they would like to find information about local issues that affect them. Six out of ten members said they would like to use the Council website to send the Council comments and complaints about services and facilities they provide (58%) and to complete Council forms (58%).

Preparing for Emergencies

- 3.10 Members were given a brief explanation of how the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit provides an emergency planning service to the four local authorities in the former Cleveland area. They were also told that the role of this unit is to ensure that local authorities are prepared to respond to emergencies and to support the emergency services community.
- 3.11 In March 2006, a 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet was delivered to every home in the area by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit. This leaflet provides information about what to do in the event of a serious emergency. In order to ask Viewpoint members' thoughts on this leaflet, a copy of the leaflet was included with the survey.
- 3.12 Viewpoint members were asked if they remembered receiving this leaflet and three quarters (74%) answered positively. Of these, nine out of ten (91%) members said they remembered reading the leaflet, and a similar number (90%) said they had kept the leaflet.
- 3.13 Viewpoint members were presented with a list of statements about the 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet, and were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with these statements. Overall, Viewpoint members were more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement 'The leaflet was easy to understand and follow' (92%) and were least likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement 'The content covered everything I need to know about preparing for emergencies' (72%).
- 3.14 Participants were asked if they had heard of the Emergency Planning Unit before they read this leaflet, and two thirds (68%) of respondents answered that they had not.
- 3.15 Members were then asked if they were aware that local authorities have Emergency Planning Units and that they produce this type of information. Again, two thirds (66%) of participants said they were not.

- 3.16 Members were asked if they had ever visited the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit website. Eighty-three per cent said they had not visited this site, and fifteen per cent said they did not know the website existed.

Foster Caring

- 3.17 Viewpoint members were told that the Children's Services Department would like to know what they think about foster caring, whether they had seen any recent advertising about foster caring, and for their views on what would encourage people to become foster carers.
- 3.18 Members were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a range of nine of statements about foster care, which aimed to measure people's knowledge and awareness of fostering. For six out of the nine statements, the most frequently made answer was "Don't know". Awareness of foster care and how it is organised and arranged is not very high in Hartlepool. For example, the majority of members (71%) did not know if foster care allowances would effect benefit payments.
- 3.19 Viewpoint members were then asked if they had seen or heard any recent advertising, information or articles about foster care, and a quarter (24%) of respondents said that they had seen or heard recent advertising about foster care. When asked to describe what they had seen or heard, members were most likely to say they had seen recent advertising about foster care in local newspapers (98 respondents), or on television (55 respondents).
- 3.20 Next, members were asked where do they think they would be likely to notice adverts or information for foster care. Three quarters (75%) said in articles or features in local newspaper and magazines, and just over half of respondents (51%) said leaflets delivered through their doors or posters displayed around Hartlepool.

Community Strategy

- 3.21 This section asked for residents' views about the Hartlepool Community Strategy, to help with the 2006 Hartlepool Community Strategy review. These questions were also asked in 2001 when the Community Strategy was first being developed, and so, where appropriate, comparisons have been made.
- 3.22 Viewpoint members were told how the following vision of what the town will be like in 2020 is central to the Community Strategy: *"Hartlepool will be a prosperous, caring, confident and outward looking community in an attractive environment, realising its potential"*.

Members were asked to tell us whether they agree with this vision. In 2006, three-quarters of participants (75%) said yes, they agree with this vision. This is a reduction from 80 per cent in 2001.

- 3.23 The questionnaire laid out the seven priority aims that have been identified in order to achieve the Community Strategy Vision. These aims are: Jobs and the Economy; community Safety; Health and Care; Environment and Housing; Lifelong Learning Skills; Strengthening Communities; and Culture and Leisure. Members were invited to say which three out of the seven priorities they believed should be tackled first. The Jobs and the Economy aim came out top followed by the Community Safety aim and the Health and Care aim. These are the same top three aims that were identified in 2001.

4. THE LYONS INQUIRY

- 4.1 On 1st August 2006, forty Viewpoint Members were invited to attend a discussion group event at the Historic Quay. This event was organised on behalf of OPM Research for the Lyons Inquiry into Local Government. This event asked Viewpoint members what local government should be doing in their area and how it should be paid for.
- 4.3 The Lyons Inquiry team have promised to provide feedback, which will be given to Viewpoint members via a newsletter and will also be reported to the Portfolio Holder at a later meeting.

5. E-Consultation System

- 5.1 In June 2006, Viewpoint members were invited to take part in the latest Viewpoint survey, Viewpoint 20. This is the first Viewpoint survey where we offered members the chance to fill out their Viewpoint surveys on-line using the Councils new e-consultation system: Your Town, Your Say. In total, over 150 members have expressed an interest in filling out their surveys on-line. This is part of the development of the Councils new e-consultation system. Information on Viewpoint 20 will be reported to the Portfolio Holder at a later meeting.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder note the results.

CORPORATE STRATEGY



HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Nineteenth Viewpoint Survey Results Overall Report

Lisa Anderson

August 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 Viewpoint, Hartlepool Borough Council's Citizens' Panel, is one of the ways that the Council consults and involves local people in the governance of Hartlepool. It is a statistically balanced panel of local people who receive questionnaires at regular intervals throughout the year, asking for their views on a variety of local issues facing the Council and Hartlepool as a whole.
- 1.2 The panel was refreshed in 2005 with one third of the panel being replaced to ensure that each member only serves for a limited period of time. The refreshment was done by sending out a recruitment questionnaire to a number of Hartlepool residents who were selected at random from the electoral roll. From the returns approximately 1200 local residents, with characteristics matching the profile of the local population, were selected for Viewpoint. The panel members are kept informed of the findings of the Viewpoint project, and what the Council is doing in response, via a regular newsletter. A section of the panel is refreshed on a regular basis to ensure that each member serves for a limited time.
- 1.3 This report details the results from the latest questionnaire, which was distributed in April 2006.

Aims of Viewpoint

- 1.4 The aims of the survey are:
 - To listen to the community
 - To involve local people in the Council's decisions and in its policy planning and reviews
 - To consult the panel regularly on important local issues
 - To discover what are the community priorities for future Council activities
 - The specific areas covered in this phase of Viewpoint included:
 - The Internet and You
 - Preparing for Emergencies
 - Foster Caring
 - Community Strategy

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 Viewpoint was launched in August 1999 with a recruitment campaign under the original name of Viewpoint 1000. A random sample of 10,000 residents was selected from the electoral register and each resident was sent the self-completion recruitment questionnaire. The recruitment questionnaire was developed to capture all the necessary background information needed to obtain a representative sample of the total population.
- 2.2 Just under 2,500 people from the 10,000 sample volunteered to take part in Viewpoint 1000 and from this group, the panel of 1,000 was selected to mirror the Hartlepool community as closely as possible. A range of variables was used to produce a balanced sample including gender, age and geographical location.
- 2.3 The panel is refreshed at regular intervals and in 2005 a third of the panel was refreshed. We sent out 4,200 recruitment questionnaires to a random selection of people from the edited electoral register, from which we received an adequate number of returns. We also contacted Viewpoint members who were on the pool and asked them if they still wanted to take part. In 2003, when the BVPI survey was completed, respondents were asked if they would be interested in taking part in the Viewpoint panel and during this recruitment exercise they were invited to join the refreshed panel. We envisage repeating this recruitment process when refreshing the panel in 2006/07. This re-recruitment process helps avoid the problems of drop-out, consultation fatigue and respondents becoming local government “experts”. The panel currently stands at approximately 1200 members.
- 2.4 The setting up of this type of panel gives the authority the advantage of access to a large group of people from across the community who have agreed to be involved in consultation exercises several times a year. The disadvantage that this type of consultation brings is that, because all panel members are volunteers, there is a possibility that they may not be typical of the community as a whole. However, every effort has been made to ensure that the panel members represent the demographic make up of the area and to include all sectors of the community.
- 2.5 In practice most surveys are weighted as it is rare to achieve samples of population that are perfectly representative of a community. It was therefore decided that the data would be weighted for analysis purposes. The main potential weakness of the survey is differential response rates, because although the full panel is statistically balanced, not all Viewpoint members return the questionnaire at each phase. There is a tendency for certain groups to be less likely to respond than other e.g. young male respondents. Therefore to achieve a better representative result the data was weighted slightly by age, gender and geographical location. However when the weighted and unweighted results were compared there was very little difference in the overall results and the weighting did not come into effect until small minority groups were examined.

- 2.6 In April 2006, the latest survey was carried out using a self-completion questionnaire returned via the postal system. Panel members had four weeks to complete the questionnaire and return it in the post paid envelope provided. A reminder letter was sent out to those who had not returned the questionnaire after a set period of time.

The Sample

- 2.7 A questionnaire was sent out to all active members of the panel, which equated to 1236 individuals.

Response Rates

- 2.8 A response rate of 70.9 per cent was achieved. A small number of cases were excluded from the sample because they were ineligible, due to either the panel member having moved house or having died. A further group indicated that they no longer wished to participate in the Viewpoint initiative, often due to ill health. These exclusions resulted in a possible sample of 1219 with a total of 864 questionnaires being returned.

Table 2.1 Response Rates

	Number of Cases
Total Sample	1236
Unsuitable/Ineligible Cases	17
Total Possible Sample	1219
Completed Questionnaires	864
No Response	355
Response Rate	70.9%

The Report

- 2.9 All percentages in all tables are rounded to the nearest whole number. In some tables the total number of respondents may be less than the total number of returned questionnaires. This is because some respondents may choose not to answer a particular question. In some instances the number of responses is greater than 100 per cent due to the fact that respondents have been asked to choose multiple answers.

3. THE INTERNET AND YOU

KEY FINDINGS

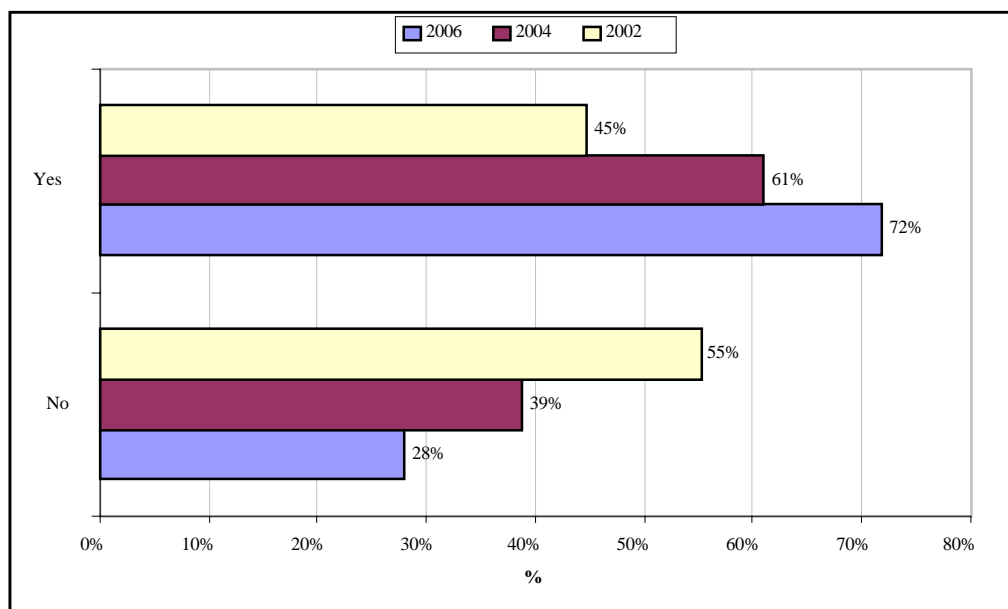
- Over seven out of ten members said they have a computer with internet connection in their home.
- Eight out of ten members were aware they could access the Internet free of charge from their local library.
- Respondents are most likely to access the Internet for personal reasons from their own homes.
- Nearly nine out of ten members said they would like to use the Council website to get information about Council services, such as planning, recycling or Council jobs, and eight out of ten members said they would like to find information about local issues that affect them.

- 3.1 In March 2006, Hartlepool Borough Council launched a new website. In line with this, it was decided to ask Viewpoint members whether they had seen the Council's new website and where they access the Internet. Two questions asked in this section have been asked in previous Viewpoint surveys, which allows comparisons to be made with 2002 and 2004 survey results.

Home Internet Connection

- 3.2 First of all, Viewpoint members were asked if they have a computer with internet connection in their home, and over seven out of ten (72%) members said they do. This is an increase from just over six out of ten (61%) members in 2004, and less than half (45%) of Viewpoint members in 2002. See Chart 3.1 for more information.
- 3.3 As you would expect, younger residents are more likely to have a computer with internet access in their home. Only three out of ten (30%) Viewpoint members aged 65 years and over said they have a computer with internet access in their home. This is compared to over nine out of ten (92%) of respondents aged between 17-24.

Chart 3.1 Do you have a computer with internet connection in your home? Compared with February 2002 & May 2004 Viewpoint Surveys. (Different question wording used in Feb 2002)



Library Internet Access

- 3.4 Viewpoint members were then asked if they were aware that they can access the internet for free from their local library, and reassuringly eight out of ten (80%) members said they were aware of this.
- 3.5 It must be noted however, that Viewpoint members have recently been told that they could access the internet free of charge from libraries. They were asked if they would like to fill out their Viewpoint surveys on-line through the Council's new e-consultation system, Your Town, Your Say. They may, therefore, be more aware of this service than the general population.

Internet Access at Different Locations

- 3.6 The Council was interested in finding out where people use the Internet for personal reasons, such as banking, shopping or contacting friends. This question was repeated from 2002. See Table 3.1 for full results.
- 3.7 In 2006, Viewpoint members were most likely to say they have used the Internet for personal reasons in their home (66%). Three out of ten participants said they had used the Internet for personal reasons at work (31%) or at a friend's or neighbours (29%).
- 3.8 In 2002, 46 per cent of Viewpoint members said they had never accessed the Internet, compared with only 15 per cent in 2006.

- 3.9 The 2006 detailed results show that men are more likely than women to use the internet for personal reasons at home (72% and 61% respectively) and at work (38% and 24% respectively).
- 3.10 The detailed results also show that Viewpoint members aged between 17-24 years are more likely to use the Internet for personal reasons at home (93%, compared to 21% of members aged 65 years and over), and at a friend's or neighbour's PC (60%, compared to 9% of members aged 65 years and over).
- 3.11 Unsurprisingly, respondents aged between 17-24 are more likely to access the Internet for personal reasons at local colleges (54%) than any other age group. Also, members aged between 25-34 are more likely to access the Internet for personal reasons at work than any other age group.

Table 3.1 Have you ever used the Internet for personal reasons, such as banking, shopping or contacting friends, at any of the following places?

	2006		2002	
	%	(No.)	%	(No.)
Home	66	(796)	(Option not in question)	
Work – not for work purposes	31	(371)	10	(65)
Friend's or neighbour's PC	29	(353)	17	(112)
Never accessed the Internet	15	(183)	46	(307)
Libraries	15	(182)	8	(51)
Local colleges	12	(157)	7	(47)
Internet café	7	(89)	2	(12)
None of the above	4	(52)	(Option not in question)	
Community Centres	3	(37)	1	(8)
Other	1	(60)	1	(3)
No answer	5	(13)	22	(147)
(N=1200)			(N=665)	

New Council Website

- 3.12 Viewpoint members were told that Hartlepool Borough Council had launched their new website in March 2006, and members were asked whether or not they had seen the new website.

3.13 Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents said they had seen the new website. However, two thirds (64%) had not, and one in ten members said they did not know it existed.

- Yes - 23 per cent (271 respondents)
- No - 64 per cent (772 respondents)
- Don't know - Less than 1 per cent (5 respondents)
- Did not know it existed - 10 per cent (124 respondents)
- No answer - 2 per cent (28 respondents)

3.14 Of the 271 members who had seen the Council's new website, over two-thirds (68%) found it easy or very easy to use. Only seven per cent found it hard or very hard, and a quarter (25%) found it neither easy nor hard to use.

- Very easy - 17 per cent (46 respondents)
- Easy - 50 per cent (134 respondents)
- Neither easy nor hard - 25 per cent (66 respondents)
- Hard - 5 per cent (14 respondents)
- Very hard - 2 per cent (5 respondents)

3.15 The detailed results show that respondents from AB socio-economic group were more likely to find the website easy or very easy to use (74%) than respondents from DE socio-economic groups (55%).

3.16 The 271 members who had seen the Council's new website were asked how they found the information they were looking for.

3.17 Four out of ten (42%) participants said they found what they were looking for by finding their own way around the site. A similar number (38%) said they used the A-Z of Council Services search, and a third (33%) used the general search facility. See Table 3.2 for more information.

**Table 3.2 How did you find the information you were looking for?
(Those who have seen the Council's new website)**

	%	(No.)
I found my own way through the website	42	(113)
Used the A-Z of Council Services search	38	(103)
Used the general search facility	33	(89)
I followed a link to the information I was after	22	(59)
Wasn't looking for anything in particular	15	(40)
I just knew where to go	7	(18)
Could not find the information I was looking for	6	(17)
Other	1	(3)
Don't know	1	(3)
(N=271)		

- 3.18 Seventeen individuals said they could not find the information they were looking for on the Council's website. These members were asked to describe what information they were looking for but could not find. In total, 15 suggestions were made. See Table 3.3 for full results

Table 3.3 If you could not find the information you were looking for, could you please describe what it was you were looking for in the box below.

	Number of Comments
Council Tax details/payment info	3
Where to pay parking ticket	2
Sports facilities	2
Recycling info	2
Job vacancies	1
Contact numbers	1
Current/forthcoming events	1
Easter Sunday events at Ward Jackson Park	1
Free bus travel details	1
Link to PCT website	1
(N=15)	

How Members would like to use Council Website

- 3.19 The last question in this section asked respondents who had seen the website how would they like to use the Council website. Nearly nine out of ten members (87%) said they would like to use the Council website to get information about Council services, such as planning, recycling or Council jobs, and eight out of ten members said they would like to find information about local issues that affect them. Six out of ten members said they would like to use the Council website to send the Council comments and complaints about services and facilities they provide (58%) and to complete Council forms (58%). See Table 3.4 for full results.

Table 3.4 How would you like to use the Council website? (Those who have seen the Council's new website)

	%	(No.)
Get information about Council services (e.g., planning, recycling, Council jobs)	87	(235)
To find information about local issues that affect you	78	(211)
Send Council comments and complaints about services and facilities they provide	58	(157)
Complete Council forms (e.g., to arrange to get your bulky waste collected)	40	(156)
Find information about councillors	35	(108)
Get information on Council expenditure and Council Tax	23	(95)
Find out about the Council's Customer Charter (customer service standards)	23	(62)
Other	3	(9)
Don't know	1	(4)
(N=271)		

- 3.20 The detailed results show that men are more likely than women to want to use the Council's website to send the Council comments and complaints about services and facilities they provide (64% and 51% respectively); to find out about Councillors (47% and 32% respectively); and to get information on Council expenditure and Council Tax (41% and 28% respectively).
- 3.21 Also, Viewpoint members with children under the age of 18 living in the household were more likely to want to get information about Council services (91%) than respondents without children under the age of eighteen living in the household (82%). They were also more likely to want to complete Council forms on the Council website (65% and 51% respectively).

4. PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

KEY FINDINGS

- Three quarters of respondents remembered receiving the 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet which was delivered to every home in the area in March 2006.
- Of these members, nine out of ten members remember reading the 'Prepare for Emergencies leaflet' and a similar number said they had kept the leaflet.
- When asked for their thoughts about the leaflet, Viewpoint members were more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement 'The leaflet was easy to understand and follow' and were least likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement 'The content covered everything I need to know about preparing for emergencies'
- Only a third of members had heard of the Emergency Planning Unit prior to receiving the leaflet.

- 4.1 Viewpoint members were given a brief explanation of how the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit provides an emergency planning service to the four local authorities in the former Cleveland area. They were also told that the role of this unit is to ensure local authorities are prepared to respond to emergencies and to support the emergency services community.

Prepare for Emergencies Leaflet

- 4.2 In March 2006, a 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet was delivered to every home in the area by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit. This leaflet provides information about what to do in the event of a serious emergency. In order to ask Viewpoint members thoughts on this leaflet, a copy of the leaflet was included with the Viewpoint survey.
- 4.3 First of all, Viewpoint members were asked if they remembered receiving the 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet in the post at the end of March 2006. The vast majority of members (74%) said they do remember receiving the leaflet. However, a quarter of respondents (26%) said they do not remember receiving this leaflet.
- 4.4 The 861 respondents who remembered receiving the 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet were then asked if they remembered reading it. Of these, nine out of ten (91%) members said they remembered reading the leaflet, and the remaining nine per cent did not remember reading it.

- 4.5 Respondents were more likely to remember reading the leaflet the older they were. For example, 82 per cent of respondents aged between 17-24 remembered reading the leaflet, compared to 97 per cent of respondents aged between 65-74.
- 4.6 Respondents were told how the leaflet is designed to fold up neatly, so it can be easily stored away. Those respondents who remembered receiving the leaflet were asked if they had kept the leaflet. The majority of respondents (90%) said they had kept the leaflet. One in ten respondents (10%) said they did not.
- 4.7 Respondents from the North area of Hartlepool were more likely to say they had kept this leaflet (92%) than respondents from South (90%) or Central (88%) areas of Hartlepool.
- 4.8 Viewpoint members were presented with a list of statements about the 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet, and were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with these statements.
- 4.9 Overall, Viewpoint members were more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement 'The leaflet was easy to understand and follow' (92%) and were least likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement 'The content covered everything I need to know about preparing for emergencies' (72%).

"I found the leaflet useful"

- 4.10 Participants were asked to tell us how much they agreed or disagreed with this statement. The majority of respondents (81%) either agreed or strongly agreed and only five per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Therefore, we can conclude that Viewpoint members found the 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet useful.
- Strongly agree - 18 per cent (208 respondents)
 - Agree - 62 per cent (704 respondents)
 - Neither agree nor disagree - 15 per cent (166 respondents)
 - Disagree - 3 per cent (39 respondents)
 - Strongly disagree - 1 per cent (12 respondents)
- 4.11 The detailed results show that respondents from C2 (85%) and DE (89%) socio-economic groups were more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement than respondents from AB (77%) and C1 (73%) socio-economic groups.

“The leaflet was easy to understand and follow”

- 4.12 Participants were asked how much they agreed with the statement ‘The leaflet was easy to understand and follow’. Over nine out of ten (92%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Two per cent disagreed with this statement. Therefore, we can infer that Viewpoint members found the ‘Prepare for Emergencies’ easy to understand and follow.

• Strongly agree	-	22 per cent (246 respondents)
• Agree	-	70 per cent (790 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	6 per cent (65 respondents)
• Disagree	-	2 per cent (21 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	Less than 1 per cent (2 respondents)

- 4.13 Women were slightly more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement than men (94% and 90% respectively). Again, the detailed results show that respondents from C2 (93%) and DE (96%) socio-economic groups were more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement than respondents from AB (90%) and C1 (90%) socio-economic groups.

“The content covered everything I need to know about preparing for emergencies”

- 4.14 Over seven out of ten participants (72%) said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘The content covered everything I need to know about preparing for emergencies’ and only seven percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. However, one fifth (21%) neither agreed or disagreed with this statement.

• Strongly agree	-	15 per cent (169 respondents)
• Agree	-	57 per cent (631 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	21 per cent (228 respondents)
• Disagree	-	6 per cent (67 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	1 per cent (12 respondents)

- 4.15 Respondents living in the North area of Hartlepool were more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement (81%) than respondents living in South (70%) or Central areas (67%) of Hartlepool.

“There was plenty of information on the leaflet”

- 4.16 Eighty-five per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘There was plenty of information on the leaflet’ and only four per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

• Strongly agree	-	18 per cent (197 respondents)
• Agree	-	67 per cent (755 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	12 per cent (131 respondents)
• Disagree	-	3 per cent (34 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	1 per cent (6 respondents)

- 4.17 Respondents living in the North area of Hartlepool were more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement (91%) than respondents living in South (85%) or Central areas (79%) of Hartlepool.

“The overall appearance of the leaflet was good”

- 4.18 Eighty-five per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and only five per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

• Strongly agree	-	20 per cent (222 respondents)
• Agree	-	65 per cent (732 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	11 per cent (120 respondents)
• Disagree	-	4 per cent (44 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	1 per cent (8 respondents)

- 4.19 The detailed statistics show that respondents from C2 (86%) and DE (91%) socio-economic groups were more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement than respondents from AB (82%) and C1 (80%) socio-economic groups.

“The content was interesting”

- 4.20 Nearly three quarters (73%) of participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and only five per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. One in five (22%) participants neither agreed or disagreed that the content of the ‘Prepare for Emergencies’ leaflet was interesting.

• Strongly agree	-	17 per cent (186 respondents)
• Agree	-	56 per cent (633 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	22 per cent (249 respondents)
• Disagree	-	4 per cent (42 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	2 per cent (17 respondents)

- 4.21 The detailed results show that respondents living in the North area of Hartlepool were more likely to agree with this statement (77%) than respondents living in South (74%) or Central areas (68%) of Hartlepool.

Other Information on the ‘Prepare for Emergencies’ Leaflet

- 4.22 Members were asked what other information, if any, they would like to see included on the ‘Prepare for Emergencies’ leaflet, and in total 73 suggestions were made. Table 4.1 for full results

Table 4.1 What, if any, other information would you like to see included on the ‘Prepare for Emergencies’ leaflet?

	Number of Comments
Nuclear pollution/nuclear accidents	12
Basic first aid information	12
Contact numbers	11
Terrorist attack	6
Other	32
(N=73)	

Emergency Planning Unit

- 4.23 Participants were asked if they had heard of the Emergency Planning Unit before they read this leaflet, and two thirds (68%) of respondents answered that they had not. Only a third (32%) said they had heard of the Emergency Planning Unit prior to receiving the leaflet.
- 4.24 Respondents living in the South area of Hartlepool were more likely to say they had heard of the Emergency Planning Unit (38%) than respondents living in Central (33%) or North (26%) areas of Hartlepool.
- 4.25 Participants were then asked if they were aware that local authorities have Emergency Planning Units and that they produce this type of information. Again, two thirds (66%) of participants said they were not aware that local authorities have Emergency Planning Units which produce this type of information. Men were more likely to say they were aware of this (41%) than women (28%).
- 4.26 Members were asked if they had every visited the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit website. Eighty-three per cent said they had not visited this site, and fifteen per cent said they did not know the website existed. Only nine Viewpoint members said they had visited the Emergency Planning Unit website.
- Yes - 1 per cent (9 respondents)
 - No - 83 per cent (994 respondents)
 - Don’t know - Less than 1 per cent (1 respondent)
 - Did not know it existed - 15 per cent (178 respondents)
 - No answer - 2 per cent (18 respondents)

5. FOSTER CARING

KEY FINDINGS

- Awareness of how to become a foster carer and what help, training and support there is for carers is not very high.
- The majority of members did not know if foster care allowances would effect benefit payments.
- A quarter of respondents had seen or heard recent advertising about foster care.
- Three quarters of members thought that they would notice adverts or information for foster care in articles or features in local newspaper and magazines, and just over half of respondents would notice leaflets delivered through their doors or posters displayed around Hartlepool.
- Only nine per cent of members had given some thought or some serious thought o being a foster carer.
- Seventy-one members said they would like us to send them further information about becoming a foster carer.

- 5.1 Viewpoint members were told that the Children's Services Department would like to know what they think about foster caring, whether they had seen any recent advertising about foster caring, and for their views on what would encourage people to become foster carers.

Foster Care – Awareness and Opinions

- 5.2 Members were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a range of nine of statements about foster care. For six out of the nine statements, the most frequently made answer was "Don't know". Awareness of foster care and how it is organised and arranged is not very high in Hartlepool. For example, the majority of members (71%) did not know if foster care allowances would effect benefit payments. Viewpoint members were most likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement 'you can combine being a foster carer with looking after your own children' (68%)

“Foster carers receive a good level of financial support”

- 5.3 The majority of Viewpoint members (45%) said they did not know if foster carers receive a good level of financial support. A third (34%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, and only three per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

• Strongly agree	-	10 per cent (124 respondents)
• Agree	-	24 per cent (285 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	14 per cent (168 respondents)
• Disagree	-	2 per cent (29 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	Less than 1 per cent (5 respondents)
• Don't know	-	45 per cent (541 respondents)
• No answer	-	4 per cent (48 respondents)

- 5.4 The detailed results show that women are more likely than men to agree or strongly agree with this statement (38% and 30% respectively). The detailed results also show that respondents living in the North area of Hartlepool were more likely to answer ‘don’t know’ than respondents living in the Central or South area of Hartlepool (49%, 46% and 40% respectively).

“If you want to be a foster carer you’d be better off with an independent foster agency rather than the local authority”

- 5.5 Again, the majority of Viewpoint members (53%) answered ‘don’t know’ to this statement. Only four per cent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, and fourteen per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. A quarter (25%) of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

• Strongly agree	-	1 per cent (13 respondents)
• Agree	-	3 per cent (41 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	25 per cent (295 respondents)
• Disagree	-	12 per cent (137 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	2 per cent (24 respondents)
• Don't know	-	53 per cent (633 respondents)
• No answer	-	5 per cent (57 respondents)

- 5.6 The detailed results show that respondents living in the North area of Hartlepool were more likely to answer ‘don’t know’ than respondents living in the Central or South area of Hartlepool (58%, 50% and 50% respectively).

“Foster carers don’t get much training, support or breaks from the children they care for”

- 5.7 Over half (55%) of Viewpoint members answered ‘don’t know’ to this statement. Only nine per cent agreed or strongly agreed and fourteen per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

• Strongly agree	-	1 per cent (14 respondents)
• Agree	-	8 per cent (95 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	17 per cent (200 respondents)
• Disagree	-	12 per cent (146 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	2 per cent (25 respondents)
• Don’t know	-	55 per cent (665 respondents)
• No answer	-	5 per cent (56 respondents)

- 5.8 The detailed results show that respondents living in the North area of Hartlepool were more likely to answer ‘don’t know’ than respondents living in the Central or South area of Hartlepool (61%, 55% and 50% respectively). Also, respondents with children under the age of eighteen living in the household were slightly more likely to answer ‘don’t know (59%) than respondents without (53%).

“Foster carers are needed for older children and young teenagers”

- 5.9 Over six out of ten (62%) participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘ foster carers are needed for older children and young teenagers’. A quarter (24%) answered ‘don’t know’.

• Strongly agree	-	12 per cent (147 respondents)
• Agree	-	50 per cent (595 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	7 per cent (88 respondents)
• Disagree	-	2 per cent (20 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	1 per cent (7 respondents)
• Don’t know	-	24 per cent (286 respondents)
• No answer	-	5 per cent (56 respondents)

- 5.10 The detailed results show that women were more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement (68%) than men (55%). Also, respondents living in the North area of Hartlepool were more likely to answer ‘don’t know’ than respondents living in the Central or South area of Hartlepool (28%, 23% and 20% respectively).

“Foster care allowances don’t affect benefit payments”

- 5.11 Over seven out of ten participants (71%) said they did not know if foster care allowances affect benefit payments, and only twelve per cent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

• Strongly agree	-	2 per cent (29 respondents)
• Agree	-	9 per cent (113 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	11 per cent (129 respondents)
• Disagree	-	1 per cent (11 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	Less than 1 per cent (3 respondents)
• Don’t know	-	71 per cent (855 respondents)
• No answer	-	5 per cent (59 respondents)

- 5.12 The detailed results show that Viewpoint members who are employed full time were more likely to respond ‘don’t know’ to this statement (75%) than members who are unemployed (63%).

“You can combine being a foster carer with looking after your own children”

- 5.13 Over two thirds (68%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘you can combine being a foster carer with looking after your own children’. Viewpoint members were most likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement out of the nine statements in this question. However, one in five (19%) participants answered ‘don’t know’.

• Strongly agree	-	10 per cent (124 respondents)
• Agree	-	58 per cent (691 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	7 per cent (79 respondents)
• Disagree	-	2 per cent (20 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	Less than 1 per cent (5 respondents)
• Don’t know	-	19 per cent (225 respondents)
• No answer	-	5 per cent (57 respondents)

- 5.14 Women were more likely than men to agree or strongly agree with this statement (71% and 64% respectively), as were Viewpoint members with children under the age of eighteen living in the household (73% compared to 64% of Viewpoint members without).

“It is extremely difficult and very time consuming to be approved as a foster carer”

- 5.15 Just less than half (49%) of Viewpoint members answered ‘don’t know’ to this statement. A quarter (25%) agreed or strongly agreed and only five per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

• Strongly agree	-	4 per cent (43 respondents)
• Agree	-	22 per cent (262 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	16 per cent (192 respondents)
• Disagree	-	4 per cent (49 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	1 per cent (6 respondents)
• Don’t know	-	49 per cent (587 respondents)
• No answer	-	5 per cent (61 respondents)

- 5.16 Respondents living in South areas of Hartlepool were more likely to agree or strongly agree to this statement (31%) than respondents living in Central (24%) or North (23%) areas of Hartlepool.

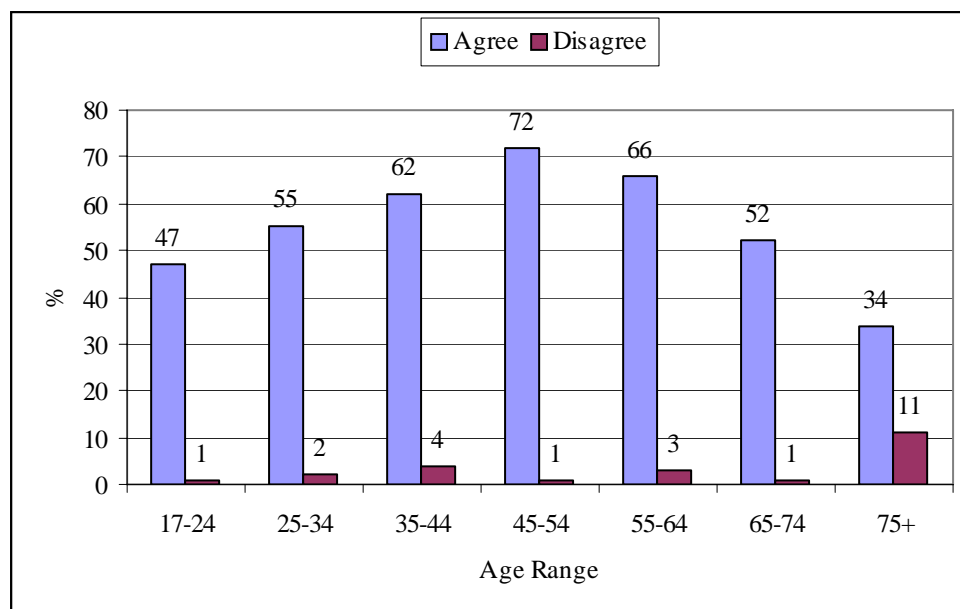
“Older people can make very good foster carers”

- 5.17 Nearly six out of ten (58%) Viewpoint members agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and only three per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. One in five respondents answered ‘don’t know’ when asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘older people can make very good foster carers’.

• Strongly agree	-	10 per cent (125 respondents)
• Agree	-	47 per cent (566 respondents)
• Neither agree nor disagree	-	15 per cent (185 respondents)
• Disagree	-	3 per cent (32 respondents)
• Strongly disagree	-	Less than 1 per cent (3 respondents)
• Don’t know	-	20 per cent (237 respondents)
• No answer	-	4 per cent (51 respondents)

- 5.18 The detailed results show that there is a steady increase of people agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement between the 17-24 age group to the 45-54 age group. After this point, there is a steady decline in respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that older people can make very good foster carers. See Chart 5.1 for detailed result.

Chart 5.1 Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statement ‘Older people can make very good foster carers’, by age group



“Hartlepool Borough Council is a fostering agency and recruits foster carers”

5.19 Only three out of ten (28%) participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘Hartlepool Borough Council is a fostering agency and recruits foster carers’. Over half (56%) answered ‘don’t know’.

- Strongly agree - 4 per cent (48 respondents)
- Agree - 24 per cent (283 respondents)
- Neither agree nor disagree - 11 per cent (129 respondents)
- Disagree - Less than 1 per cent (5 respondents)
- Strongly disagree - Less than 1 per cent (4 respondents)
- Don’t know - 56 per cent (671 respondents)
- No answer - 5 per cent (60 respondents)

5.20 The detailed results show that men are more likely than women to answer ‘don’t know’ to this statement (59% and 53% respectively). Also, women were more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement than men (33% and 21% respectively).

Advertising

5.21 The next question asked Viewpoint members if they had seen or heard any recent advertising, information or articles about foster care. A quarter (24%) of respondents said that they had seen or heard recent advertising about foster care; however, the majority said that they had not.

- 5.22 Women were more likely to have answered positively to this question (27%) than men (20%), as were Viewpoint members who had children under the age of eighteen living in the household (29% compared to 20% for members without).
- 5.23 The 270 participants who said they had seen or heard any recent advertising, information or articles about foster care were asked to describe what they had seen or heard. Viewpoint members were most likely to say they had seen recent advertising about foster care in local newspapers (98 respondents), or on television (55 respondents). See Table 5.1 for full results.

Table 5.1 If yes [Have you seen or heard any recent advertising, information or articles about foster care?] would you please describe it.

	Number of Comments
Local newspapers	(98)
Television	(55)
No answer	(42)
Poster/billboards	(40)
Local radio	(27)
On buses	(8)
National newspapers	(8)
Newspaper advertisement with photo and description of a child	(7)
Other	(14)
(N=270)	

- 5.24 Next, Viewpoint members were asked where do they think they would be likely to notice adverts or information for foster care. Three quarters (75%) of Viewpoint members thought that they would notice adverts or information for foster care in articles or features in local newspaper and magazines, and just over half of respondents (51%) said leaflets delivered through their doors or posters displayed around Hartlepool. See Table 5.2 for full results.
- 5.25 Respondents aged between 17-24 were more likely to say they would notice adverts or information for foster care in articles or features in local newspaper and magazines (83%) than any other age group (62% for respondents aged 65 years and over).
- 5.26 Members aged between 17-24 were also more likely to say they would notice advertising on leaflets put through their door (61%, compared to 38% for respondents aged 65 years and over).

Table 5.2 Where do you think you would be likely to notice adverts or information for foster care?

	%	(No.)
Articles or features in local newspaper and magazines	75	(896)
A leaflet through your door	51	(613)
Posters displayed around Hartlepool	51	(607)
Local radio (e.g. Radio Cleveland or Hartlepool fm)	47	(561)
The Council Magazine	47	(558)
Leaflets available in public places around the town (e.g. Libraries)	41	(491)
Hartlepool Borough Council's internet site	41	(489)
A stall at local events (e.g. Hartlepool Show, Maritime Festival)	39	(464)
Adverts in the jobs pages of local papers	36	(428)
A display in the Civic Centre reception area	30	(361)
A stand in the local supermarket	29	(351)
Adverts on the back of pay and display tickets in the town	27	(319)
In a school based newsletter or publication	21	(248)
A calendar or wall planner	14	(167)
Television (suggested in the 'other' category)	2	(25)
None of the above	1	(7)
GP Surgeries (suggested in the 'other' category)	Less than 1%	(5)
Buses (suggested in the 'other' category)	Less than 1%	(5)
Other	1	(7)
Don't know	8	(91)
(N=1200)		

Thinking about being a Foster Carer

5.27 We wanted to find out if any Viewpoint members had ever been a foster carer or had thought about becoming a foster carer. Over half of Viewpoint members said they would be unlikely to consider being a foster carer, and only nine per cent said they had given some thought or some serious thought to being a foster carer. Two per cent of Viewpoint members are currently or have been a foster carer. See Table 5.3 for full results.

Table 5.3 Where do you think you would be likely to notice adverts or information for foster care?

	%	(No.)
I am currently or have been a foster carer	2	(18)
I have given serious thought to being a foster carer	2	(24)
I have given some thought to being a foster carer	7	(72)
Being a foster carer might be an option for me in the future	11	(117)
I would be unlikely to consider being a foster carer	52	(581)
I would never want to be a foster carer	27	(296)
(N=1108)		

- 5.28 Respondents aged between 25-54 were more likely to say they had given some thought or some serious thought to becoming a foster carer (between 11% and 14%) and respondents aged between 17-24 were more likely to say that being a foster carer might be an option for them in the future (23%).
- 5.29 Viewpoint members were asked to tell us what, if anything, do they think would be the good things about being a foster carer. There were 434 separate comments made, the detail of which can be seen in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 To help us understand your reasons could you please explain what, if anything, you think would be the good things about being a foster carer

	Number of Comments
To help a child/give a child a better life	199
Rewarding for foster parent	81
Provides a safe environment/stability	76
Am a caring person	30
Financial stability	11
Lots of free time available	9
Would give you children if you've not had any	9
Other	19
(N=434)	

- 5.30 Members were then asked to tell us what are the things that put them off being a foster carer. There were 813 separate comments made, the detail of which can be seen in Table 5.5

Table 5.5 What are the things that put you off being a foster carer?

	Number of Comments
Too old	212
Lack of time/too many other commitments/current family situation	195
Could get disruptive/problem children	92
Too much responsibility	60
Worried about effect on own family	48
Poor health	35
Dealing with natural parents	30
Lack of room in property	30
Don't like/want children	23
The cost	20
Lack of support/guidance	18
Risk of becoming emotionally involved	16
Want to have own family	11
Not emotionally strong enough	7
Other	16
(N=813)	

- 5.31 Finally, Viewpoint members were asked if they would like us to send them further information about becoming a foster carer. Seventy-one members said yes, they would like more information about becoming a foster carer. A list of names and contact details were passed onto the Children's Services Department.

6. COMMUNITY STRATEGY

KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of Viewpoint 1000 members who responded to this questionnaire agreed with the Community Strategy Vision.
- Over 500 suggestions were made for improving the Vision. These included more regeneration of the town (77 respondents), to tackle crime (74 respondents) and more street cleaning/reduction in litter (60 respondents).
- With regard to immediate priorities the three clear favourites which were: Jobs and the Economy; Community Safety; and Health and Care. These were the same top three priorities as in 2001.
- Two-hundred and eighty seven members said they would like to get involved in the Community Strategy process through discussions and events

6.1 This section asked for residents' views about the Hartlepool Community Strategy, to help with the 2006 Hartlepool Community Strategy review. These questions were also asked in 2001 when the Community Strategy was first being developed, and so, where appropriate, comparisons will be made.

6.2 Viewpoint is just one of the methods used to consult about the 2006 Hartlepool Community Strategy Review. These questions were also sent out to all households across the borough, and were placed on the Council's e-consultation system so residents could answer the questions on-line

Community Strategy Vision

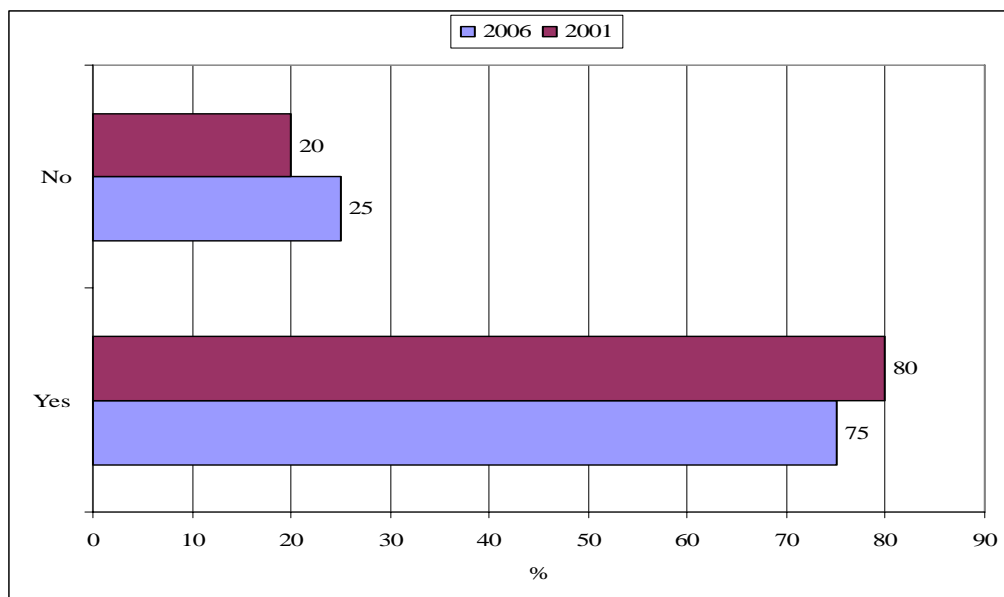
6.3 Viewpoint members were told how the following vision of what the town will be like in 2020 is central to the Community Strategy:

"Hartlepool will be a prosperous, caring, confident and outward looking community in an attractive environment, realising its potential"

6.4 Members were asked to tell us whether they agree with this vision. In 2006, three-quarters of participants (75%) said yes, they agree with this vision. This is a reduction from 80 per cent in 2001. See Chart 6.1 for full results.

6.5 The detailed statistics show that respondents from AB (74%) socio-economic group were more likely to agree with this vision (80%) than respondents from other socio-economic groups (between 72% - 74%).

Chart 6.1 Please tell us if you agree with the vision (Hartlepool will be a prosperous, caring, confident and outward looking community in an attractive environment, realising its potential)?



Improvements to the vision

- 6.6 Viewpoint members were asked what improvements or changes could be made to improve the Vision. Six out of ten members did not make any suggestions. There were 536 separate comments made, the detail of which can be found in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Thinking about the vision what, if any, improvements or changes would you make?

	Number of Comments
More regeneration of the town	77
Tackle crime	74
More street cleaning/reduce amount of litter	60
Create more jobs	38
“Supporting” instead of caring	26
Reduce anti-social behaviour	24
Ensure that the vision is achievable	21
More for young people	18
Tougher sentencing of criminals	18
Less drugs	18
Make people work/less sponging off the state	14
Improve public transport	11
Encourage “cleaner” industries/remove Able UK	10
Spend more money on all groups of people	9
Involve something that brings people together more	8
Shorter time span of the vision	7
More/better leisure facilities	7
Other	114
(N=536)	

Seven Priority Aims

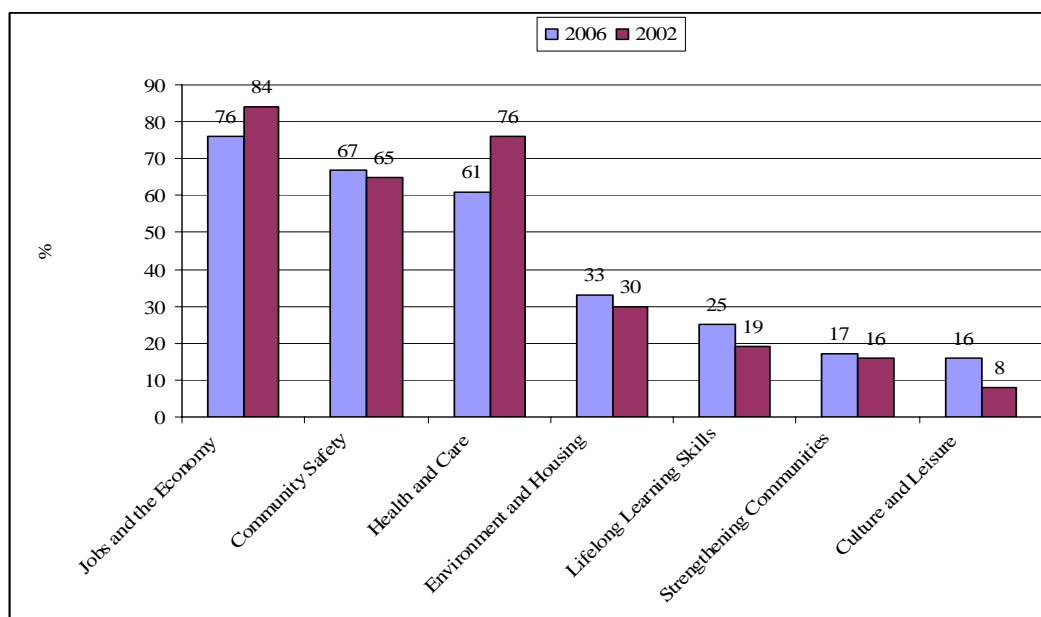
- 6.7 The questionnaire laid out the seven priority aims that have been identified in order to achieve the Community Strategy Vision. It was explained to Viewpoint members that not all of the seven aims could be tackled in the first instance and that the Council is interested in finding out which aims the public would give the highest priority to. The panel members were invited to reveal which three out of the seven priorities they believed should be tackled first.
- 6.8 The results are shown in Table 6.2. As in 2001, the Jobs and the Economy aim came out top with 76 per cent of respondents feeling this was a top priority. This was followed by the Community Safety aim (67%) and the Health and Care aim (61%). These are the same top three aims that were identified in 2001. Also, as in 2001 the results show that most Viewpoint members did not feel that the Culture

and Leisure aim was an immediate priority in the short term with just 16 per cent indicating that it was a top priority. Also see Chart 6.2.

Table 6.2 Please tell us which three aims should be tackled first.

	2006		2002	
	%	(No.)	%	(No.)
Jobs and the Economy	76	(855)	84	(508)
Community Safety	67	(757)	65	(395)
Health and Care	61	(687)	76	(460)
Environment and Housing	33	(369)	30	(179)
Lifelong Learning Skills	25	(281)	19	(113)
Strengthening Communities	17	(210)	16	(99)
Culture and Leisure	16	(182)	8	(46)
	(N=1129)		(N=607)	

Chart 6.2 Please tell us which three aims should be tackled first.



- 6.9 The detailed results show that women were more likely than men to think the Health and Care aim was a priority aim with two-thirds (65%) identifying this compared to 56 per cent for males. Also, respondents living in South Hartlepool were less likely to identify the Community Safety aim as a priority aim than Central or North areas of Hartlepool (62%, 68%, and 70% respectively).
- 6.10 Viewpoint members were asked what improvements or changes could be made to the seven aims. Eighty-seven per cent did not make any suggestions. There were 169 separate comments made, the detail of which can be found in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Thinking about the aims set out above what, if any, improvements or changes would you make to them?

	Number of Comments
Ensure that jobs are created	22
Higher level of policing	19
Reduce the level of crime	17
Ensure secure future for hospital/good health care facilities	14
More for young people	9
More for adult education	7
People should have more pride in the town	7
Other	74
(N=169)	

Involvement in the Community Strategy

- 6.11 Within this phase of Viewpoint, members were asked if they would like to get involved in the Community Strategy process through discussions and events and 287 respondents indicated that they would be interested. A list of names and contact details were passed onto the Hartlepool Partnership.
- 6.12 The detailed results show that men were more likely than women to say they would like to get involved in the Community Strategy process through discussions or events (27% and 21% respectively). Also, respondents aged between 25-54 were more likely to say they would like to take part than members from other age groups
- 6.13 The 287 participants who said they would be interested in getting involved in the Community Strategy process through discussions or events were asked to tell us what themes they would be interested in. Half of Viewpoint members said they would be interested in the Jobs and Economy theme (50%), the Health and Care theme (49%) and the Community Safety theme (48%). See Table 6.4 for full results.

Table 6.4 If yes [Would you like to get involved in the Community Strategy process through discussions or events], which of the following themes are you interested in?

	%	(No.)
Jobs and the Economy	50	(143)
Health and Care	49	(141)
Community Safety	48	(137)
Lifelong Learning Skills	43	(124)
Strengthening Communities	39	(111)
Culture and Leisure	37	(107)
Environment and Housing	34	(97)
(N=287)		

- 6.14 The final question asked panel members to think about the various services currently provided by a range of organisations across the town. They were then asked to indicate what one key change they would like to see made to any of these services to help improve their quality of life. This was a very open ended question not just directed at council services but at the community as a whole.
- 6.15 Eight out of ten participants (78%) did not make any suggestions. There were 265 suggestions made by respondents in total. These can be found in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Thinking about the various services provided by a range of organisations across the town, is there one key change that you would like to see made to a service or services that would improve your quality of life?

	Number of Comments
More policing/reduce crime	46
Safeguard hospital/health care provision	31
Tidy the area/reduce the amount of litter	27
Improved leisure facilities	19
Improved public transport	11
Reduce amount of anti-social behaviour	10
More activities for young people	10
Give support to all residents	7
More affordable housing	7
Improved car parking	6
Other	91
(N=265)	

APPENDIX 1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON RESPONDENTS

Table A1 Age of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
17 to 24	11	(134)	6	(53)
25 to 34	16	(197)	11	(95)
35 to 44	20	(238)	19	(166)
45 to 54	18	(211)	20	(170)
55 to 64	14	(165)	21	(180)
65 to 74	12	(148)	16	(141)
75+	9	(107)	7	(58)
No answer	/	/	Less than 1	(1)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(864)

Table A2 Sex of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
Female	53	(634)	56	(482)
Male	47	(566)	44	(382)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(864)

Table A3 Location of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
North	32	(382)	27	(236)
Central	38	(457)	41	(350)
South	30	(361)	32	(278)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(864)

Table A4 Economic activity of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
Employed full-time	41	(492)	39	(339)
Employed part-time	10	(116)	10	(89)
Unemployed	3	(31)	2	(21)
Retired	23	(278)	26	(228)
Full-time student	8	(100)	4	(36)
Self employed	3	(41)	4	(32)
Permanently sick or disabled	5	(64)	7	(56)
Other (inc. housewife/husband)	6	(75)	7	(61)
No answer	Less than 1	(3)	Less than 1	(2)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(864)

Table A5 Car ownership of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
One car	56	(669)	59	(507)
Two or more cars	22	(259)	23	(199)
No car	22	(264)	18	(152)
No answer	1	(8)	1	(6)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(864)

Table A6 Disability of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
Yes – disabled	15	(179)	17	(146)
No – not disabled	84	(1010)	82	(710)
No answer	1	(11)	1	(8)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(864)

Table A8 Socio Economic Group of respondent

	Weighted		Unweighted	
	%	(No.)	%	(No)
AB	23	(278)	23	(200)
C1	25	(294)	25	(213)
C2	22	(268)	23	(202)
DE	21	(248)	22	(187)
Don't Know / No Answer	9	(112)	7	(62)
Total	100	(1200)	100	(864)

Social Group Definitions:

<i>Social group</i>		<i>Occupation of Chief wage earner</i>
A	Upper middle class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	Middle class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Lower middle class	Intermediate or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	Skilled working class	Skilled manual workers
D	Working class	Semi and unskilled manual workers
E	Those at the lowest levels of subsistence	Long term unemployed (6+ months), State pensioners, etc. with no earnings, Casual workers and those without a regular income

APPENDIX 2

FULL RESULTS



Viewpoint Your Views are Important

This latest Viewpoint questionnaire seeks your views on a variety of local issues. It aims to find out what you and others from across the community think about these matters so that we can take your views into account when making decisions that affect your daily life. The questionnaire should only take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The issues covered this time include:

**The Internet and You
Preparing for Emergencies
Foster Caring
Community Strategy**

There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions; we just want to find out what you think of our services and other important issues that affect your daily lives. If you can't complete a question or feel you don't want to answer a particular question, don't worry, just leave it blank and move on to the next one.

When you have completed the questionnaire please return it to us in the enclosed reply paid envelope, no stamp required, by **12th May 2006**

We will look at what the Viewpoint members say and the Council's response in the next Viewpoint Newsletter, which you receive with your next Viewpoint questionnaire.

All the information you provide is confidential and we will never pass your name or address to any other organisation. What's more, if at any time you wish to leave Viewpoint, for whatever reason, simply let us know.

**If you require any further information, need a large print questionnaire or
any help filling it in then please contact Lisa Anderson
at**

**Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY
Telephone: (direct line) 01429 523584**

70.9% response rate, 864 completed questionnaires

The Internet and You

Hartlepool Borough Council has a new website, which was launched in the spring of this year. Through the Council website you can access all sorts of information on Council services, Councillors, and local information. We would like to ask you a few questions about if and where you access the internet, whether you have seen the Council's new website, and how you would like to use it to contact the Council.

If you would like any further information on this topic please contact Paul Diaz on (01429) 284280 or via e-mail paul.diaz@hartlepool.gov.uk

	Yes	No	No answer
1. Do you have a computer with internet connection in your home?	70.3%	27.5%	2.2%
2. Are you aware that you can access the internet for free from your local library?	77.3%	19.1%	3.6%
3. Have you ever used the internet for personal reasons, such as banking, shopping or contacting friends, at any of the following places? (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY)			
a. Home			66.3%
b. Libraries			15.1%
c. Community Centres			3.1%
d. Local Colleges			13.1%
e. Work – not for work purposes			30.9%
f. Internet Café			7.4%
g. Friends or neighbours PC			29.4%
h. None of the above			4.3%
i. Other (Please specify _____)			1%
j. Never accessed the internet			15.3%
k. No answer			5%
4. Hartlepool Borough Council launched their new website in March 2006. It includes information on council services, councillors and local events. Have you seen the Hartlepool Borough Council's new website at www.hartlepool.gov.uk ? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)			
Yes	22.6%	Go to Q5	
No	64.3%	Go to Q9	
Don't know	0.4%	Go to Q9	
Did not know it existed	10.3%	Go to Q9	
No answer	2.4%		

5. **If you have used the Hartlepool Council's new website, how easy did you find it to use?** (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY) (Those who have seen the Council's new website) (N = 271)

Very easy	Easy	Neither easy nor hard	Hard	Very hard	Don't know	No answer
17%	49.4%	24.5%	5.2%	2%	1.4%	0.5%

6. **How did you find the information you were looking for?** (N = 271)
(PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY) (Those who have seen the Council's new website)

a. Used the A – Z of Council Services search	38%
b. Used the general search facility	32.8%
c. I found my own way through the website	41.6%
d. I followed a link to the information I was after	21.7%
e. I just knew where to go	6.6%
f. Wasn't looking for anything in particular	14.8%
g. Don't know	1%
h. Other (Please specify _____)	1.2%
i. Could not find the information I was looking for	6.1%

7. **If you could not find the information you were looking for, could you please describe what it was you were you looking for in the box below. If you found the information you were looking for, please go to Q8.** (Those who could not find the information they were looking for) (N = 17)

No answer	15.9%	Contact numbers	7.5%
Council Tax details/payment info.	15.2%	Current/forthcoming events	7.5%
Where to pay parking ticket	11.4%	Easter Sunday events at Ward	
Sports facilities	10%	Jackson Park	6.9%
Recycling info.	9%	Free bus travel details	5%
Job vacancies	7.5%	Link to PCT website	1%

8. **How would you like to use the Council website?** (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY)
(Those who have seen the Council's new website) (N = 271)

a. To find information about local issues that affect you	77.9%
b. Get information about council services (e.g., planning, recycling, Council jobs)	86.7%
c. Send council comments and complaints about services and facilities they provide	58%
d. Find out about the Council's Customer Charter (customer service standards)	23%
e. Complete council forms (e.g., to arrange to get your bulky waste collected)	57.7%
f. Get information on council expenditure and council tax	35%
g. Find information about councillors	39.8%
h. Don't know	1.4%
i. Other (Please specify _____)	3.4%

Preparing for Emergencies

In March 2006, a 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet was delivered to every home in the area by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit. This leaflet provides useful information about what to do in the event of a serious emergency, and describes different types of emergencies we might face in this area, such as flooding, severe weather storms or snow, and large scale transport accidents. The leaflet also provides useful contact numbers, including police, fire and ambulance services and the Environment Agency floodline.

The Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit provides an emergency planning service to the four local authorities in the former Cleveland area. Their role is to ensure that local authorities are prepared to respond to emergencies and to support the emergency services and the community. They want to find out your views on the 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet and also want to see if you were aware of the Emergency Planning Unit.

We understand that not everyone will remember the 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet and so we have included with your Viewpoint questionnaire a spare copy of the leaflet for you to look at and keep.

If you would like any further information on this topic please contact Denis Hampson,
Chief Emergency Planning Officer on (01642) 221121 or via e-mail
denis.hampson@hartlepool.gov.uk

9. Do you remember receiving the 'Prepare for Emergencies' leaflet which got delivered to your home at the end of March 2006? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

Yes	71.8%	Go to Q10
No	25.2%	Go to Q12
Don't know	2.2%	Go to Q12
No answer	0.8%	

10. If yes, did you remember reading it? (Those who remember receiving the "Prepare for Emergencies" leaflet) (N = 861)

Yes	89.5%
No	9%
Don't know	1.1%
No answer	0.4%

11. The leaflet is designed to fold up neatly, so you can easily store it away. Did you keep it? (Those who remember receiving the "Prepare for Emergencies" leaflet) (N = 861)

Yes	85.9%
No	9.5%
Don't know	4.6%

12. Please have a look at the copy of the leaflet we included with your Viewpoint questionnaire and tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ON EACH LINE)

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Don't know %	No answer %
I found the leaflet useful	17.3	58.7	13.8	3.2	1	1.8	4.2
The leaflet was easy to understand and follow	20.5	65.9	5.5	1.8	0.2	1.3	4.9
The content covered everything I need to know about preparing for emergencies	14.1	52.6	19	5.6	1	2.1	5.8
There was plenty of information on the leaflet	16.4	62.9	11	2.9	0.5	1.4	4.9
The overall appearance of the leaflet was good	18.5	61	10	3.7	0.7	1.2	5
The content was interesting	15.5	52.8	20.8	3.5	1.4	1.2	4.9

13. What, if any, other information would you like to see included on the 'Prepare for Emergencies leaflet?

No answer	94%	Contact numbers	0.9%
Nuclear pollution/nuclear accidents	1%	Terrorist attack	0.5%
Basic First Aid information	1%	Other	2.7%

- | | Yes | No | Don't know | No answer |
|--|-------|-------|------------|-----------|
| 14. Before you read this leaflet, had you ever heard of the Emergency Planning Unit? | 31.3% | 65% | 1.8% | 2.1% |
| 15. Were you aware that Local Authorities have Emergency Planning Units and that they produce this type of information? | 32.5% | 63.4% | 1.8% | 2.3% |
| 16. Have you ever visited the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit website – www.clevelandemergencyplanning.info ? | | | | |
| Yes | 0.7% | | | |
| No | 82.9% | | | |
| Don't know | 0.1% | | | |
| Did not know it existed | 14.8% | | | |
| No answer | 1.5% | | | |

Foster Caring

The Children's Services Department of Hartlepool Borough Council would like to know what people think about foster caring. They would also like to know where you have seen recent advertising about foster caring and where you think it would be better to see information on foster caring. They would like to find out your views on what you think would encourage people to be foster carers and what would put them off.

If you would like any further information on this topic please contact Rebecca Thomas on (01429) 523735 or via e-mail rebecca.thomas@hartlepool.gov.uk

17. Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.
(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ON EACH LINE)

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Don't know %	No answer %
Foster carers receive a good level of financial support	10.3	23.7	14	2.4	0.4	45	4
If you want to be a foster carer you'd be better off with an independent foster agency rather than the local authority	1.1	3.4	24.6	11.5	2	52.8	4.7
Foster carers don't get much training, support or breaks from the children they care for	1.1	7.9	16.7	12.2	2.1	55.4	4.7
Foster carers are needed for older children and young teenagers	12.3	49.6	7.3	1.7	0.6	23.9	4.7
Foster care allowances don't affect benefit payments	2.4	9.4	10.8	0.9	0.3	71.3	4.9
You can combine being a foster carer with looking after your own children	10.3	57.5	6.6	1.6	0.4	18.8	4.7
It is extremely difficult and very time consuming to be approved as a foster carer	3.6	21.8	16	4.1	0.5	48.9	5.1
Older people can make very good foster carers.	10.4	47.2	15.4	2.7	0.3	19.8	4.3
Hartlepool Borough Council is a fostering agency and recruits foster carers	4	23.6	10.8	0.4	0.3	55.9	5

18. Have you seen or heard any recent advertising, information or articles about foster care? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

Yes	22.5%	Go to Q19
No	71.3%	Go to Q20
Don't know	2.8%	Go to Q20
No answer	3.4%	

19. If yes, would you please describe it in the box below. (Those who have seen or heard recent advertising information or articles about "Foster Care") (N = 270)

Local newspaper	36.3%	National newspapers	2.9%
Television	20.3%	Newspaper advertisement with photo and description of a child	2.8%
No answer	15.6%	Other	5.3%
Poster/billboards	14.9%		
Local radio	10%		
On buses	3.1%		

20. Where do you think you would be likely to notice adverts or information for foster care? (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Articles or features in local newspaper and magazines?	74.7%
b. The Council Magazine	46.5%
c. Local radio (e.g. Radio Cleveland and Hartlepool fm)	46.8%
d. Hartlepool Borough Council's internet site	40.7%
e. Adverts on the back of pay and display tickets in the town	26.6%
f. A display in the Civic Centre reception area	30.1%
g. Posters displayed around Hartlepool	50.6%
h. Adverts in the jobs pages of local papers	35.6%
i. A stall at local events (e.g. Hartlepool Show, Maritime Festival)	38.7%
j. A leaflet through your door	51.1%
k. Leaflets available in public places around the town (e.g. Libraries)	40.9%
l. A stand in the local supermarkets	29.3%
m. In a school based newsletter or publication	20.7%
n. A calendar or wallplanner	13.9%
o. None of the above	0.5%
p. Don't know	7.6%
q. Other (please specify_____)	0.6%
GP Surgeries	0.4%
Television	2.1%
Buses	0.4%

21. Have you ever thought about being a foster carer?

a. I am currently or have been a foster carer	1.5%
b. I have given serious thought to being a foster carer	2%
c. I have given some thought to being a foster carer	6%
d. Being a foster carer might be an option for me in the future	9.8%
e. I would be unlikely to consider being a foster carer	48.4%
f. I would never want to be a foster care	24.6%
No answer	7.7%

22. To help us understand your reasons could you please explain what, if anything, you think would be the good things about being a foster carer?

None/no answer	66.8%
To help a child/give a child a better life	16.6%
Rewarding for foster parent	6.7%
Provides a safe environment/stability	6.3%
Am a caring person	2.5%
Other	1.6%
Financial stability	1%
Lots of free time available	0.8%
Would give you children if you've not had any	0.7%

23. What are the things that put you off being a foster carer?

None/no answer	41%	Lack of room in property	2.5%
Too old	17.7%	Don't like/want children	2%
Lack of time/too many other commitments/current family situation	16.3%	The cost	1.6%
Could get disruptive/problem children	7.7%	Lack of support/guidance	1.5%
Too much responsibility	5%	Risk of becoming emotionally involved	1.3%
Worried about effect on own family	4%	Want to have own family	0.9%
Poor health	2.9%	Not emotionally strong enough	0.5%
Dealing with natural parents	2.5%	Other	1.3%

24. If you would like us to send you any further information about becoming a foster carer, please tick this box:

Yes – please send me more information about becoming a foster carer 5.9%
(N = 71)

Community Strategy

The Hartlepool Partnership is the town's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and brings together all of the town's partnerships delivering local services. It has agreed a "grand plan" which is called the Hartlepool Community Strategy. Through the Community Strategy process the Partnership looks at what local services and developments are needed, the best way of providing them and involving people further in the way services are delivered.

The Strategy draws on information in existing plans, results of previous consultations and identifies the needs in Hartlepool. It also takes into account local priorities, government policy, national targets and regional plans. The Hartlepool Partnership is beginning a review of the Community Strategy and welcomes your views.

If you would like any further information on this topic please contact the
Hartlepool Partnership on (01429) 284147 or
via e-mail hartlepoolpartnership@hartlepool.gov.uk

A vision of what the town will be like in 2020 is central to the Community Strategy. Our vision is that:

"Hartlepool will be a prosperous, caring, confident and outward looking community in an attractive environment, realising its potential"

25. Please tell us if you agree with the vision in the box above?
(PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

Yes	69.2%
No	22.6%
No answer	8.1%

26. Thinking about the vision what, if any, improvements or changes would you make?

None/no answer	59.7%	Make people work/less sponging off the state	1.1%
More regeneration of the town	6.4%	Improve public transport	0.9%
Tackle crime	6.1%	Encourage "cleaner" industries/ remove Able UK	0.9%
More street cleaning/reduce amount of litter	5%	Spend more money on all groups of people	0.8%
Create more jobs	3.2%	Involve something that brings people together more	0.7%
"Supporting" instead of "caring"	2.1%	Shorter time span of the vision	0.6%
Reduce anti-social behaviour	2%	More/better leisure facilities	0.6%
Ensure that the vision is achievable	1.8%	Other	9.5%
More for young people	1.5%		
Tougher sentencing of criminals	1.5%		
Less drugs	1.5%		

To achieve the vision set out above, seven priority aims have been identified. As you will appreciate not all seven aims can be tackled immediately and so they must be given some priority.

27. Please tell us which three aims should be tackled first.
(PLEASE TICK UP TO THREE BOXES)

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a) Jobs and the Economy
<i>Develop a more enterprising, vigorous and diverse local economy that will attract investment, be globally competitive and create more employment opportunities for local people</i> | 71.2% |
| b) Lifelong Learning & Skills
<i>Help all individuals, groups and organisations realise their full potential, ensures the highest quality opportunities in education, lifelong learning and training and raise standards of attainment</i> | 23.5% |
| c) Health and Care
<i>Ensure access to the highest quality health, social care and support services, and improve the health, life expectancy and well being of the community</i> | 57.2% |
| d) Community Safety
<i>Make Hartlepool a safer place by reducing crime, disorder and fear of crime</i> | 63.1% |
| e) Environment and Housing
<i>Secure a more attractive and sustainable environment that is safe, clean and tidy, a good infrastructure, and access to good quality and affordable housing</i> | 30.8% |
| f) Culture and Leisure
<i>Ensure a wide range of good quality, affordable and accessible leisure and cultural opportunities</i> | 15.2% |
| g) Strengthening Communities
<i>Empower individuals, groups and communities, and increase the involvement of citizens in all decisions that affect their lives</i> | 17.5% |
| No answer | 5.9% |

28. Thinking about the aims set out above what, if any, improvements or changes would you make to them?

None/no answer	86.6%	More for young people	0.7%
Ensure that jobs are created	1.8%	More adult education	0.6%
Higher level of policing	1.6%	People should have more pride in the town	0.6%
Reduce the level of crime	1.5%	Other	6.2%
Ensure secure future for hospital/ good health care facilities	1.1%		



29. Would you like to get involved in the Community Strategy process through discussions or events? (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

Yes	23.9%	Go to Q30
No	66.9%	Go to Q31
No answer	9.2%	

30. If yes, which of the following themes are you interested in? (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY) (Those who would like to get involved in the Community Strategy process) (N = 287)

a. Jobs and the Economy	50%
b. Lifelong Learning Skills	43.2%
c. Health and Care	49%
d. Community Safety	47.6%
e. Environment and Housing	34%
f. Culture and Leisure	37.3%
g. Strengthening Communities	38.9%
No answer	0.4%

31. Thinking about the various services provided by a range of organisations across the town, is there one key change that you would like to see made to a service or services that would improve your quality of life?

None/no answer	78.1%	Improved public transport	0.9%
More policing/reduce crime	3.8%	Reduce amount of anti-social behaviour	0.8%
Safeguard hospital/health care provision	2.6%	More activities for young people	0.8%
Tidy the area/reduce the amount of litter	2.2%	Give support to all residents	0.6%
Improved leisure facilities	1.6%	More affordable housing	0.6%
		Improved car parking	0.5%
		Other	7.6%

And finally.....

Please use the space below to suggest any subjects that you would like to see covered in future Viewpoint surveys or any further comments you would like to make about Viewpoint in general.

To follow in main report

Thank you for completing this round of Viewpoint please return the questionnaire in the post-paid envelope by 12th May 2006

By completing this questionnaire you give Hartlepool Borough Council the authority to collect and retain information about you. The information collected about you will be held securely and will be processed to produce statistical reports. No personal data will be disclosed. In order to run Viewpoint Citizens Panel, the Council has entered into a contract with ADTS, and will share the information with that organisation.

For the purposes of provision of this service, ADTS acts as a department of the Council and is bound by the contract to treat your information confidentially. Hartlepool Borough Council is the Data Controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act.

Viewpoint



HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE STRATEGY
HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL
Civic Centre
Hartlepool TS24 8AY

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

16 October 2006



Report of: CHIEF PERSONNEL SERVICES OFFICER

Subject: CUSTOMER CHARTER

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To endorse the Customer Charter and report on progress made in respect of the Corporate Customer Services Strategy of the Communicating with your Council suite of strategies.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

This report details the proposed Customer Charter that outlines the minimum customer service standards that will be implemented across the Council.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Corporate issue.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Portfolio holder only.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

To note the report and endorse the Customer Charter.

Report of: CHIEF PERSONNEL SERVICES OFFICER

Subject: CUSTOMER CHARTER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To endorse the Customer Charter and report on progress made in respect of the Corporate Customer Services Strategy of the Communicating with your Council suite of strategies.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** At the Performance Portfolio meeting on 31 October 2005 a suite of strategies were agreed with the aim of presenting a coherent and complementary message. The four strategies of Corporate Communications, Customer Services, Consultation and Complaints and Comments have similarities and overlapping content and therefore were presented as one suite.
- 2.2** The action plan relating to the Corporate Customer Services Strategy includes the implementation of a Customer Charter that will outline the minimum customer services standards that will be provided by the Council.

3. CUSTOMER CHARTER

- 3.1** The Customer Services Champions Group, made up of officers appointed by each Director, have compiled and agreed the draft Customer Charter that is attached at Appendix A. Each officer has circulated the draft Customer Charter within their individual departments and comments/views have been considered and agreed by the Group. The final draft Customer Charter has been circulated to Corporate Management Team for information.
- 3.2** The Customer Charter sets out the minimum standards that customers of the Council can expect and aims to provide excellent customer services across all departments. It specifies our aims and highlights the customer care standards that customers can expect when they contact us in person, by telephone, letter, fax or email.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CUSTOMER CHARTER

- 4.1** In order to ensure that employees are aware of the customer standards that are included in the Customer Charter, all employees will be required to undertake a basic training course in customer services. This course is being organised by the Workforce Development Team and will be provided in-house. More advanced training is necessary for frontline staff who regularly deal with customers during their working day. It is intended that these staff will undertake a nationally-recognised qualification eg NVQ Level 2 in Customer Service.

- 4.2** In order to ensure that the standards are being met, performance will be monitored using a number of methods. In relation to the Contact Centre, reports are available that detail the number of contacts that have been made together with information on time taken to respond to requests for services. In addition, regular feedback will be gathered from customers by
- undertaking exit surveys
 - including customer service questions in Viewpoint
 - using the new e-Consultation system, Your Town, Your Say
- 4.3** The Customer Charter will be published on the website and will be available (including in different formats e.g. Braille and different languages) upon request. A poster will be produced that will include the customer service vision and customer promises. This poster will be displayed in all reception areas and entrances to council buildings that are used by our customers. The poster will include details of how to obtain a copy of the complete Customer Charter.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Funding of approximately £5000 will be required for the training software that will be used to deliver the initial customer service training for all staff. Funding alternatives are currently being explored.
- 5.2** In addition, the costs for NVQ Level 2 qualifications will need to be met. The Workforce Development Section is liaising with the Learning Skills Council to explore possible contributions towards the funding of NVQs.
- 5.2** All costs associated with publication of Customer Charter will be considered as part of the Communicating with Your Council suite of strategies.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** The Portfolio Holder endorses the Customer Charter and agrees the arrangements for implementation subject to funding being identified for the training.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1** Corporate Customer Services Strategy

8. CONTACT OFFICER

- 8.1** Christine Armstrong, Central Services Manager
Chief Executive's Department, HR Division, Central Services Section
Hartlepool Borough Council

Tel: (01429) 523016
christine.armstrong@hartlepool.gov.uk



CUSTOMER CHARTER

A CUSTOMER SERVICE VISION FOR HARTLEPOOL

Customers of Hartlepool Borough Council will get a service that is excellent. Customers will always be warmly welcomed, will trust us to act in the best interests of their community and see us as honest and fair. Our words, actions and plans will always be in the interest of our customers. We will join up what we do and how we do things so that we do the whole of the job. Our customers' communications needs will be known and met.

The 'Hartlepool Way' will become the customer care standard that others aspire to.

CUSTOMER PROMISES

The Council is committed to providing an excellent service to our customers.

As a Council we aim to:

- be friendly, approachable and professional
- respond quickly and efficiently to requests for service or information
- provide straightforward information about our services
- get things right the first time and correct them promptly if they go wrong
- deal with complaints speedily and simply, learning lessons from them
- actively seek the views of our customers and take account of their comments
- balance the needs of individual customers with those of the wider community
- promote equality and fair treatment including equal access to services
- ensure that all information provided to us is handled sensitively and confidentially
- provide customer care training to all staff and monitor delivery standards
- help people who use our services
- answer telephone calls quickly
- continuously improve our services for customers and offer value for money
- ensure that all information provided is dealt with confidentially

CUSTOMER CARE STANDARDS

The Council is committed to meeting the needs of our customers in a professional manner. Customers can contact us in person, by telephone, letter, fax or email and can expect the following standards:

Service – we aim to

- provide services that are accessible to all and will ensure that all public areas of Council premises are accessible to every customer
- ensure that any information we provide will be easy to understand and informative
- ensure that privacy and dignity are fully respected
- ensure that the first person customers deal with either answers their enquiry or passes them on to the right person
- provide a proactive approach to customers by offering appropriate, additional services at first contact
- provide information, upon request, in a variety of formats such as other languages, large print, Braille and on cd or audio cassette

Visiting Our Premises – we aim to

- see all customers within 10 minutes of arrival
- deal with enquiries as quickly as possible
- arrange a time and place for customers to discuss issues in private, upon request
- provide easy access for wheelchairs and pushchairs
- provide disabled toilets and baby changing facilities, upon request
- provide a hearing loop system in public reception areas, if appropriate
- provide access to a Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) British Sign Language (BSL) videophone, if necessary
- provide access to a telephone translation service, if necessary
- pre-book an interpreter or language signer, upon request
- ensure that reception areas are clean, comfortable and smoke-free
- clearly display our leaflets and other information

Answering Telephone Calls – we aim to

- answer calls within 20 seconds
- greet customers politely and clearly with employees stating their section/department and name
- ensure that calls are not transferred more than once
- take details and contact customers if we cannot provide the information required
- avoid the use of answerphones during office hours

Dealing with Queries – we aim to

- respond to all straight forward letters, faxes and emails within 10 working days and will let the customer know if their correspondence is not straight forward
- respond to more complex queries within 20 working days
- contact customers to explain the reason for longer delays in replying to their query
- include a named person and telephone number in all correspondence

- use plain English avoiding the use of jargon
- provide information, upon request, in a variety of formats such as other languages, large print, Braille and on cd or audio cassette

Visits by Council Staff – we aim to

- arrange a mutually agreed time for visits to customers' homes or premises, if appropriate
- be on time for pre-arranged appointments
- let the customer know if we will be late for an appointment
- let the customer know as soon as possible if an appointment has to be cancelled or postponed
- make sure that staff show their official identity card at each visit
- pre-book an interpreter or language signer, upon request
- advise the customer, at the end of the visit, of any actions that we intend to take

CUSTOMERS' VIEWS

The Council is interested in our customers' views on the services and information we provide. Customers must have the opportunity to influence the decisions we make. We aim to make it easy for customers to give us their views, opinions, priorities and concerns so that we can make our services more responsive to their needs. We undertake to consider all the issues that are raised with us.

The Customer Charter is distributed to Council Members who, as representatives of the community, will review the standards and provide feedback. We will have regular consultation with our customers, including satisfaction surveys, and use this information to help us make decisions. We will ensure that customers are aware of arrangements for feedback on consultations they have been involved in.

We want customers to let us know if they are happy or unhappy with us or with our services. Customers can complete a Comments/Suggestion card that is available at access points, comment on Council services through the Comments, Compliments and Complaints leaflet and via our online comment form available at www.hartlepool.gov.uk/ (hyperlink to form).

CUSTOMERS' INFORMATION

The information that we produce about our services will be accurate, useful and up to date. It will be written in plain English avoiding the use of jargon and will be clear, concise and user-friendly. We will provide information in the Council's 'Hartbeat' (hyperlink) magazine that is published 4 times a year and also on the Council's website at www.hartlepool.gov.uk (hyperlink). We will display a wide range of information leaflets at Council premises that will also be sent to customers upon request. The Council will issue news releases to the local press and radio stations.

We will make arrangements, upon request, for our information to be provided in other languages, large print, Braille and on cd or audio cassette.

HELPING US TO HELP CUSTOMERS

High expectations should produce better services and it is important that customers know what they can expect of service providers. Customers can help us by

- keeping appointments or, if possible, letting us know that they will be late
- giving us as much notice as possible if they need to cancel an appointment
- giving us full and accurate information so that we can deal with requests quickly and effectively
- keeping us up-to-date about their circumstances and letting us know if a particular service is no longer needed
- telling us immediately if they are unhappy with the service they have received
- telling us if they are pleased with the service they have received to encourage good practice across the council
- treating our staff with courtesy and respect

We will not tolerate aggressive behaviour, bad language or racist, sexist and discriminatory comment.

COMPLAINTS

The Council aims to provide excellent services that meet the needs of all our customers. We aim to make our services as efficient and effective as possible and to do this we need to know if we are getting it right. If customers are not satisfied with their service they need to tell us and we will try to resolve things speedily and simply. If a customer is still dissatisfied they may make a formal complaint.

A complaint can be made by letter, fax, email, and phone, via the website, their Councillor or in person at any Council office. The department concerned will investigate the complaint and will advise the customer, within 5 working days, who is dealing with it and how long it will take to investigate. We aim to give a full written answer within 15 working days and if it is going to take longer than this the customer will be advised when a reply can be expected. The customer may ask for the complaint to be reviewed by Councillors if it is not resolved to their satisfaction. Social care complaints are dealt with differently and information on their procedure is available on request. We will record and analyse all complaints and publish lessons learned.

We will make every effort to resolve a complaint to the customer's satisfaction but if we are not able to do this, the customer can ask the Local Government Ombudsman to investigate their case.

Full details of the complaint procedure are available upon request and are available in alternative formats, eg other languages, large print, Braille and on cd or audio cassette.

IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

We will set clear and measurable targets for each service that will help to promote best practice. We will monitor services and carry out regular reviews taking account of customer feedback to help us make decisions.

HOW TO CONTACT THE COUNCIL

The Council's main administrative offices and switchboard are open from 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Thursday and from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm on Friday. The main switchboard number is 01429 266522. A text phone is available on 01429 523601.

The main Council address is Hartlepool Borough Council, Civic Centre, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY.

A-Z OF SERVICES

Emergency Contact Numbers - Outside Normal Office Hours

SERVICE	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Needles (Richard Court)	01429 869424
Social Care Services	08702 402994
Social Care Services (textphone)	01642 602346

During Normal Office Hours

	SERVICE	TEL NUMBER
A	Abandoned/derelict properties	01429 523322
	Abandoned vehicles	01429 523333
	Adopted roads and footpaths	01429 523252
	Adult Education	01429 868616
	Alley gates	01429 523333
	Allotments	01429 523415
	Animals – Stray, Fouling, Dead	01429 523333
	Anti-Social Behaviour	01429 296588
	Art Gallery	01429 869706
	Asbestos	01429 523333
	Benefits – Housing and Council Tax	01429 284188
B	Births, Marriages and Deaths - Registering	01429 284201
	Bonfires	01429 523333
	Borough Hall	01429 266269
	Building Regulations	01429 523299
	Bulky Household Waste	01429 523333
	Bus Passes	01429 523333
	Business Awards	01429 867677
	Business Rates	01429 284166
	Business Security Grants	01429 523505
	Business Sites and Support	01429 523511

2.2

C	Car Parking	01429 523369
	Cemeteries and Crematoria	01429 523316
	Chairman of the Council	01429 523702
	Children's Information Service	01429 284284
	Community Safety	01429 405557
	Community Wardens	01429 523370
	Conservation Areas	01429 523275
	Council Tax	01429 284166
	Councillors	01429 523704
	Countryside Wardens	01429 853325
D	Development Plans	01429 284084
	Dog Wardens	01429 523333
	Drugs Intervention Team	01429 283498
E	Elected Mayor	01429 523702
	Elections	01429 523088
	Electoral Registration	01429 523088
	Employment and Training Initiatives	01429 284482
F	Fly Tipping	01429 523333
G	Garden Centre/Nursery	01429 233950
	Graffiti	01429 523333
	Gritting	01429 523706
H	Hartlepool Maritime Experience	01429 860077
	Housing Advice and Homelessness	01429 523338
L	Land Charges Searches	01429 523088
	Libraries	01429 272905
	Licensing	01429 523349
	Listed Buildings	01429 523275
	Litter Bins	01429 523333
M	Mayor	01429 523702
	Mill House Leisure Centre	01429 223791
	Museum	01429 860077
N	Needles	01429 523333
	Noise Nuisance	01429 523311
P	Parks	01429 523412
	Play Areas	01429 523333
	Pest Control	01429 523323
	Planning Applications and Enforcement	01429 284317
	Potholes/manholes	01429 523333
R	Road Works	01429 284072
	Radar Keys	01429 523333
	Refuse Collection	01429 523333
	Recycling	01429 523333
	Rights of Way	01429 523524
S	School Admissions	01429 523768
	School Attendance	01429 284213
	School Bullying	01429 287352
	School Meals (Free)	01429 284122
	School Transport	01429 523769

2.2

	Shrub Beds	01429 523333
	Social Care – Duty Team	01429 523872
	Sports Development	01429 284050
	Street Cleaning	01429 523333
	Street Lighting	01429 523333
	Stray Dogs	01429 523333
	Summerhill Outdoor Activity Centre	01429 284584
T	Tourist Information	01429 869706
	Town Hall Theatre	01429 890000
	Trees – Preservation Orders	01429 523414
	Trees - Highways	01429 523333
U	Unadopted Land	01429 523216
W	Weed Control	01429 523333
Y	Youth Offending	01429 523986
	Youth Service	01429 523900

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

16 October 2006



Report of: CHIEF PERSONNEL SERVICES OFFICER

Subject: ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide departmental responses for the Portfolio Holder to consider regarding attendance management

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report sets out the corporate and individual departmental responses confirming the current and planned arrangements for managing attendance. Comments are also provided by the Director of Adult and Community Services as the Corporate Sickness Champion.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Corporate issue.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Portfolio holder only.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

To note the report and endorse the arrangements made.

Report of: CHIEF PERSONNEL SERVICES OFFICER

Subject: ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1** To provide departmental responses for the Portfolio Holder to consider regarding attendance management.

2. Background

- 2.1** The extent to which employees are absent from work due to illness has a direct impact on the quality, level and cost of the provision of services. As such the Government has included BVPI12 – The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence in its basket of Corporate Health Performance Indicators.
- 2.2** Quarterly reports are made to the Performance Management Portfolio Holder meetings detailing corporate and departmental performance and corporate performance improvement actions which have been undertaken or are planned
- 2.3** A request was made at the August 2006 Performance Management Portfolio holder's meeting for "each department to report on sickness levels and days lost to the October Portfolio Holder meeting and that where sickness levels are higher or no better than they were two years ago then departmental heads attend the Portfolio Holder meeting to explain why and what they intend to do to improve figures".
- 2.4** At the August 2006 Performance Management Portfolio holder's meeting, the Chief Personnel Services Officer was also asked to report best practice from authorities who are doing well at tackling sickness to the October meeting.

3. Departmental Responses

- 3.1** All departments have provided a response to the Portfolio Holder's request setting out the attendance statistics for the last two years and current performance, a brief description of current management arrangements and planned actions to improve attendance levels. All the responses can be found at Appendix A.

4. Departmental performance

- 4.1** As indicated in the August 2006 Performance Management Portfolio Holder report, the Council wide weighted performance is not meeting its target and this trend is continuing, with only Regeneration and

Planning Services forecasted to achieve its target at the end of the year. Based on figures to the end of August 2006, Chief Executive's and Regeneration and Planning Services have improved on two years ago, whereas performance in Children's Services, Adult and Community Services and Neighbourhood Services has worsened. Departmental performance over the previous two years and in the current year is detailed in Appendix A

- 4.2** It is clear from the analysis of sickness into Short, Medium and Long Term Sickness that there is a degree of consistency amongst departmental short term performance but that the inconsistency amongst medium and long term absence performance is a significant contributor to the variation in departmental performance. The two most significant categories of absence are stress and musculo-skeletal injuries. The proportion of sickness applicable in departments varies which may reflect the type of work being undertaken for example Neighbourhood Services Department is more prone to musculo-skeletal absence than any other department.

5. Summary / Commentary on current arrangements

- 5.1** The Corporate Attendance Management Policy and Procedure were developed based on guidance included in the Management of Ill Health handbook and other guidance documents prepared by the former Employers Organisation. They therefore reflect good practice for attendance management.

- 5.2** A significant range of resources are available to departments to manage sickness absence including

- Occupational Health - to provide medical advice and guidance to managers and employees
- Counselling – to help employees who are suffering from stress and other mental health problems
- Physiotherapy – to help employees with musculo-skeletal problems
- Attendance Management Policy and Procedure – to set the framework for managing attendance and provide best practice advice and guidance
- HR – to support managers in addressing sickness
- employee support to support employees who are experiencing a wide range of difficulties at work and at home e.g. family relations, debt, alcohol abuse, sexual orientation and help signpost them to specialist counselling
- Chaplaincy service – to provide a non-denominational pastoral service to support employees who are experiencing a wide range of difficulties at work and at home e.g. family relations, debt, alcohol abuse, sexual orientation
- Sickness champions – to 'champion' sickness matters in departments

- Information and guidance to employees and managers for example wellbeing scenarios
- Provision of management information
- Absence related modules included in phase 2 of the Leadership and Management Development programme

5.3 Most, if not all, of the best practice arrangements for dealing with absence are mentioned in at least one of the departmental reports. Whilst this apparent lack of consistency may be a symptom of the pro-forma approach to the reports it may also be indicative of inconsistent application of the arrangements, both within and between departments. Whilst not mentioned in any of the departmental reports, consistency of application and approach, particularly in addressing sickness absence early, is something the Sickness Champions Group is striving to achieve.

6. Summary / Commentary on planned actions to improve

6.1 High-level commitment to managing sickness is demonstrated by the appointment of Member (Performance Management Portfolio Holder), CMT (Director of Adult and Community Services) and departmental Sickness Champions. The latter 2 groups, plus representation from HR form the Corporate Sickness Champions Group which is chaired by the Director of Adult and Community Services. The group gives strategic leadership to initiatives to improve sickness performance.

6.2 Over the last twelve months the Sickness Champions Group has been instrumental in

- Developing, in draft, a more prescriptive process for managing long term sickness absence
- Developing scheme of delegation for agreeing termination of employment arrangements with employees whilst retaining the ability to dismiss for non attendance at work (where appropriate)
- Identifying improvements needed in respect of Occupational Health
- Developing wellbeing scenarios to assist managers
- Including briefings to managers and training modules as part of the Leadership and Management Development Programme
- Developing of improved 'phased return to work' arrangements
- Improving management information

6.3 Planned actions by the Sickness Champions Group include

- Testing the effectiveness of the more prescriptive process for managing long term sickness absence
- Overseeing the implementation of improvements in the Occupational Health arrangements
- Identifying improvements needed in respect of Counselling services

- Overseeing the absence related Leadership and Management Development Programme project
- Improving sickness recording and reporting arrangements
- Identifying further improvements in management information requirements
- Improving the clarity of departmental and HR responsibilities in managing absence
- Increasing support for managers in dealing with long term sickness where it is clear the employee is not well enough to return to work but does not qualify for ill health retirement
- Improving consistency of approach and appropriate priority given by managers/HR in addressing sickness absence
- Exploring good practice amongst neighbouring authorities

6.4 Whilst the Sickness Champions Group oversee the strategic improvements needed in respect of absence management, much of the detailed planning work is undertaken within HR. The HR support to the group, as well as the general HR support in managing individual cases, has a significant resource implication which is currently being considered in HR, although some improvements may be delayed due to other priorities i.e. equal pay and job evaluation.

6.5 The Director of Adult and Community Services comments on her role as CMT Sickness Champion as follows

“The work of the Sickness Champions Group is starting to have an impact on sickness levels, although the strategic work needs to be backed up by robust individual case management across the Council. Whilst the Sickness Champions Group can improve the framework in which absence management operates and can demonstrate a high level of commitment to these issues, individual managers need to actively manage absence, including making early interventions such as referral to physiotherapy or counselling where appropriate. A balance needs to be struck between supporting those who are genuinely sick and not tolerating other absence. A range of tools are available to managers, although further support needs to be given to managers where it is clear that an individual employee is not fit enough to continue to be at work, particularly where the manager has been a colleague of the employee for some time, and unlike discipline, has not done anything wrong except experience ill health

7. Recommendation

7.1 That the Portfolio Holder notes the report and endorse the arrangements made and actions planned

Appendix A

Departmental Responses

Chief Executive's Department

(Department not greatly affected by Corporate Restructure in 2005)

Absence Management Report

	S	M	L	Total
2004/05	3.33	1.85	7.23	12.41
2005/06	4.03	3.45	2.02	9.50
2006/07 Unweighted to August	2.86*	3.21*	2.43*	8.49
2006/07 Weighted to August	3.26*	3.66*	2.77*	9.68
2006/07 Departmental Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	8.89

Short Term 1-5 days
Medium Term 6-20 days
Long Term greater than 20 days

* Approximate figures

N.B. The numbers shown in the table above relate to the number of days lost on average per FTE employee

Departmental absence management arrangements

- Follow corporate absence management procedure
- Monthly consideration of sickness at CEMT
- Monthly consideration of sickness at Divisional Management Teams
- Consideration of, and determination of appropriate action, in respect of individual absences at appropriate management levels e.g. in relation to long term sickness or persistent bouts of short term sickness
- In managing sickness absence full use is made of the spectrum of support mechanisms that the Council provides and flexible working arrangements wherever possible.

Analysis of absence levels

- Whilst short term absence appears to have returned to 2004/5 levels, medium term absence continues to be much higher than in 2004/5 and long term absence has increased from 2005/6 levels. Overall, the forecasted outturn (weighted performance) for 2006/7 is similar to 2005/6 levels

Planned actions to achieve 2006/07 target

- Regular positive promotion of attendance with all staff
- Review quarterly trends
- Continued monitoring and targeting as appropriate of sickness as identified above
- Continued proactive use of preventative interventions e.g. physiotherapist for bad backs etc
- Staff 'ownership' of sickness record to instil culture of attendance.
- Monthly monitoring returns ensure accountability of operational managers to Divisional Management Team.
- Robust Application of Council's Attendance Management Procedures to actively manage absence
- Implementation of Homeworking and Compressed Hours Policy in Finance Division (allowing greater flexibility in working times and the opportunity of additional flexi time off).

Adult and Community Services Department
(New Department established by the Corporate Restructure in 2005)

Absence Management Report

	S	M	L	Total
2004/05 - Social Services	3.13	2.58	8.55	14.26
2004/05 - Community Services	3.18	2.28	7.96	13.43
2005/06	3.10	2.55	12.40	18.05
2006/07 Unweighted to August	3.29*	4.62*	8.97*	16.86
2006/07 Weighted to August	3.75*	5.26*	10.22*	19.23
2006/07 Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.37

Short Term **1-5 days**
Medium Term **6-20 days**
Long Term **greater than 20 days**

*** Approximate figures**

N.B. The numbers shown in the table above relate to the number of days lost on average per FTE employee

Departmental absence management arrangements

- All managers are following corporate absence management procedures
- All managers are completing return to work interviews, even for part day absences
- Absence trends are monitored and action taken when trigger points are reached or earlier if intervention could result in prevention of sickness
- Sickness absence levels are reviewed at management meetings at all levels and actions agreed to address issues.

Analysis of absence levels

- A problem has now been identified with long term sickness absence management. This is now being case managed on an individual basis with HR. There is now an impending conclusion on a number of long term issues being resolved or timescales identified for resolution.

Planned actions to achieve 2006/07 target

- Management to continue to be made aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities for the management of absence in staff teams
- Strengthen arrangements for absence monitoring in staff meetings
- Analyse trends and reasons for absence and act on these
- Promote healthy living policies / well-being facilities
- Recognition for good attendance in supervision/appraisal/team meetings
- In-depth absence management training for all line managers is being set up with HR, in addition to the management programme
- Monthly Departmental absence management meetings are held with HR where long term cases are case managed. This meeting is now beginning to focus on the to 20 intermittent sickness cases to case manage these.

Children's Services Department
(New Department established by the Corporate Restructure in 2005)

Absence Management Report

	S	M	L	Total
2004/05 - Social Services	3.13	2.58	8.55	14.26
2004/05 - Education	2.72	1.41	8.40	12.53
2004/05 - Community Services	3.18	2.28	7.96	13.43
2005/06	2.90	1.74	10.17	14.81
2006/07 Unweighted to July	2.84*	4.63*	7.69*	15.16
2006/07 Weighted to July	3.24*	5.28*	8.77*	17.29
2006/07 Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	12.50

Short Term **1-5 days**
Medium Term **6-20 days**
Long Term **greater than 20 days**

*** Approximate figures**

N.B. The numbers shown in the table above relate to the number of days lost on average per FTE employee

Departmental absence management arrangements

- All managers are required to follow corporate absence management procedures and training has been provided for Senior Management Team (eg availability of physiotherapy and counselling, return to work interviews, processes for addressing sickness absence problems);
- Absence trends are monitored at the Children's Services Management team and action taken as soon as concerns arise;
- Sickness absence levels are also reviewed at management meetings at all levels and actions agreed to address issues;
- Sickness champion identified;
- Positive actions are in place to provide a healthy workplace environment through supervision, team meetings appraisals and Investors in People policies;
- Departmental managers make full use of a range of other HR policies in order to support employees and help minimise sickness absence e.g. working at home, flexible working arrangements and carers' leave policies.
- Regular liaison with HR to discuss absence levels and look at possible solutions (eg counselling, occupational health, part-time return to work, workplace assessment)

Analysis of absence levels

- The most difficult factor to resolve is long-term sickness absence. Individual cases are managed in liaison with HR. A number of long-term issues are being resolved, but the process for resolution can take a long time.
- New policies need to be developed to analyse and address increased medium term absences.

Planned actions to achieve 2006/07 target

- Continue to reinforce managers' responsibilities for the management of absence in their teams;
- Strengthen arrangements for absence monitoring in staff meetings;
- Analyse trends and reasons for absence and act on these, supported by improved HR ICT systems;
- Continue to promote HR policies which support and encourage good staff attendance, including implementation of actions from recent stress audit;
- Ensure appropriate managers and staff take advantage of absence management training;
- Continue regular discussion with HR in relation to long term cases and provide monthly updates on progress to Children's Services Management Team;

Neighbourhood Services Department
(Department not greatly affected by Corporate Restructure in 2005)

Absence Management Report

	S	M	L	Total
2004/05	2.63	2.05	7.99	12.67
2005/06	3.02	2.39	7.84	13.25
2006/07 Unweighted to August	2.52*	4.93*	5.37*	12.82
2006/07 Weighted to August	2.87*	5.62*	6.13*	14.62
2006/07 Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.77

Short Term **1-5 days**
Medium Term **6-20 days**
Long Term **greater than 20 days**

*** Approximate figures**

N.B. The numbers shown in the table above relate to the number of days lost on average per FTE employee

Departmental absence management arrangements

- Regular meetings held with Human Resources to discuss absence levels and look at possible solutions eg Referral, offering counselling, Phased returns
- Examination of sickness trends, both long and short term sickness
- Interviews with employees who have reached threshold levels / back to work interviews undertaken.
- Support and assistance offered during and following sickness absences
- Redeploy staff / put on light duties / make reasonable adjustments to aid return to work
- Removal of right to self certify sickness
- Offer staff mutual termination / ill health retirement / medical redeployment if appropriate or look at possible dismissal on grounds of capability.
- Sickness levels regularly discussed at department and section meetings

Analysis of absence levels

- Sickness levels analysed on a monthly basis at section levels
- At current levels we estimate that long term sickness represents approx. half of the sickness for the department.

Planned actions to achieve 2006/07 target

- Continue to address absence as detailed above, reviewing methods / trigger points etc as appropriate.
- Consider mutual termination / compromise agreement at an earlier stage.
- Improved reporting and management reports through HR analyser.
- Pro-active approach to the use of employee support / physio etc.
- Introduction of weekly and monthly reporting systems detailing actions taken in addressing long term sickness.

Regeneration and Planning Department
(Department not greatly affected by Corporate Restructure in 2005)

*** Approximate figures**

N.B. The numbers shown in the table above relate to the number of days lost on average per FTE employee

Absence Management Report

	S	M	L	Total
2004/05	3.12	0.88	6.10	10.10
2005/06	3.12	1.38	2.43	6.93
2006/07 Unweighted to August	2.21*	2.67*	0.79*	5.67
2006/07 Weighted to August	2.52*	3.05*	0.90*	6.47
2006/07 Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.08

Departmental absence management arrangements

- On a monthly basis, the Director and Senior Management Team monitor progress towards achieving the sickness target, consider emerging trends and review individual cases of employee absence.
- The wider Departmental Management Team meetings with all section heads in attendance also discuss sickness absence as a regular agenda item.
- The issue of sickness absence is raised with new staff as part of the department's standard induction programme.
- Departmental managers make full use of a range of other HR policies in order to support employees and in doing so, help minimise sickness absence eg working at home, flexible working arrangements and carer's leave policies.

Analysis of absence levels

- Sickness absence has improved since 2004/05 mainly due to the reduction in the number of long term sickness cases.
- Absence recorded within the 'stress related illness' classification is the highest single cause of days lost in the current year.

Planned actions to achieve 2006/07 target

- A stress audit has recently been completed by the department in consultation with the Trade Unions. An action plan to address issues arising is currently being finalised.

- Use of new Corporate HR analyser reports to better understand trends in short term sickness absence is planned.
- Work towards maintaining and further enhancing the positive culture within Regeneration and Planning Services will continue in accordance with the departmental plan drawn up following the Employee Survey.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

16 October 2006



Report of: CHIEF PERSONNEL SERVICES OFFICER

Subject: HALF YEARLY DIVERSITY REPORT

SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report progress made in respect of the action plan for achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (BVPI 2a) by 2007/8 and other achievements in the first six months of 2006/7.

2.0 SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report provides details of the Council's progress in respect of the actions planned to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by 2007/8, departmental achievements and the diversity actions planned for the next six months.

3.0 RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Corporate Performance.

4.0 TYPE OF DECISION

This is not a key decision.

5.0 DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Portfolio Holder only.

6.0 DECISION(S) REQUIRED

Endorse the report and action plan.

Report of: CHIEF PERSONNEL SERVICES OFFICER

Subject: HALF YEARLY DIVERSITY REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report progress made in respect of the action plan for achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (BVPI 2a) by 2007/8 and other achievements in the first six months of 2006/7.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At your meeting held on 26 June 2006, the 2005/6 Annual Race and Diversity Report was endorsed. It was also reported that the Council had achieved Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (BVPI 2a) and had set itself a target of achieving Level 3 by 31 March 2008. The Diversity Steering Group has developed an action plan (**Appendix A**) which is designed to

- Identify and implement the actions needed to achieve Level 3 of the Standard
- Implement 2006/7 Corporate Plan objectives
- Address other, more general, equality and diversity issues.

- 2.2 Wherever possible, existing arrangements (e.g. Corporate Procurement Group, Corporate Consultation Group etc) are being utilised to take the necessary actions. This has the advantage of mainstreaming the activities as well as avoiding duplication of effort. Where existing groups do not exist, small sub groups comprising some Diversity Steering Group and co-opted 'experts' are being formed to work through the action plan.

3. Key achievements since April 2006

- 3.1 Significant progress is being made against the action plan (see Appendix A for details) although some actions have been slightly delayed due to preparations for CPA.
- 3.2 Key Corporate achievements since April 2006 include: -
- Improvements to the Talking with Communities Initiative for consulting with the BME communities including the development of its own website
(<http://consultation.hartlepool.gov.uk/inovem/consult/ti/talkingwithcommunities/consultationHome>)

- Accessibility improvements to the council website which is now World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) AA compliant, Browsealoud installed and welcome information provided in 8 main community languages.
- Departments incorporating the three new Equality Standard strands (Age, Sexual orientation and Religion & Belief) in their equality and diversity work.
- Revised IDeA workbook for recording Equality Standard evidence implemented
- Review of HR policies, development of a new draft HR policy in relation to working beyond age 65 and training of some managers in response to the new age regulations which come into effect on 1st October 2006.
- Launch of a web based Diversity in the Workplace course tailored to the Council and signposted to relevant policies and procedures.
- Consultation with disabled people and groups representing disabled people in relation to, and initial draft of a Disability Equality Scheme in order to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.
- Initial discussions about including the Diversity Steering Group Action Plan within the Performance Management Database

3.3 A summary of key actions and achievements by departments since April 2006 is attached at Appendix B

4.0 Actions Planned for the next six months

- 4.1 The actions planned for the next six months are detailed in appendix A. Some of the key actions planned include
- Disability Equality Scheme with action plan agreed and implemented.
 - Corporate guidance developed detailing how equality is to be integrated into service planning (including setting targets based on equality objectives).
 - Corporate Access (physical access, access to services and access to information) strategy with action plan agreed and implemented.
 - Equality issues mainstreamed into Procurement
 - Revised corporate guidance on INRA's and DIA's (retrospective and predictive impact assessments).
 - Improved accessibility features on the Council's website
 - Updated and new HR policies in response to the new age regulations agreed and implemented
 - Diversity Steering Group Action Plan included within the Performance Management Database

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That the Portfolio Member endorses the half yearly Race and Diversity progress Report.

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Appendix A

DSG Action Plan - to meet Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by 2007-08

Key:

DSG Sub Group 1 = Peter Turner (Lead), Carol Davis, Andrew Hagon, Wally Stagg, Vijaya Kotur

DSG Sub Group 2 = Wally Stagg (Lead), Andrew Hagon, Julie Wilson, Vijaya Kotur, Les Nevin, Keith Lucas

DSG Sub Group 3 = Graham Frankland (Lead), Michelle Thubron, Keith Lucas, Les Nevin, Albert Williams

DSG Sub Group 4 = Margaret Hunt (Lead), Christine Armstrong, Angela Read, Julie Wilson, Vijaya Kotur

DSG Sub Group 5 = Wally Stagg (Lead), Alastair Rae, Paul Diaz, Joan Chapman, Angela Read, Vijaya Kotur, Paul Bass

DSG Sub Group 6 = Joanne Smithson (Lead), Liz Crookston, Michelle Thubron, Wally Stagg, Vijaya Kotur

DSG Sub Group 7 = Vijaya Kotur (Lead), Carol Davis, Wally Stagg, Peter Turner, Margaret Hunt

DSG Sub Group 8 = Julie Wilson (Lead), Alastair Rae, Wally Stagg, Lucy Armstrong, Angela Read

DSG Sub Group 9 = Wally Stagg, Vijaya Kotur, Julie Wilson, Lucy Armstrong

DSG Sub Group 10 = Graham Frankland (Lead), Wally Stagg, Julie Wilson, Vijaya Kotur, Mic Bannister

Equality Standard Actions	Actions	Milestone	Responsible	Progress Reports
3.1 Leadership & Corporate commitment				
3.1.1 Ensure all departments and services set targets based on equality objectives	• Develop guidance on developing equality based targets	October 2006	Peter Turner (Lead) + DSG Sub group 1	First draft of improved service planning arrangements prepared
	• Service plans contain equality based targets & objectives	March 2007		
3.1.2 Establish corporate guidance for information gathering and equality monitoring	• Corporate guidance in place	October 2006	Peter Turner (Lead) + DSG Sub group 1	Delayed due to CPA preparation
3.1.3 Seek agreement on equality targets with partners in local partnerships	• Evidence of equality targets with partners available	March 2008	CMT Graham Frankland (Lead), Corporate Procurement Group + DSG Sub group 10	

3.1.4 Establish mechanisms for ensuring that equality targets are met by suppliers through contract management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of mechanisms in place 	March 2008	Graham Frankland (Lead), Corporate Procurement Group + DSG Sub group 10	
3.1.5 Ensure completion of equality action plans at departmental & service level incorporating performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence contained in Annual Diversity Reports 	March 2007	DSG Departmental Working Groups	
3.1.6 Adopt where appropriate national targets/performance indicators as prescribed by Govt. Departments & the Audit Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of achievement of national targets & performance indicators 	Oct 2006	Peter Turner (Lead) + DSG Sub group 1	Complete - National targets and performance indicators adopted and collected on annual basis
3.1.7 Implement systems for reviewing and revising the CEP & departmental action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitored by DSG on quarterly basis Revisions reported in Annual Diversity Plan Implement quarterly reporting system 	Sept 2006	DSG Departmental Working Groups	Complete
3.1.8 Members & senior officers to endorse plans as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual reports to portfolio holder Departmental action plans to go to DMTs and be minuted 	June 2006	DSG Departmental Working Groups	Complete
3.1.9 Link action planning to Best Value processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of links to Best Value process 	Oct 2006	Peter Turner (Lead) + DSG Sub Group 1	First draft of improved service planning arrangements

			prepared
3.1.10 Ensure that action on targets has started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitored by DSG on quarterly basis 	March 2008 DSG Departmental Working Groups	
3.2 Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny			
3.2.1 Make public all service level & employment action objectives and targets that are available for consultation & scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in consultation programme Reported in Annual Diversity Report INRAs to be planned into taking with communities consultation events 	March 2007 Liz Crookston (Lead) + Corporate Consultation group	
3.2.2 Make provision of language services appropriate to designated consultation and scrutiny groups		March 2007 Liz Crookston (Lead) + Corporate Consultation group	
3.2.3 Completion of a full and systematic consultation process with designated community, staff & stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of consultation processes with all stakeholder groups Extend Employee Survey 	March 2008 Liz Crookston (Lead) + Corporate Consultation group	
3.2.4 Consultation involving designated community, staff & stakeholders groups with scrutiny procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of consultation on involvement with scrutiny process Corporate/Service Plans go to Scrutiny 	March 2008 Liz Crookston (Lead)+ Corporate Consultation group	
3.2.5 Consultation equality to be linked with the continuing development of the Community Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be included in review of community Strategy Feedback on monitoring reports to community strategy partners 	March 2007 Joanne Smithson, + DSG sub group 6	
3.2.6 Publicise how, where and when action on targets will start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be included in annual diversity reports 	March 2008 Oct 2007 Liz Crookston (Lead) + Corporate	Delayed due to CPA preparation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hartbeat Press Release 	Consultation group	
3.3 Service Delivery & Customer Care			
3.3.1 Complete access to services element of the CEP and ensure consistency with the RES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DIA programme Review INRAs Evidence of improved access to services 	March 2007 CMT Departmental Working Groups	
3.3.2 Equality objectives & targets developed within each department/service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives & targets in place 	March 2007 Directors Departmental Working Groups	
3.3.3 Service planning to specifically address the importance of barriers, accessibility and reasonable adjustments in the provision of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of service planning to address accessibility to issues Access Strategy in place 	Dec 2006 Directors Departmental Working Groups	
3.3.4 Allocation of appropriate resources to achieve targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of allocation of resources 	Annual budget process Directors Departmental Working Groups	Complete
3.3.5 Establish structures of responsibility at departmental and service level to progress action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental Working groups in place responsible for progressing departmental action plans 	In place Directors Departmental Working Groups	Complete
3.3.6 Set timetable within action plans for creating/adopting information & monitoring within service areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance on data collected Action plans in place 	(refer to dept service plans) Departmental working groups	

3.3.7 For agencies delivering services on behalf of the authority, include within contracts a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service, fairly and without unlawful discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of equality issues included in contracts 	March 2007	Graham Frankland (Lead), Corporate Procurement Group + DSG Sub group 10	Race related contract clauses being revised to reflect all equality strands
3.3.8 Establish monitoring of contracts to secure equal employment and equal service delivery targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring arrangements in place 	March 2008	Graham Frankland (Lead), Corporate Procurement Group + DSG Sub group 10	
3.3.9 Start action on departmental and service area targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	November 2006	Departmental Working Groups	To be completed as part of 2007/8 service planning process
3.4 Employment & Training				
3.4.1 Complete employment section of CEP & ensure consistency with RES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure employment section included in CEP is consistent with the RES 		Chief Personnel Services Officer	Complete
3.4.2 Set employment equality targets for recruitment, staff retention & workforce profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set objective employment detailing equality targets for recruitment, training and retention 	May 2007	Chief Personnel Services Officer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure targets are informed by LLMA & workforce profile assessment 	May 2006		Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure family friendly policies are available to all employees 	In Place		Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify positive action 	April 2007		

3.4.3 Conduct an equal pay review & plan for equal pay adjustment	<p>recruitment schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake equal pay review linking with pay and grading structures March 2007 Set plan to address pay in equalities identified In place Develop guidelines on starting pay, pay on promotion & accessibility and reasonable adjustments in recruitment, retention and promotion procedures as part of review of R&S policy March 2007 	Chief Personnel Services Officer	
3.4.4 Ensure that staff and Members are aware of action plans and the implications for services and employment 3.4.5 Provide training for managers on the implementation of the standard with contractors and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate equal employment & pay targets to all employees with detailed information June 2007 Report to Portfolio Holder Provide training for all managers on detailed implementation of equal action objectives and targets in relation to contracts/partnerships March 2007 	Chief Personnel Services Officer Graham Frankland (Lead), Corporate Procurement Group + DSG Sub group 10	
3.4.6 Training for all staff involved in recruitment on the Equality Standard, setting service objectives, action planning & monitoring, consistent with the training arrangements set out in the RES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop equality training systems for all employees March 2007 Ensure all employees involved in recruitment are aware of equality action plan and its implications for employment practice Ensure training is consistent with 	Chief Personnel Services Officer	

	Diversity Scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop interview guidance for recruitment 		
3.4.7 Provide training for all staff on the detailed implementation of the Equality Standard including action plans and updates on legal and other developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure disciplinary procedures specify that they must be applied fairly to all employees & include in review of discipline/attendance/capability procedures Ensure all breaches of equality & harassment policy are dealt with under disciplinary procedures 	March 2007	Chief Personnel Services Officer
3.4.8 Build equality objectives and targets into management appraisal mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include in revised appraisal scheme 	March 2007	Chief Personnel Services Officer
3.4.9 Provide information and appropriate training on action plans to support scrutiny process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure cabinet & scrutiny members are aware of action plans and targets for employment and pay equality Ensure information & appropriate training on equality action plan is provided to support the scrutiny process 	March 2007	Chief Personnel Services Officer
3.4.10 Establish a system of guidance, training on relevant equality issues to short listing panels and interviewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in corporate annual training plan Develop equality guidance for shortlisting and interviewing that are consistent with Guidance from the equality & human rights 	March 2007	Chief Personnel Services Officer

	commission		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure system for training all members of short listing and interviewing panels is effective 		
3.4.11 Start actions on employment & pay targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement employment and pay action plan April 2007 	Chief Personnel Services Officer	
Corporate Plan			
SC2 Develop the “Talking with Communities” consultation initiative	Start April 2006	Vijaya Kotur (Lead), Liz Crookston	Complete
SC 19 Develop and agree corporate access strategy and access to buildings, services and information policies /statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategy Dec 2006 Develop access to buildings policy Dec 2006 Develop access to services policy Dec 2006 Develop access to information policy including Website Accessibility, Key information to be available in different formats and languages, Internal information to be made available like translation services etc Dec 2006 	Strategy - DSG Sub Group 2 Access to Buildings – DSG Sub Group 3 Access to Services – DSG Group 4 Access to information DSG Sub Group 5	
OD 69 Publish Annual Race & Diversity Report	June 2006	Vijaya Kotur Julie Wilson	Complete

OD 70 Implement Diversity Steering Group Action Plan	Start May '06	Diversity Steering Group	Complete
General			
Processes	Review and Simplify INRA and DIA process Nov 2006	Vijaya Kotur (Lead) + DSG Sub Group 7	Second draft INRA process developed
Awareness Raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles, News line, Departmental Newsletter, Briefings Learning & Awareness raising Raising the profile of Diversity to all Employees 	March 2007 Julie Wilson (Lead) + DSG Sub group 8	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear Priority in every area of Diversity Looking at how we maximize the external resources available and working in partnerships Scrutinising impact and what difference it makes 'Age' to be mainstreamed in equalities agenda Disability Equality Scheme 	March 2007 DSG Sub group 9	Complete First draft complete and subject to consultation with disabled people and groups representing disabled people

Departmental Key achievements**Appendix B****Chief Executives Department****Key Achievements (April 2006- Sept 2006)**

- Three successful Talking with Communities events addressing a wide range of issues and resulting in positive outcomes. For full report please log onto <http://consultation.hartlepool.gov.uk/inovem/consult.ti/talkingwithcommunities/consultationHome>
- Improvements to the council website, now AA compliant, Browsealoud installed and information provided in main community languages
- The mobile benefits service continues to be rolled out delivering a more convenient and speedier service

INRAS (objectives and targets progress so far)

Progress on the actions required to ensure/ reaffirm compliance with diversity requirements include:

- Agendas, reports and decision records/minutes are now being made available on the council website
- Ensuring appropriate consultation is carried out for all scrutiny reviews
- Improvements to the council website, AA compliant, Browsealoud installed and information provided in main community languages
- Job Evaluation, Pay & Grading review is progressing

DIA's (so far)

Identified 8 topics, which require DIAs in 2006/7.

In April to Sept a DIA was undertaken in respect of the support for alcohol, drugs and substance abuse policy and procedure.

Progress on the Diversity objectives set for this year

Progress on the Corporate Plan diversity and equality objectives:

SC05 Develop the "Talking with Communities" consultation initiative – this is progressing – see above

SC017/19 Develop and agree corporate Access Strategy and access to buildings, services and information policies/statements - Diversity Steering Group Sub Group starting to make progress

OD066 Publish Annual Race and Diversity Report - Report approved by Portfolio Holder June 2006 and published and published

OD067 Implement Diversity Steering Group Action Plan – progressing various work streams to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard by March 2008

OD 68-72 Address equal pay and job evaluation issues - As at 30th June 2006 465 Jobs had been evaluated. Progress had been slower than expected due to the long term sickness of the full-time Senior Job Analyst. Recovery plan being devised to achieve target date.

Refs refer to Corporate Plan 2006/7 objectives and actions

Adult & Community Services**Key Achievements (April 2006- Sept 2006)**

- The Disability Sports Officer was appointed on 05/06/06 and made a good start to progressing this agenda, including taking the service users from Havelock to the Headland Sports Hall.
- In the museum service publicity materials comply fully with DDA and the guide to the Museum of Hartlepool have been translated into 2 languages.
- A contemporary art project “through the eyes of” was completed.
- In Adult Social Care – ethnicity recording is now approaching 100% and consultation is underway on the introduction of an extra care-housing scheme.
- In the Library Service – the new materials have been ordered in Bengali.

INRAS (objectives and targets progress so far)

INRAS were reviewed. The majority of objectives and target are in progress and are expected to be complete. For example, deliver a programme of arts and museums outreach projects with under represented, is an ongoing project with success so far includes a photography course with a BME women project. The INRA process will recommence in line with the service-planning timetable.

DIA's (so far)

Extra Care Housing
Telecare
Integrated Teams
Fair Access to Care
Library Plan

Progress on the Diversity objectives set for this year

- Ethnicity recording in Adult Social Care is now close to 100%
- A review of library vehicle services has been completed, including how these services are delivered to those with special needs who find visiting a library difficult.
- Disability Sports Officer appointed.

Children Services

Key Achievements (April 2006- Sept 2006)

- Draft of School Uniform Guidance for Schools
- Appointment made to dedicated Care Coordinator post
- Revised and updated launch date for Child Protection Procedures is 2nd October. They are being printed at present
- A decision to offer 'Direct Payments' to parents of children with a disability so that they are able to commission services to meet their identified need

INRAS (objectives and targets progress so far)

CPD for Schools Assessment Grid – ongoing assessment

Secondary Strategy - Through Intervention Action Plans/School Improvement Plans with a specific focus on groups i.e BME pupils, EAL pupils, SEN, Disabled pupils and gender groups.

Early Years - CIS - review of material produced by CIS in relation to diversity issues

DIA's (so far)

Children's Centre and Extended Schools Strategy

School Admissions

Computerised data base for governor support

Departmental Plan

Special Educational Needs and Pupil Inclusion: BV Review

Progress on the Diversity objectives set for this year

- Consultation underway for a fully inclusive play strategy
- Children's Fund is negotiating a strategy for Children & Young People at The Salaam Centre
- Progress on a more consistent and comprehensive use of Tees Valley & Durham Communication Service
- Progress on a more consistent and comprehensive use of Language Line

Regeneration and Planning Department

Key Achievements (April 2006- Sept 2006)

- Speaker phones installed in Bryan Hanson House interview rooms 2 & 3 for use with Language Line.
- Extensive use of various translation services to assist people in finding employment and training courses, production of leaflets, letters and audio tapes.
- Economic Development held Age Discrimination Seminar in June for Council and external employers.
- Hartlepool Working Solutions team secured employment for disabled people through the Progression to Work Scheme.
- Racially Motivated Incident Policy produced by Anti-Social Behaviour Unit
- Departmental representatives attended Talking with Communities to talk about planning and conservation within the town.
- Design and Access Statements guidance added to Development Control webpage.
- First Draft of the Community Strategy Review produced (including translation statements).

INRAS (objectives and targets progress so far)**Anti-Social Behaviour Unit**

- ASBU representation on Neighbourhood Policing Joint Action groups
- Article on RESPECT requirements published in Hartbeat
- Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Days held September in Borough Hall
- Youth Shelter erected in Burbank Community Garden
- Criminal Damage Action Plan launched by Mayor
- RMI reporting presented to Talking with Communities
- £5,000 budget allocation for publicising ASBU service
- Enforcement capacity increased by the introduction of the Criminal Anti Social Behaviour Order (CRASBO)
- Registered Social Landlord Forum established for sharing information with Police
- ASBU services added to Members Induction Handbook and briefings undertaken with Councillors.

Community Safety

- Works ongoing to mainstream and raise awareness of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act
- £50K budget allocated to improvement community safety in Church Street via the provision of four new street planters. CCTV installation in taxis also being considered.
- 'No drinking in public places' consultation exercise currently being carried out via all Hartlepool licenced premises and Public Notice in Hartlepool Mail.
- Multi-Agency Domestic Violence Officer group established led by Crime

<p>& Disorder Co-ordinator. Domestic violence strategy in the process of being drafted.</p> <p>Community Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, economic and environmental well being of Hartlepool improved through the Community Strategy review. <p>Development Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer access to the planning service under e-government improved through the implementation and development of the NIS ILAP and Hummingbird RKYV systems. <p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment opportunities created under the Progression to Work scheme. <p>Support Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New front line staff trained in the use of Language Line.
<p>DIA's (so far)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Hartlepool Neighbourhood Action Plan. • Dyke House Neighbourhood Action Plan.
<p>Progress on the Diversity objectives set for this year</p> <p>Development Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £10,000 of PDG allocated to HAG for 2006/07. • E-planning services marketed via Member presentation, Hartbeat and Agents Forum. <p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight people have been employed on Hartlepool Working Solutions Progression to Work scheme, with three going onto further employment. <p>Community Strategy Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Event held in May. • First draft prepared. • Consultation events took place with the Hartlepool Partnership, Community Network, Neighbourhood Consultative Forums, Neighbourhood Action Plan Forums, as well as on-line consultation. <p>Anti Social Behaviour Unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BVPI targets set in April. • Draft RMI policy consultation held in June. • RMI articles published in June.

Neighbourhood Services

Key Achievements (April 2006- Sept 2006)

- The redevelopment of the entrance to Spion Kop cemetery to improve the feeling of well being and security of visitors and to encourage more to attend.
- Climate Change conference hosted in Hartlepool. Event gave opportunity for everybody to become aware of climate change.
- The appointment of a Community Nutritionist to assess and address inequalities in nutrition throughout the borough, in particular working with schools.
- Re-launch of 'Fruit and Veg Bag' scheme with the aim to facilitate equal access to healthy fruit and veg.
- Attended Talking with Communities Consultation Event in April to consult on Services for People with Disabilities and in June to consult on Cemeteries and Crematoriums.
- An Environmental Education officer is working in two schools in deprived areas to improve their environmental performance.
- Equality in Procurement sub-group of Corporate Procurement Group has been set up. Progress to date includes:- Decision to aim for level 5 of Equality Standard immediately (not stage by stage)
- Updating Equality Guidance in Officers Guide to Procurement to include all 6 strands of the Equality Standard, plus Human Rights and linking Equality in Procurement to Community Aims / Strategy.
- Updating Equality questionnaire and Pre Qualification Questionnaire to include revised Equality clause's.
- Updating Standard Conditions of Contract of Supply & Service Contracts to include revised Equality clauses.
- Introduction of a free bulky waste collection service.
- Secured funding for supported housing scheme for vulnerable adults

INRAS (objectives and targets progress so far)

- Consultation methods under review for Waste Management
- Continuing with dropped crossing programme and low floor bus stop strategy
- Review of Cemeteries and Crematorium DIA after attending consultation event
- Via meetings and discussions with parents, the School Catering service are now able to provide a service for several pupils who suffer from anaphylactic shock and other eating disorders.
- Departmental INRA review to be carried out Oct-Dec 06 to link with the Service Planning Cycle.

DIA's (so far)

- Community Transport (Transport Services)
- Briarfields
- Multi Storey Car Park

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting People Strategy• Environmental Education
<p>Progress on the Diversity objectives set for this year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversity Action Plan completed• Two progress reports produced to DSG and DMT• Regular monthly meetings continue• Progress monitored through performance monitoring procedure• DIA's reviewed at each Departmental Working Group• Es @t regularly checked and updated

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

16 October 2006



Report of: CHIEF PERSONNEL SERVICES OFFICER

Subject: POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Portfolio holder on the processes relating to postal arrangements.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

This report includes comparative information for the first 2 quarters of 2006/07 relating to the receipt and issue of post for departments of the Council and Elected Members. Included in the report are details of number of items received and sent each day together with information on the impact on postage costs since the implementation of Royal Mail's Pricing in Proportion charges in August this year. Information on the work that has commenced in re-engineering the business processes is also included.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Corporate issue.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Portfolio holder only.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

To note the report.

Report of: CHIEF PERSONNEL SERVICES OFFICER

Subject: POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Portfolio holder on the processes relating to postal arrangements.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Performance Management Portfolio held on 24 July 2006 (Minute 32 refers) a further report was requested in 3 month's time on postal arrangements. Since that meeting, work has continued on gathering information that will be used identify, process map and consider business process re-engineering.

3. EXISTING POSTAGE LEVELS

3.1 Incoming Mail

Table 1 below shows a comparison of the amounts of post received for an average week collected in the first 2 quarters of this financial year. The number of items that are incorrectly or not fully addressed has reduced. Customers who regularly send incorrectly addressed correspondence have been contacted and advised of the correct address details for their letters. Work is ongoing to identify regular senders of incorrectly addressed letters.

3.2 Table 1

AVERAGE INCOMING MAIL PER WEEK BY DEPARTMENT		
Dept	Qtr 1	Qtr 2
Adult & Com Services	435	518
Chief Executive	1673	1427
Children's Services	497	498
Neighbourhood Services	268	349
Regeneration & Planning	69	90
Incorrectly/Not Fully Addressed	157	53
Total	3099	2935

- 3.3 Table 2 below shows a comparison of the average amounts of post received each morning for one week collected in the first 2 quarters of this financial year in the Chief Executive's department. Additional items generated by departments are included in these totals. The amount of items had reduced by 910. This reduction is the result of staff

2.5

encouraging departments to email correspondence direct to officers rather than distributing it via the internal post system.

3.4 Table 2

AVERAGE INCOMING MAIL FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE DEPT		
Division	Qtr 1	Qtr 2
Chief Executive Office	420	128
Corporate Strategy	117	94
Finance	1019	924
Human Resources	519	201
Registration & Members' Services	324	286
Contact Centre	97	41
Legal	379	201
Total	2785	1875

3.5 Outgoing Mail

Table 3 details the number of items and cost of franked mail by department. Since the introduction of Royal Mail's Pricing in Proportion, the average cost per item has reduced. Children's Services department's average costs for franked mail have increased. Investigations are currently underway to identify whether the extra cost relates to the size of the envelope and, if so, to consider what alternatives are available.

3.6 Table 3

OUTGOING MAIL BY DEPARTMENT PER MONTH						
Dept	June 2006			September 2006		
	No. of Items	Cost (£)	Av. Cost per Item	No. of Items	Cost (£)	Av. Cost per Item
Adult & Com Services	9599	3027	£0.32	8342	2457	£0.29
Chief Executive's	7111	2377	£0.33	2543	802	£0.32
Children's Services	4047	1617	£0.40	2045	880	£0.43
Neighbourhood Services	2178	728	£0.33	3130	845	£0.27
Regen & Planning	42	9	£0.21	0	0	£0.00
Total	22977	7758	£0.32	16060	4984	£0.31

3.7 Elected Members

The Members Services are continuing to encourage staff and customers to email those Members who regularly check their email accounts. An ICT event is being held in October where Members will be able to obtain further information on ICT provision and computer training. As more Members are trained and become proficient in using computers, the amount of mail for sorting and delivery will reduce. The Contact Centre Admin team are checking the correspondence that is delivered to

Members via the courier service. They advise departments that emails can be sent instead of printed letters to the 15 Members who regularly check their emails.

4. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Business Process Re-engineering

Work is continuing on re-engineering the business processes in relation to post. In addition to the ongoing work, a small project team has been set up to look at the processes relating to compiling and distributing committee papers.

4.2 Bulk Mailings

Following meetings with postal providers, the Procurement team are compiling a guide that will list the existing bulk mailing arrangements that are available from Royal Mail. Further statistics are needed before any further savings can be identified from other providers. The Procurement team are co-ordinating this work.

5. STAFFING

- 5.1 The new staff employed in the Contact Centre admin are gaining experience and as a result of this the number of complaints has reduced. The team are encouraging employees in other departments to review their postal arrangements, in particular, in relation to emailing correspondence. As their knowledge has increased they are now able to offer more detailed advice to staff in other departments on Pricing in Proportion, bulk mailings and deliveries via the Courier Service.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Further work is needed to ensure that all staff who deal with post are aware of the extra costs that can be incurred by using large envelopes in all but essential cases.
- 6.2 The work that is being undertaken by the Procurement Team in relation to bulk mailings has identified that substantial savings can be made by consolidating the Council's mail. However further work is needed to gather detailed information on the number of items sent, size of packages, urgency of delivery etc. To obtain the highest discount available, all outgoing correspondence will need to be co-ordinated from a central point.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the report be noted.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Monthly Franking Reports for Apr-Jun and Jul-Sep 2006

9. CONTACT OFFICER

- 9.1 Christine Armstrong, Central Services Manager
Chief Executive's Department, HR Division, Central Services Section
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PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

Report To Portfolio Holder
16th October 2006



Report of: Head of Procurement and Property Services

Subject: PROCUREMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on the development and delivery of the Council's Procurement Strategy.

2.0 SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report highlights the significance of the strategy and the Council's progress to date.

3.0 RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Portfolio Holder is the procurement champion.

4.0 TYPE OF DECISION

Non key decision

5.0 DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Portfolio Holder only

6.0 DECISION(S) REQUIRED

The Portfolio Holder notes the progress to date.

Report of: Head of Procurement and Property Services

Subject: PROCUREMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the development and delivery of the Council's Procurement Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 24th January 2005 Cabinet approved the revised Procurement Strategy for the Council. A report endorsing the Procurement Strategy was approved by the Portfolio Holder on 8th August 2005. The last update report to the Portfolio Holder was provided on 2nd May 2006.
- 2.2 The strategy is significant in bringing together several national agendas and setting them in a local context.
- 2.3 The main drivers are:
- The National Procurement Strategy (NPS) and NPS Milestones
 - The Gershon Efficiency Agenda
 - The Council's Way Forward
 - The Community Strategy

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Portfolio Holder is the Council's Procurement Champion and it is therefore important that updates and developments are considered at appropriate times.
- 3.2 A Corporate Procurement Group made up of Senior Officers from all departments is now well established and ensures that the strategy and its delivery is embedded in departments.
- 3.3 The Group also integrates with work on the efficiency agenda.

4. NPS MILESTONES

- 4.1 The Council is progressing well in achieving the targets (See **Appendix 1**) however, some key issues, particularly around e procurement, are dependent on the implementation of the Council's financial management system which is currently under underway. The "E procurement series" of the system has been rescheduled from October 2006 to April 2007 in order to advance the integration of the Council's direct services job costing system. This will result in processing efficiencies and dispense with separate IT systems.
- 4.2 During 2006 we will be continuing to monitor progress against the milestones including a peer review / fitness check.

5. DOING BUSINESS ELECTRONICALLY

- 5.1 As part of our monitoring process and fitness checks on e procurement peer review has been completed by the Improvement and Development Agency. The peer review provides a guide for future development.
- 5.2 The report highlighted positive findings in relation to:-
- E procurement strategy objectives.
 - Governance arrangements.
 - E procurement solutions and the new financial management system.
 - Sub regional and regional collaboration.
- 5.3 The main recommendations for action include:-
- Develop the business case and strategy for e procurement.
 - Implement the e procurement module of the financial management system as soon as possible.
 - Review performance indicators for procurement and e procurement.
 - Develop a process for trading cost and efficiency savings to identify benefits from e procurement.
- 5.4 An e procurement strategy is in place (Approved at the Performance Management Portfolio Meeting of 8th August 2005) and this will now be reviewed and updated with an action plan in line with recommendations of the peer review most of which were in our work plan for the next 6 – 12 months.
- 5.5 The draft business case for the use of an interoperable e market place produced as part of a North East Centre of Excellence (NECE) project (with funding from the NECE) will be considered as part of the e procurement strategy review and as part of the implementation of the e procurement services of the FMS.
- 5.6 The use of electronic means of payment has progressed and in particular payment by Bank Automated Creditors System (BACS) has

increased to over 80% by value . Purchase card transactions have also increased for low value items. (nb. Stock transfer in 2004 resulted in a dip in purchase card use).

Proportion of Supplier Payments by Volume					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (to 13.9.06)
BACS	34.90%	39.00%	36.65%	44.27%	54.39%
P Card	0.20%	0.30%	0.30%	8.04%	8.85%
Cheque	64.90%	60.70%	63.05%	47.69%	36.76%

Proportion of Supplier Payments by Value					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (to 13.9.06)
BACS	41.95%	57.28%	58.82%	78.90%	82.73%
P Card	0.27%	0.26%	0.19%	0.25%	0.32%
Cheque	57.77%	42.47%	40.99%	20.85%	16.94%

6. SPEND ANALYSIS

- 6.1 Further work has been carried out on data by the Procurement Unit concentrating particularly on expenditure over £50k and the importance of correct coding to expense codes. The Unit have undertaken briefing sessions with departments in order to improve procurement performance.
- 6.2 Contracts lists are currently being reviewed which will lead to a rationalisation of contracts, increased potential for collaboration (especially across the Tees Valley) and a greater control of expenditure. The new Financial Management System will ultimately assist in this control.
- 6.3 The Council is to participate in an E Auction for stationery in conjunction with the NECE and other Local Authorities. This was planned to be completed in December 2006 but will be delayed until February 2007. This should achieve significant savings but unfortunately this will not contribute as much to the 2006/7 savings as expected. A mini competition has been held and will secure some savings prior to the E auction taking place (approximately 20% on a range of supplies which might amount to £40k per annum).
- 6.4 The savings from spend analysis will contribute a significant element of the Councils efficiency strategy for 2006/7 and beyond.

7. PROCUREMENT GUIDANCE

- 7.1 The officers procurement guide is being continually updated and is posted on the intranet and internet for easy access. The guide on

procurement processes is to enable a consistent corporate approach to achieve efficiencies and best practice.

- 7.2 Since the last report the guidance has been updated to include information on the following topics:-

- EU Regulations
- Equality in Procurement
- Revised Contract Procedure Rules
- Business Continuity

8. STIMULATING THE MARKET AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- 8.1 Our “Selling to the Council Guide” has been produced and is continually updated to help suppliers do business with the Council. It includes a list of contracts and is available on the website and intranet for easy access.
- 8.2 The Council is currently leading on a regional collaboration which is promoting local employment in contracts and development agreements.
- 8.3 Through our involvement within the regional project known as LM3 which looks at the local multiplier benefits of expenditure within the local economy the following table represents an encouraging picture for Hartlepool. This represents the first run by post code and will be developed further as some of the national and regional suppliers recorded operate from local bases.

LM3 Postcode Analysis

Area	No of Suppliers within Area	Percentage%
National	3603	100%
Hartlepool (TS)	1148	31.86%
Tees Valley (including Hartlepool) (DH, DL & TS)	1430	39%
North East (including Hartlepool and Tees Valley) (DH, DL, NE & TS)	1435	39.82%
Not North East	2168	60.18%

- 8.4 The Council is seeking to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard by March 2008 and part of this will be a policy for Equality in Procurement. A Diversity sub group is currently drafting the policy which at this stage indicates we can be more ambitious in procurement by aiming for a Level 5 by March 2008.

9. PROCUREMENT AND COMMISSIONING OUTCOMES

- 9.1 **Appendix 2** to the report summarises some of the key procurement and commissioning outcomes to date. The outcomes are important in delivering our efficiency strategy and our CPA performance.

10. BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING

- 10.1 Work on the Procurement and Efficiency Strategies is being complemented by a review of the key processes within the various strands e.g. Contact Centre, the Financial Management System, Electronic Document Management and Strategic Transport (including Adults and Childrens transport).

11. PROCUREMENT TRAINING

- 11.1 A module on Procurement has also been included in Phase 2 of the Council's Leadership and Management and Development Programme.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 That the Portfolio Holder notes the progress to date.

NPS Milestones	Hartlepool Progress
<i>Leadership and Building Capacity</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2004 Adopt a Corporate Procurement Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Corporate Procurement Strategy approved by Cabinet • Performance Management Portfolio Holder is Procurement Champion • Head of Procurement and Property Services appointed • Corporate Procurement Group reviewing and developing procurement • E procurement strategy approved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2005 Carry out a Health Check on progress against NPS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NECE and ODPM surveys (INLOGOV) • IDeA self assessment • Internally as part of performance framework / portfolio reports • E procurement review by IDeA completed in May 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2005 Involved in RCE and Project Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with NECE on Chief Executives Steering Group and Strategic Procurement Network. Involvement in NECE projects. • Management of major procurements as projects with Gateway Reviews (Construction Property and Highways Partnership) • Gateway Review Training undertaken • 4P's Member, Senior Officer and middle tier officer training undertaken • Regional spending analysis project
<i>Partnering and Collaboration</i>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2004 Strategy sets out approach to partnering in Service Delivery and Construction Projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic partnering in place e.g. ICT, Construction Charging and Trading powers used
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2004 Strategy sets out approach to collaboration, (Purchasing consortia, joint procurement, trading) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of NEPO and other joint working Joint commissioning e.g. Adult services Tees Valley Collaboration Consideration of Shared Services via NECE workstream
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2004 Robust challenge of different delivery models in service reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services challenged with option appraisals e.g. Construction and Property Partnership Gateway review process implemented Project management and risk management in place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2005 Average time taken for OJEU notice reduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action – very few
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2005 Identify opportunity for collaboration with neighbouring LA's for shorter commissioning/delivery of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tees Valley collaboration in Vehicle Procurement, Waste Management, Adult Services, Food Procurement, Building Cleaning and Highway materials, Stairlifts, Fire Extinguishers, Advocacy Services. Regional collaboration projects commenced in liaison with NECE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2006 Average time taken from OJEU notice to award reduced by 25 per cent (2003 base – projects of more than 1 year duration) 	N/A
<i>Doing Business Electronically</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2005 Implement an appropriate e procurement solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E procurement strategy developed E procurement business case completed Supplier event undertaken Financial management system being implemented E tendering / quotation system in test Spend analysis undertaken Increased use of BACS payments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2005 Make use of Purchase Cards for low value purchases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In place in several areas and being expanded to several departments / schools e.g. food, stationery, travel NECE project on Food Procurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2006 Use appropriate e market place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigations into IDeA/UK Procure – New financial management system being implemented no action taken on e market place at present due to setting up of new FMS. E market place business case completed.

<i>Stimulating Markets/Achieving Community Benefits</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 2003 Staff consultation and employment considerations built into procurement processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In place e.g. Stock Transfer, Construction and Property Partnership considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2004 Selling to the Council/Contract Details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selling to the Council Guide reviewed and approved Supplier event undertaken in September 2005 Selling to the Council Guide and other procurement guidance published on website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2004 Strategies to address sustainability, community plan, workforce issues, equality, diversity etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in Procurement Strategy Equality in Procurement Policy being formulated to enhance processes SME Concordat signed up Regional project to promote local employment in Contracts and development agreements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2004 Build sustainability into strategy/process/contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole life costs and benefits considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2004 Compact with local voluntary and community sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work via Hartlepool Partnership (LSP) Working with NECE to develop in collaboration Link with HVDA and Economic Development Division Voluntary and Community Sector projects in place

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2004 Procurement processes for partnerships to include council's objectives and effective use of supply chains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community strategy objectives utilised • Rethinking construction principles promoted • Local employment project commenced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2005 Invitations to include pricing of options for delivery of community benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes include community strategy objectives in appraisals • Local employment project commenced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2005 Sign up to national concordat for SME's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has signed up to the National Concordat (Performance Management Portfolio on 21st August 2006).

Procurement & Commissioning Outcomes

Background

The Council spends around £50m per annum on a range of goods, works and services and recognises the importance procurement can have in delivering strategic and efficiency benefits. Driven by the National Procurement Strategy, the Gershon Efficiency Agenda, and the Community Strategy, significant developments have taken place over the past 2 years evidencing the strong commitment the council has in embedding effective procurement in day to day working.

Our Approach

The Council's approach to procurement and commissioning has been based on internal governance and control, collaboration, working with suppliers and challenging existing arrangements. The approach has sought to utilise the skills and capacity of staff in providing a central multi functional team advising, coordinating and drawing on the expertise of specialists within Council Departments. We have a mixed economy of provision taking into account social, economic and community benefits for the town.

Governance and Control

Effective leadership of our Member Procurement Champion and the **Corporate Procurement Group** of senior officers from each department has ensured procurement strategies have been developed with a systematic yet flexible approach. The group provides guidance and information and is now a well established forum to develop strategies, set priorities and embed an effective procurement culture in departments. The Procurement Champion, via his portfolio not only develops and reviews policy but also **monitors performance** of progress against the national procurement strategy milestones and other procurement objectives.

Strategic Direction

Procurement and e-Procurement Strategies are now developed and implemented, aligning with the council's core values and the National Procurement Strategy (NPS) milestones. An Officers Guide to Procurement has been developed and implemented including a review of the Contract Procedure Rules.

The Contract Procedure Rules have been updated to align with the Council's Procurement Strategy and other developments including e procurement. The rules have been approved by Constitution Committee and Council.

The Council has signed up to the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises National Concordat and through its link with Hartlepool Business Forum hosted a "Procurement Safari" where over 100 local businesses gathered together in an event which encouraged and guided SME's in doing business with the Council. This was also an opportunity to promote our "Selling to the Council" guide. The event was successful not only in providing information and opportunity on the Council but "deals" were also made between the SME's themselves.

All of our key procurement documents and information are available on our **website**.

Commissioning Strategy and successes

Cabinet approved a **Commissioning Framework** for the Council at its meeting on 20th June 2005 and this forms the basis of future procurements including the Children's and Adults Services sectors. As an example in the case of Adult Services the link has been made with the Green Paper "Independence, Well Being and Choice" and "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" via the "**Connected Care**" project which is developing a new approach to delivering health and social care within communities. In addition the "Building Links" project is a mapping exercise dealing with the range and contribution of the voluntary sector. This project attracted funding from the North East Centre of Excellence.

During 2003/04 financial pressures were identified in relation to the unstructured procurement of care placements for children. A strategy for controlling expenditure and developing a more consistent approach to placement choice was implemented. This was enhanced by a "value for money" audit of all independent sector placements during 2005/06, which together with the strategy led to efficiencies/savings of £450K being identified for the financial year 2006/07.

Through a series of service changes 75% of social care provision is now provided externally through the private and voluntary sectors. This enables the Council to concentrate its efforts in intensive support and early intervention. As an example the Council commissions the not for profit group "Peoples Relief of Pressure" for the provision of support and guidance to people with mental health problems. The organization is able to seek additional match funding to deliver and improve services which would not have been accessible to the Council.

Collaboration

The council recognises that joint collaboration with our partners is important to success and the Procurement Champion has endorsed a number of approaches:-

North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO) is a collaboration of 25 NE Councils that provides the means of pooling purchasing knowledge and expertise and of gaining savings through aggregated contracts and co-ordinated purchasing. The Council is currently benefiting from its membership in the following ways: -

- use of collaborative contracts all to EU regulations saving on tendering procedures
- savings on Energy Contracts through flexible procurement
- rebates through on-contract purchases (£53K in 2005/6)

North East Centre of Excellence (NECE) The Council is working with the NECE to make best use of procurement intelligence and buying power to deliver efficiencies and savings and to develop capacity and skills.

The council is currently involved with the NECE in the following projects:

- development of a business case for e-procurement
- a regional e-auction for stationery in conjunction with NEPO
- regional spend analysis tool 'Powerplay' which maps supplier spend improving procurement performance and leverage
- LM3 – a methodology to assess the impact via a 'local multiplier' of expenditure within the local economy
- Food Supplier engagement in the use of Procurement cards

Tees Valley Joint Procurement Group. The council is a member of a Tees Valley sub-regional collaboration procurement group with 5 other organisations (Redcar & Cleveland, Stockton, Middlesbrough, Darlington and Cleveland Police). A collaboration strategy has been agreed by the Tees Valley Chief Executives to maximise the potential gains from collaboration. The group share procurement expertise and contract preparation between them operating a “lead buyer” approach.

In addition the Tees Valley Authorities are developing 2 projects funded by the NECE on best practice in vehicle operation and procurement and potential joint arrangements in waste management. The group seeks to be innovative as well as realizing product savings in seeking efficiencies and opportunities. A formula has been established for the non-cashable saving in developing a “lead buyer” approach which amounts to £6,600 for a small contract to £70,000 for complex procurements.

Other Collaborative Arrangements include:

- A Strategic Partnership for building maintenance and minor works. This covers both public buildings and schools delivery of projects with private sector partners incorporating improved client involvement, project management and shared savings mechanism.
- Domiciliary Services. The rationalisation of sub-regional providers and joint working to provide common standards and price reduction
- The Survey, Supply, Installation, Maintenance, Removal and Disposal of Lifts in the Community Contract. The Council, in collaboration with 7 other partners (local authorities and housing providers) tendered for the provision of stairlifts, introducing a clearly defined set of performance measures, a common service specification, including defined maintenance periods and a 24 hour breakdown and repair service.

Challenging Existing Arrangements and Delivery Benefits

The Council takes a variety of approaches to service delivery and this, through the procurement process, results in a variety of delivery mechanisms including using collaboration with other local authorities, partnerships with the private sector and involvement of the voluntary sector.

We continuously innovate in the way we deliver services to provide improved outcomes. Successful examples include:

A partnering initiative with the Dogs Trust. The Council has a statutory duty to provide a Dog Warden Service and has in the past delivered it through employing wardens who were solely assigned to collecting dogs that appeared to be straying. A partnering initiative with the Dogs Trust has been introduced, which provides free dog chipping and spaying and neutering schemes. Funded entirely by the Dogs Trust, this has proved extremely popular with dog owners in the town and has led to fewer strays being collected; this in turn has resulted in reduced kenneling costs for the Council.

The reduction in the number of dogs straying provided scope for a more efficient means of collecting these animals and subsequently the service was ‘out-sourced’. A specialist company was assigned to the task of collecting stray dogs and the Council has been able to show a saving of around £31,000 per year as a result.

Provision of Construction, Property and Highways Professional Services. A review into future delivery methods in Construction, Property and Highways Professional Services has been undertaken in the light of changing workloads and recruitment and retention problems.

Various options were considered such as outsourcing, joint venture and frameworks using a Gateway Review facilitated by the 4P's. Cabinet's preferred option of a framework agreement is now in the procurement stage. The arrangement will combine core in-house skills with access to additional expertise which is expected to be valuable as we develop our Primary Capital and Buildings Schools for the Future projects.

Stationery supplies. The Council historically used several stationery suppliers, all with differing pricing structures for essentially the same products. A benchmarking exercise has taken place and identified that a saving of around 20% will be achieved by using 2 local suppliers via a new pricing structure representing a potential saving of up to £40k per annum depending on usage.

Mobile phones. In a similar way we have also looked at mobile phones producing a projected annual saving of £19k. We have also achieved £37k of savings in recruitment advertising in 2005/6.

Purchasing civil engineering materials. Closer working with other Tees Valley Local Authorities is delivering savings. Stockton BC has tendered a new civil engineering materials contract by aggregating the demand of Middlesbrough BC, Hartlepool BC, Stockton BC and Darlington BC. The resulting contract delivers savings of £13k projected for 2006/7 (based on the same spend profile as 2005/6). Middlesbrough have tendered for cleaning materials and savings are also expected.

E-Procurement. E-Procurement Solutions are being developed via a new financial management system. This will phase the introduction of significant process changes including the e-enabling of procurement functions and the provision of an integrated FM and Costing system over the next 12 months. Suppliers have and are being encouraged to move towards receipt of BACS for invoice payments now in excess of 80%.

Insurance Services Re-tendering and new arrangement is expected to save up to £200k per annum.

Partnering and Rethinking Construction. Since 2002 we have been proactive in delivering building and engineering projects via partnering arrangements which have resulted in increased client involvement and value engineering to achieve a successful end product. This is evidenced in projects such as Carlton Outdoor Centre and Carnegie Building where early engagement of the Contractor resulted in affordable and successful projects.

Our partnering projects include a shared savings arrangement which, as an example returned over £15k to the Children's Services modernisation programme for reinvestment in 2005/6.

In 2001 the Council signed up to a partnership agreement with SX3 (now Northgate IS) for all the ICT requirements for a period of 10 years. This partnership enabled the Council to have access to £2.2 million of investment funds to help develop the potential of its ICT and to help develop new systems.

We have several arrangements with the voluntary sector to undertake services on behalf of the Council. The Owton Fens Community Association carry out grounds maintenance and other gardening works and in partnership with Kirklevington Prison to undertake improvements to Waverley Allotments. We also work with the Probation Service enabling ex-offenders to deliver neighbourhood improvement projects.

Contribution to Efficiencies

The **2006/07 Annual Efficiency Statement** outline expects cashable savings of £300K for Procurement. Through the improvement of existing procurement practices, such as bulk buying with other authorities, supplier rationalisation and the development of new arrangements such as E-Procurement Hartlepool continues to add value to the working practices of the Authority and reap savings. Efficiency gains will also be achieved from market testing existing service delivery methods and determining where outsourcing will deliver efficiencies.

Capacity and Skills

Members, Senior and Middle Tier Managers have benefited from training through the 4P's and a **procurement module** is being developed within the Council's "Be the difference" Leadership and Management Development Programme that will "reach" over 300 members of staff.

Equality in Procurement

The Council is seeking to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard and is now developing a policy for Equality in Procurement. A **sub-group** of the Corporate Procurement Group is working together with the Diversity Steering Group to produce the policy. In reviewing the achievements to date the sub group have determined that we can be more ambitious in procurement and are aiming for Level 5 by March 2008.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

Report To Portfolio Holder
16th October 2006



Report of: Head of Procurement and Property Services

Subject: LAND BETWEEN 1 AND 5 STUDLEY ROAD

SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To obtain Portfolio Holder's views to the proposed sale of land at 1-5 Studley Road.

2.0 SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Outline to the background to the initial scheme and rationale for the additional Council land to be provided. The negotiation process is then detailed with a recommendation for disposal.

3.0 RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Portfolio Holder has responsibility for the Council's land and property assets.

4.0 TYPE OF DECISION

Non key

5.0 DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Portfolio Holder only

6.0 DECISION(S) REQUIRED

That Portfolio Holder approve the land transfer subject to the terms and conditions proposed.

Report of: Head of Procurement Property Services

Subject: LAND BETWEEN 1 AND 5 STUDLEY ROAD

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To obtain Portfolio Holder's views to the proposed sale of land at 1-5 Studley Road.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Earlier in 2006, Endeavour Housing association approached the Council with a proposal to construct 5 properties on an area of land that it owns at Studley Road.
- 2.2 At this time, the Council's Town Care Manager for the Central area requested that 411 square metres of Council land adjacent the proposed development be included within the scheme. It was considered that the inclusion of this land would improve security for both the new and for existing properties.
- 2.3 The scheme was redesigned accordingly and a planning application for 6 bungalows has been submitted. Endeavour Housing Association then commenced negotiations to purchase the Council owned area of land. The plan showing the area of Council land can be found in the attached **Appendix 1**.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Financial Implications of this transaction can be found in the attached confidential **Appendix 2. This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006) namely, Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Portfolio Holder approve the land transfer subject to the terms and conditions proposed.



Location Plan