

Committee: FULL COUNCIL
Date: 16 December 2003
Agenda Item No: 9
Title: Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) –
Submission of Documents
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Summary

- 1 This report seeks agreement to delegate final approval of CPA Documents to the Member led CPA Task Group and to place the Council submission in the category of a Good Council.

Background

- 2 As part of the CPA process the Council has to submit various documents to the Audit Commission in the week of 5 January 2004 ready for the CPA Site Visit of the week of 23 February 2003. These documents are:

Corporate Self - Assessment

Diagnostic Review of Balanced Housing Markets & Decent Homes Standard

Diagnostic Review of Public Open Space

The Improvement Plan

Indicative Score indicating if the Council is Excellent/Good/Fair/Weak/Poor

Attached at Appendix A is a copy of the draft Corporate Self Assessment Version Seven and at Appendix B is the Draft Improvement Plan. These are the two principal documents and they are attached so Council can comment and note the progress to date in preparing the CPA documentation.

- 3 Work on the two diagnostic reviews is still continuing. Members will be aware that the scoring of the CPA Corporate Self Assessment has been carried out via a Members Workshop, with the Uttlesford Futures LSP Group and with groups of Council staff. The scoring has broadly ranged around the very top of Fair and bottom of Good. As a result the Member led CPA Task Group is recommending to Council that Uttlesford District Council submits a bid that the authority is a Good Council in CPA terms.

- 4 All CPA documentation will be completed by the end of December 2003 and needs to be signed off by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive the week of 5 January 2004.
- 5 As all documentation will not be finalised until late December 2003 this report requests that the final approval of:

Corporate Self - Assessment
Diagnostic Review of Balanced Housing Markets & Decent Homes Standard
Diagnostic Review of Public Open Space
The Improvement Plan

is delegated to the Member led CPA Task Group.

RECOMMENDED that Members:

- 1 Delegate to the Member led CPA Task Group final approval for the set of documents listed in paragraph 5
- 2 Agree that the Uttlesford District Council should submit a bid as a Good Council

Background Papers: CPA Files

Appendix A

Corporate Assessment: Key Lines of Enquiry: Draft Edition for IDeA October 2003

1. What is the council trying to achieve?

Our Ambition

“Working together we can create a better community “

- 1 The mission statement of Uttlesford District Council was agreed in 1995 and has provided the foundation for the longer term ambition of the Council to:

“Develop and promote Uttlesford as an inclusive healthy, safe and prosperous area in which to live, learn and work. It will continue to protect and enhance wherever possible its historic and environmental assets, whilst improving and developing opportunities for people of all ages and businesses “
- 2 The Council accepts that change is inevitable and recognises the significance of its geographical location in proximity to both London and Cambridge, and the impact of Stansted Airport within its boundary.
- 3 To help deliver the above ambition Uttlesford has long engaged and been directly involved at the national and local levels in the debate on the future of aviation and other regional issues. This involvement has helped ensure that the District has retained its very distinctive and important rural character and built environment through its local plan, despite considerable external development pressures. The Council has also shown its commitment to its ambition for the area by its powerful Stansted campaign of ‘no more runways.’
- 4 During the last three years the Council has set out how it wants to achieve its ambitions through a range of various strategies and plans with its more immediate priorities and targets set out in its Best Value Performance Plan and other associated strategic documents.
- 5 The Council wants to be recognised as an authority that listens and understands the concerns and aspirations of local people.
- 6 The longer term ambitions of the Uttlesford community been developed in partnership with local communities. In June 2003 the Local Strategic Partnership launched the Uttlesford Community Plan that contributed additional long- term partnership ambitions for the District. These are:
 - Safety of the Community
 - Conserving the Environment
 - Improving Health
 - Transport
 - Improved Economy.
- 7 In May 2003 a new administration was elected and in June 2003 the Council agreed a Quality of Life Plan. The administration clearly identified ambitions for the Council during the period 2003 to 2007. The Plan has seven key themes:

- Strong Community Leadership
 - More openness through public scrutiny
 - Improve access to services
 - Protect the environment and increase recycling
 - Promote tourism and green leisure opportunities
 - Encourage low cost housing
 - Develop better opportunities for young people
- 8 The Council recognised the need for a step change in agreeing longer term ambition and how it should be achieved. It appointed an interim change director to assist in that process. It also recognised the importance of working together to deliver ambitious priorities for the district. A strategic planning day for Members and senior managers was recently held in September. As a result the seven themes in the current Quality of Life Plan are being re-visited. The five long term themes that are currently emerging are:
- Strong Community Leadership
 - Protecting the Environment
 - Improving Access to Value for Money Services
 - Improving Community Safety & the Health of the Population
 - Supporting Lifelong Learning & Better Opportunities for Young People
- 9 These ambitions incorporate the aims of the Local Strategic Partnership and a community conference is being held in November to consider these matters further. There is a commitment to put a draft Corporate Plan 2003-07 to Council in December. It will contain programmed actions to deliver the Council's ambitions.
- 10 The Council is in the process of ensuring that the resources are in place to deliver a new Corporate Plan. The Council has recently strengthened the corporate centre by appointing a corporate performance manager and support, as well as a communications/PR officer. A skills audit is in the process of being carried out. As the Council's new priorities are developed and agreed with the community, partners and stakeholders it is essential that they are realistic and incorporate the resources to deliver the priorities.
- 11 The Council has offered leadership through extensive consultation followed by the Council then giving clear direction to deliver the results of such consultation. Consultation has involved open evenings, focus groups, newsletters and use of the media. As a result it is hoped that local communities recognise the efforts being made by the Council to create sustainability. A good recent example related to the local plan preparation.
- 12 Within the services directly managed by the Council there is strong management and political guidance at all levels. The political leadership meets regularly with senior management to ensure that a Member/officer partnership delivers the ambitions of the authority. Both the political leadership and senior management meet with staff on a regular basis to ensure that information is fed to all staff and that all staff can raise matters with the Leader and the Chief Executive. The Council has a comprehensive appraisal system where the contributions colleagues make to the ambitions of the authority are reflected in appraisal targets. Information sharing such as the notes of senior management team meetings, both of which are on the intranet, is available for all staff. The Council now shares the major processes of the authority with staff groups, for instance the Corporate Self Assessment was discussed, including draft scoring, with all staff and our partners within the Local Strategic Partnership.

**Case study:
Community leadership:
The Stansted campaign**

The Department for Transport issued a series of consultation documents on the Future Development of Air Transport in the UK on 23 July 2002. The options for the East of England and the South East included new runways at Stansted Airport.

The Council responded by reaffirming its opposition in principle to new runways, highlighting its concern that the proposals could be fundamentally damaging to communities and the quality of life of residents. It committed itself to work with others, identifying local action groups as potential partners. Specific action points included to hold a referendum on the future development of the airport and to inform and consult its residents through public meetings and seeking to obtain a copy of the Department for Transport's consultation questionnaire for every household in Uttlesford.

Residents were kept informed of the issues as they were explored through features on the Council Page. The Council successfully championed the cause for an additional public exhibition in the area by the Department for Transport. It also lobbied for every household in the District to receive a questionnaire from the DfT. Guidance was given on how to respond the questionnaire.

The referendum was held in autumn 2002 and the key message "89% of Uttlesford residents say no more runways at Stansted" featured prominently in the Council's submission to the DfT and the campaign.

The result was delivered to 10 Downing Street by community representatives in November.

Our Priorities

- 13 The Council has set out its priorities for improvement in the Best Value Performance Plan. These underpin the ambitions of the Council. A strategic framework to deliver such ambitions will be clearly set out in the new Corporate Plan. This process of clearly identifying what are the priorities for improvement has been carried out after extensive consultation with staff, partners, service providers, users of services and stakeholders.
- 14 Significant recent examples of priorities for improvement include:
- Revenue and benefits services
 - Development of leisure centres
 - Enhanced support for Members through the use of IT
 - Enhanced internal and external communications
 - Strengthening of the corporate centre through additional staff resources
 - Introduction of comprehensive performance management system

- 15 The Council has not always been explicit about what are not its priorities but this has been clear from resource allocation. During 2003/04 resources to arts services were reduced, whereas building control and land charges, for example were not considered priorities for improvement because they are already providing excellent service. Resources for the Saffron Walden Museum have been capped for a number of years in view of the size of its budget in relation to other Council priorities. The service & financial planning process for 2004/05 is being used to identify what will not be priorities for improvement in 2004/05. A similar approach is being developed by the Capital Strategy Working Group to allocate capital. This will create a more visible and focused approach during the allocation of both capital and revenue resources.
- 16 Consultation with staff is through regular meetings with senior management, the leadership of the Council, service team meetings and workshops to help formulate the basis for the priorities of the Council. This is an on-going process to ensure that all stakeholders, community and staff are aware of any fine -tuning associated with the priorities. As an example of a new initiative associated with the new priority of engagement of young people, the first focus group with young people was held in October linked to Local Democracy Week. A commitment to respond to their concerns and priorities has been given and which will also be taken into account during the service and financial planning process.
- 17 Internal communications are circulated to staff, Members and partners via Uttlesford News (the new performance and consultation monthly newsletter), the Members Bulletin, staff meetings, the intranet and regular workshops linked to all services as well as Best Value, CPA and IDeA Peer Challenges. Internal communications are both cascaded down to staff and back to senior managers through the circulation of notes and minutes. In addition team briefings are being explored.
- 18 Council priorities are promoted externally via open meetings, focus groups, and the web site, Uttlesford News, and a Council page in local newspapers, local newspapers generally, partnership meetings and extensive use of the media. The Council recognises that communications can be improved and is committed to greater use of an improved web site and a new Council newspaper. An aim of the communications strategy is to receive feedback to ensure that the authority responds to both national and local priorities. The staff within the authority is a comprehensive resource both in terms of working for Uttlesford and as local residents who are also frequent users of Council services. The Council recognises that “ hard to reach groups “ is one area where it can still improve. The Council is now meeting with young people but more work is required. There are now commitments to find out more in relation to ethnic minorities, working in conjunction with others, and reaching out to those who are not accessing a range of leisure and cultural services. There is a well established and active Access Group supported by the Council.
- 19 Resources will be shifted as required in relation to the Council's priorities, either through use of reserves or from existing services, in future, to help deliver priorities. This will be achieved through the service and financial planning process. The Council will be introducing zero based budgeting in 2004.

Focus

- 20 As a result of extensive external consultation and improved internal communications the Council will be better focused once it has approved its new four year Quality of Life Corporate Plan.

- 21 The Council has a track record of remaining focused on what matters over time and recent examples have included the Leisure Public Finance Initiative project, the sustained campaign to resist the expansion of Stansted Airport and the Best Value commitment to the move of Planning services from Great Dunmow to Saffron Walden so that all Council services are operating under one roof. Despite the complexity of the PFI project, where the Council was a national pathfinder, new and improved leisure centres were opened on time and within the affordability budget of the Council.

PFI Case Study

- 22 The Council was aware that the expansion of Stansted Airport was unpopular with local people. A case study of the focused community leadership campaign is outlined elsewhere within the submission.
- 23 Members and senior managers have used project management, performance measures and consultation as tools to ensure that the Council remains focused on what matters. Scrutiny Committees also monitor performance and delivery. In addition the development of a risk strategy, the greater use of corporate governance and the monitoring of a risk register has helped the Council remain focused.

2. How has the Council set about delivering its priorities?

Capacity

- 24 The Council is aware of its capacity to deliver strategic priorities. It now has in place a raft of human resources policies, which have increased the capacity of the authority to deliver. A skills audit will be carried out as part of the revised Personnel Strategy. This audit will help identify where additional development and resources are required to ensure that priorities are delivered. Training linked to delivering the priorities is being implemented throughout the organisation while additional performance information from the new performance management system will reveal where the Council may be able to make greater use of resources. For example as a result of positive action sickness levels were down by 50% during the first quarter of the current year compared with last year. Recruitment issues are being addressed, for example, through career development grades in planning, supportive training in environmental health, the introduction market supplement payments in exceptional circumstances and partnership working to increase the promotion of job vacancies.
- 25 Capacity has also been strengthened as a result of increased joint Member/officer working groups. This ethos is well established within Uttlesford and examples include:
- Best Value reviews,
 - The CPA process
 - Corporate Plan development,
 - Service and financial planning
 - Specific projects
 - Beacon Council application
- 26 Uttlesford has well developed financial management systems culminating in a robust service and financial planning system which is being developed to link resource allocation to the strategic priorities of the authority. The Council is debt free with a good level of reserves brought about by prudent financial management. The Council

has proactive and high profile Standards and Scrutiny Committees. Scrutiny Committees have work programmes.

- 27 The Council is developing options to improve collaboration and communications between the Council and the parishes. In addition through the Member/Officer Procurement Task Group the authority now has a robust approach to procurement. Recent examples include membership of the Essex Procurement Agency and Essex Marketplace, building on good practice from our benchmarking partners.
- 28 The Quality of Life priorities are complex themes that can only be delivered via partnerships models both within the Local Strategic Partnership and other partnerships. The Council notes that the delivery of priorities falls generally into three categories:
- Lead – where the Council through duties, powers and resources will be the driving partner – such issues may be access to services, Decent Homes and aspects of community leadership
 - Partner – where the Council is involved and its responsibilities (with the resource implications) are clearly laid out – examples include affordable housing, community safety and services to young people
 - Influence – where the Council works with partners but its influence is limited – examples are health or transport
- 29 The Council has many examples of positive outcomes of partnership working linked to alternative methods of service delivery. Examples include:
- Internal Audit Partnership with Stevenage Borough Council
 - Payroll Agency with Bedford District Council
 - Emergency Alarms system with North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - Joint Procurement framework with Essex County Council re e recruitment, Essex Marketplace and Essex Procurement Agency
 - Local Public Service Agreement with Essex County Council
 - Emergency Planning incidents with others

Performance Management

- 30 The Council has recently introduced an enhanced performance management framework that will produce quarterly data on the corporate and service health of the organisation including, wherever possible, national priorities. The performance management framework was developed with Members, partners and the managers. Performance data is assessed by senior managers and Members via the two Scrutiny Committees on a quarterly basis. This system is being developed to include greater working with Town & Parish Councils within the District. The LSP targets are being further refined to include from 2004 a range of quality of life targets that will be unique to Uttlesford and partners.
- 31 The Council has the ability to take appropriate corrective action as a result of the monitoring of performance. Performance data will be reported to Members and managers using a traffic light system and red means targets are not being met. Feedback procedure is one of the strengths of the process.
- 32 Uttlesford is committed to training and development for Members and all staff. This support includes:

- Laptop computers for all Members
- Extensive workshops for Members on existing service provision
- Training for Members and managers on new initiatives within local government
- Development opportunities for all staff linked to the appraisal process
- IDeA and other reviews of the organisation
- Comprehensive use of the Best Value process to manage and direct the organisation to ensure maximum potential
- Member training in specialist areas
- Site visits to local authorities and other relevant bodies as part of the Best Value process.

33 Other measures related to performance management include:

- Induction programme for new staff
- Job descriptions – so staff know what is expected of them
- Service standards and performance targets – what the Council will deliver and how it should perform
- Appraisal – where priorities are rolled out across the organisation to individuals
- Complaints system – what to do if you are unhappy with services from the Council. These are monitored and lessons learnt to improve services.

34 Staff are also informed about what is expected of them and how they are performing. There is extensive management consultation about how the authority is meeting its various challenges. Uttlesford also has in place a risk management strategy, corporate governance arrangements and a robust range of financial performance measures to ensure the Council authority achieves value for money. The annual letters and reports from the District Auditor regularly comment on the robust financial framework that exists within the authority.

3. What has the Council achieved/not achieved to date?

Achievements in the Quality of Service

35 Uttlesford makes extensive use of performance indicators, both national and local to measure the quality of our service delivery. The targets are challenging and even where the Council is above the average in areas such as sickness levels, payment of invoices, Council/NDR collected, household waste recycled, satisfaction level of tenants, performance indicators, robust targets are still in place to do even better and deliver continuous improvement. The performance management system shows where services are not improving against targets and, if required, additional support is applied to help resolve these issues.

36 This improvement is outlined in the BVPP.

Performance Indicator	2001/02 Target	2001/02 Actual	2002/03 Target	2002/03 Actual	2003/04 Target
Rent Collected	N/A	96%	97%	98%	98.25%
Percentage of Standard Searches in 10 Days	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Undisputed	100%	95.8%	100%	99.51%	100%

invoices paid within 30 days					
Missed Bins	15	14	12	12	10
Level of Sickness	N/A	7.1	6.8	7.94	7.0
Energy Efficiency	N/A	68.8	68	71.18	73
Council Tax Processing	36 days	36 days	36 days	20 days	25* days
Speed of processing of Council tax	9 days	12 days	9 days	4 days	6* days
Planning – determination of all applications	62%	61%	N/A	45%	58%

* Introduction of the new verification framework impacts on the actual target for 2003/04.

- 37 Some improvements relate to non priority areas but the skills in these areas, for example, in building control can help to boost the overall performance of the organisation.
- 38 The Council is aware of the challenges of working with others to ensure that levels of quality of service. But Uttlesford, perhaps particularly as a small authority, is fully aware of the need for realism. Self analysis and customer focus are strengths of the authority.
- 39 Using the consultation strategy Uttlesford has used various means to determine what people think of the services and how they can be improved. As this data now cover some years the Council has been able to chart increasing levels of satisfaction with service delivery. There is a general high level of overall customer satisfaction with services delivered by the Council. The results from the latest BV user satisfaction surveys will soon be available and the Council will have the opportunity to measure current satisfaction compared with three years ago.

Achievement of Improvement

- 40 Through self analysis there is clear evidence that the Council has seen significant improvements in service areas such as planning, refuse collection, housing repairs, Council tax/NDR's collection rates, rent collected, use of brownfield sites for development and significantly enhanced leisure facilities. In addition the corporate support within the organisation has improved significantly which has contributed to the performance culture.
- 41 As a result of better partnership working cross cutting themes such as environmental improvements has had an impact on the local quality of life in Uttlesford.
- 42 What needs to be done to improve services further relate to access to services and customer care. Some customers want access to services at the weekends and others require a 24/7 service culture. There are issues around telephone answering and

responding to letters that are still being tackled. Customers have expressed concerns about the occasional lack of response to a letter or telephone message. The Council is carrying out projects in both these areas and reports will be completed in December.

- 43 Improvements are being sought in cross cutting areas such as transport and facilities for young people; these are being tackled through the local strategic partnership.
- 44 Improvements to the planning process, recycling, housing re-letting times, waste reduction & collection plus improvements to leisure facilities are clearly recognised by local communities and users of Council services. Consultation linked to on-going user satisfaction surveys help ensure that these improvements continue to meet the needs of the local communities.
- 45 This progress can accurately be measured as a result of the national PI's and performance management system that is in place. Such improvements are shared with the community and partners to ensure that the progress is on-going. The baseline data continues to be the starting point for measuring real progress and targets are then re-assessed to ensure continuous improvement within the context and constraints in which the Council operates. However the Council is aware that significant improvements are still to be fully realised in some areas such as planning development control, sickness levels and communications within the organisation. Resources are now in place in relation to these issues such as sickness support monitoring, the Planning Best Value Review and communications to help achieve improvement.

Investment

- 46 The Council is capital debt free with capital assets of £10.3m. It has used the interest from investments to inject additional resources, address gaps in the organisation and to employ additional staff, where necessary, to help deliver priorities.
- 47 The Council has made a major commitment in assisting Members and staff with a range of training and development opportunities to both assist with personal development and to ensure that the resources, including training, are in place to deliver the priorities of the Council. The early innovation of providing laptops for all Members has ensured greater access to the workings of the Council.
- 48 In addition the Council is continuing to make a major commitment to improve ICT, leisure, refuse and recycling, Decent Homes and developing the corporate support to the authority. This investment in Housing is best illustrated by the fact that it will meet Decent Homes by 2005.
- 49 However, the Council recognises that long term investment is not without risk and therefore a risk management framework is in place throughout the organisation. All senior managers have been trained in risk management and this process is being cascaded throughout the organisation.
- 50 The Council has capital balances that allow resources to continue to be available for investment. A robust medium term financial strategy is in place. The priority areas have already or are in the process of receiving the necessary resources to deliver the required improvements.
- 51 However Uttlesford fully understands that the way forward in investment terms includes the voluntary market testing of council services and to work in partnership

with others to deliver the economies of scale and opportunity funding options to meet the expectations of the local communities. Examples to date include:

- PFI funding to refurbish and develop new leisure facilities
- Membership of Essex Procurement Agency and Essex Marketplace to ensure maximum procurement opportunities
- External bids for funding via the ODPM Liveability Project
- Developing the LSP to ensure greater shared risks, benefits and opportunities
- Making greater use of sponsorship options
- Working with other local authorities in partnerships such as service providing or the Local Public Service Agreement with Essex CC.

52 The Council has a track record of opening itself up for challenge. Examples include:

- IDeA Peer Review in October 2000. All recommendations from the review have now been implemented
- Best Value inspection process to identify weakness within the organisation and respond accordingly. For example a weakness at the corporate centre resulted in the appointment of corporate policy and communications posts. In addition the Best Value review of planning will be subject to continuous inspection by the Audit Commission during the process of the review
- IDeA to carry out a Peer Challenge Review in November 2003
- Engaging an external consultant as a Strategic Interim Director in June 2003 to help the authority to plan for the future.

53 However the Council acknowledges that responding to challenge is a continuous process. The mechanism for internal challenge is being developed with new innovations like meetings with the Leader of the Council; training for all staff in CPA and the introduction of Uttlesford News. The changing culture will help create more bottom up challenges within the organisation.

4. What the Council plans to do next in the light of what it has learnt to date

Learning

54 Uttlesford is improving at learning from others as well as from its own experiences. The Council has welcomed external challenge and both recognised and shared the outcomes flowing from challenges such as Peer Review, liP, Best Value Reviews, the use of external consultants, Peer Challenge, Member workshops and the introduction of a new computerised system of all staff training needs.

55 The Best Value review process includes the use of critical friends and external consultants. In addition the current Planning Review will be reviewed by the Audit Commission at three stages during the process and not simply at the end of the process. These changes are helping the Council learn much more from the Best Value process and these skills are being shared throughout the Council and with our partners and the community.

56 The Council has traditionally been slow to celebrate its own success. A Council monthly newsletter, Uttlesford News, was first issued in July 2003. The newsletter has a section on what we do well and staff can celebrate this. Examples are Council Tax collection, prompt payment of invoices, low sickness rates, high levels of satisfaction

from the users of our services, and improvements in planning application turn round times.

- 57 The Council is now far more aware of achievements and recent examples like the authority bidding for Liveability Funding, winning an award for the largest increase in collection of Business Rate by Direct Debit or the Beacon Status bid in Sustainable Tourism have been promoted far more aggressively within the authority. The Council is ensuring the successes of these schemes are shared throughout the organisation.
- 58 Uttlesford now encourages staff to contribute to the strategic and service direction of the authority. The Council wants to be considered as inclusive and that it is a reward, not a blame, culture and this is reflected in the urge to learn and share this process within the organisation.
- 59 The Council has made extensive use of the comparison data from the Best Value and other project driven processes. To promote this learning process of gaining experience and sound practices from others the Council has become a member of benchmarking groups, such as Daventry Benchmarking and Historic Cities Benchmarking clubs, Eastern England Performance Steering Group, County based groups such as Essex Marketplace or Essex Procurement Agency. In addition managers have made use of comparative data from professional bodies to learn from others. This expertise helped in developing the PFI model and negotiating the legal agreement in relation to a recent planning application for major development at Stansted Airport.
- 60 Where an authority or private sector organisation appears to carry out services or functions better or cheaper than Uttlesford the authority is keen to find out why so we can adopt good practice wherever possible. This is an on-going process within the Council. In keeping with many authorities the Council has recruitment and retention problems for certain posts. Learning from others helps resolve this issue. Some examples of our learning include:
- Visiting other Councils to ascertain the most appropriate IT, customer care, access to services, Benefits overpayment recovery processes.
 - Completing Beacon Council application in Sustainable Tourism so that the authority can learn from the process
 - Visits to other authorities to develop joint procurement systems
 - Use of Scrutiny Committees as a learning tool for Members and managers
 - All staff have received a briefing in the CPA process and completed a draft Corporate Self Assessment Form.
 - Member and staff development using external suppliers to ensure effective facilitation in areas such as CPA, Best Value, anti -discrimination, access to services and community safety.
 - Joint workshops between Members and managers break down barriers and build more trust and confidence for the future. Such events have recently included self-scoring the CPA, three Planning Workshops linked to the Best Value Review, briefings on aviation issues. Such workshops also include other bodies such as Town and Parish Councils
- 61 In a small authority it is important to share learning throughout the entire organisation. Uttlesford News is helping inform what is happening but to encourage staff to contribute to, and test new solutions to old problems, cross service teams are being established to tackle issues like abandoned cars, customer care and access to

services. Learning is a powerful resource and the authority recognises that this resource needs to be shared

Future Plans

- 62 There is an approved Uttlesford Community Plan agreed by the Local Strategic Partnership. The Council has plans in place to deliver its priorities with a key new one to be approved in December, namely the Corporate Quality of Life Plan 2003-07. The draft Corporate Plan is in the process of being costed with milestones identified plus short and long term goals which are linked into the performance delivery process within the authority. It is essentially a change document. Plans are monitored and reviewed as required. Formal reporting arrangements are in place.
- 63 The Council regularly reviews its future plans in line with changing national and community priorities. However to recognise and act on change, as well as maintain continuous improvement, the Council accepts that hard decisions may have to be made. The capacity of the organisation to deliver has to be regularly monitored. Any new projects may need to be accompanied by reductions or greater efficiencies elsewhere within the organisation. This process will, in part, be achieved through Best Value reviews and the performance management system.
- 64 Means of delivery vary and the Council is aware that in certain cross cutting areas areas such as aspects of community safety, transport and services to young people it has to be more proactive and innovative. This needs to be through greater partnership working and use of focused project based task groups involving all key partners, including Members, officers, relevant partners and customers.
- 65 A cornerstone for the development and implementation of future plans is consultation and involvement. This is set out in its consultation strategy as described elsewhere in this submission. The Council is now more positively trying to engage hard to reach groups and is committed to surveys including young people and ethnic minorities to gain greater understanding of their service requirements.
- 66 The capacity to implement and maintain further improvements is undertaken through our performance planning, consultation strategy and the service and financial planning. The identification of further improvements may be linked to the performance management system revealing a deficiency, it may be linked to findings emerging from the consultation strategy. In addition the Local Strategic Partnership will feed issues into the Council for consideration. Other examples for improvement flow from where the Council has used the quest for accreditation eg IIP, Beacon Status, CPA process, use of consultants and appointment of a temporary interim change director.
- 67 With the approval of its new Quality of Life Corporate Plan which has involved a root and branch review within the Council, the Council will have in place a comprehensive consultation, performance management and resource allocation framework to deliver, monitor and respond effectively to the needs of the local population and to meet the challenges of national decisions.

Version Eight : 5th December 2003: Ian Orton

Appendix B

Draft Improvement Plan

This Improvement Plan highlights those areas key to the Council's development for the next three years, addressing in particular its priorities and weaknesses and including details of anticipated outcomes from Year One ACTIONS.

Key Areas	Action	Lead	Outcomes
Strong Community Leadership and Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To brand Uttlesford and market its rural qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise the profile of the Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wherever possible explore service delivery via partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economies of scale Greater community support
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve community engagement to understand their requirements and involve them more in decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger decision making process More open government
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To strengthen Member/officer working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Executive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater trust and confidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To engage more fully in regional and sub regional matters and be recognised as an outward looking authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Executive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council more aware of the big picture which will assist decision making Status of the authority will increase which will help applications for resources

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To restructure the senior management structure to enhance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Executive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance corporate working Assist delivery of four year plan
Protecting and Enhancing the Environment and Character of the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To accelerate waste reduction and increased recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Environmental Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet government targets Deliver green performance measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure new planning guidance contains policies that represent the Uttlesford community and protects its rural qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Planning Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning guidelines will underpin much of the Quality of Life ethos
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the match of housing supply that better meets the needs of the local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Housing Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better range of housing options Reduce homelessness Meet Decent Homes Standard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that national airports policy and existing developments at Stansted Airport protect the quality of the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Planning Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet a community demand
Improving Access to Value for Money Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enhance services to customers by new first point of contact review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Executive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater access to services

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enhance service to customers by enhanced performance monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater knowledge of the organisation will ensure improved management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify non priority areas within the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Executive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger process to allocate resources
Improving Community Safety and the Health of the Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the health of the community via access to leisure facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Community and Leisure Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthier community Improved partnership working with the Primary Care Trust
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve services to the community by enhanced voluntary sector working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Community and Leisure Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making greater use of the volunteer resource within the District
Supporting Lifelong Learning and Developing Better Opportunities for Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage more learning opportunities for staff and the wider community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Community and Leisure Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater choice for the community Utilising existing facilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the usage of public building by young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Executive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting with meeting the needs of young people
Ian Orton	Version Two	8 December 2003	