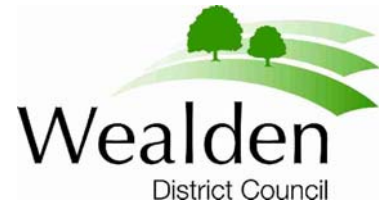


## Corporate Assets Service Plan 2009/10



### The role of the service

- Provide and manage a cost effective range of corporate properties and provide a facilities management service to enable the Council to fulfil its corporate objectives, responsibilities and aspirations of its staff, Members, residents of and visitors to Wealden District Council.
- Lead on strategic property matters and ensure that the role of Corporate Property Officer is fulfilled by requiring that property assets are efficiently and effectively acquired, used and disposed of for best value.
- Provide an energy management, monitoring and control service for corporate properties and a corporate overview of energy use thereby reducing cost, environmental impact (particularly climate change) and waste.
- Provide a Courier service between the Council's offices, Members and Parish Councils.
- Manage the Council's car parks and provide a fair and sensitive service to visitors and residents of Wealden.
- Provide the Council's Emergency Planning service to fulfil its statutory obligations and support the Community in time of need.
- Provide the Council with Business Continuity resilience to maintain its own service provision and to co-ordinate the Council's Business Continuity service to fulfil its statutory obligations and support the Community in time of need.

### The service is planning to achieve the following outcomes by March 2012:

- Independent assurance of the quality of our services ensuring that these are in line with the highest standards nationally
- Improved value for money based on the opinions of our customers and when our performance is compared to other local authorities
- Leading our communities in reducing the local impact on the environment
- Value for money efficiency savings year on year
- Working more efficiently, meeting agreed key priorities, and cutting 'red tape' wherever possible

## What have we achieved in 2008/09?

### Corporate Objective 1 : Putting People First

Providing Quality Services  
Health, Prosperity and Community Safety

- We achieved Charter Mark status in May 2008.
- We responded to the opening of the White House Primary School, Hailsham and co-ordinated the access by providing a safe route across the Council's car park for parents and children and also managed vehicular traffic at drop-off and pick-up times to reduce the risk of accident.
- We commenced an improvement programme for our car parks, particularly signage.
- We minimised the impact of the Hailsham Office flooding event and provided a safe, secure and continuous working environment for staff to provide services to the public.
- We completed a major review of the Council's Emergency and Business Continuity Plans, and successfully exercised them at senior management level.
- We completed an important Corporate Procurement strategy and set in place challenging targets, which have subsequently been met.
- Successful rating appeal settlement showing a £120,000 saving.
- Successfully achieved further capital receipts over £1m in value.
- We undertook further Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) works to help improve access to our services.
- We responded quickly and decisively to improve the security of our offices when a breach occurred.

### Corporate Objective 2 : Pride Of Place

Sustainability  
Place Shaping

- Leading our communities in reducing the local impact on the environment
- Worked with Crowborough Town Council to transfer the management of Bluebell Wood, Crowborough to them to provide a more locally provided facility.
- We continued our good husbandry of our wooded areas by following conservation guidelines and good practice to help promote greater biodiversity and habitat in our countryside.

### Corporate Objective 3 : Purpose Through Partnership

Improving Performance and Efficiency  
Strong Community Leadership

- Obtained agreement to rationalise the Council's offices to one site and commenced a work programme to achieve this
- Reviewed our charges to maximise income, but at the same time supported the community by continuing to make the services available at moderate cost
- Improved value for money based on the opinions of our customers and when our performance is compared to other local authorities
- Working more efficiently, meeting agreed key priorities, and cutting 'red tape' wherever possible
- Independent assurance of the quality of our services ensuring that these are in line with the highest standards nationally
- Worked with the community to progress the Crowborough Community Facility.
- Continued to benefit from energy efficiency improvements giving an estimated £100,000 per year saving on gas and electricity.
- Assisted Pevensey Town Trust to help achieve its objectives for its Cattle Market car park.
- We successfully commenced the implementation of Atlas Incident Management System to aide us in the management and co-ordination of our response to emergencies in partnership with neighbouring authorities.

## What we plan to improve

Target for 2010/11	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10 Milestone	2010/11 Milestone
<b>Corporate Objective 1 : Putting People First</b> Providing Quality Services Health, Prosperity and Community Safety			
Improve and renew signage identifying the services we provide by the end of financial year 2010.	Identify existing and brief for new signage	Surveys complete and programme in place	Programme implemented.
Improve and renew signage in our car parks by the end of financial year 2010.	Identify existing and brief for new signage	Surveys complete and programme in place	Programme implemented.
We will extend our consultation process to those difficult and emotive areas and analyse the results.	Consultation documents issued	Programme of further consultation identified	Programme implemented.
We will publish the results of consultation, provide feedback to those who responded and explain how the results inform future service delivery and decisions.	Feedback and revise service delivery plans.	Feedback and revise service delivery plans.	Feedback and revise service delivery plans.
<b>Corporate Objective 2 : Pride Of Place</b> Sustainability Place Shaping			
Continue to manage, monitor and control the Council's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and optimise its use and cost.	Annual energy report	Annual energy report	Annual energy report
We will contribute to the delivery of a more environmentally friendly HQ building in line with the Council's Climate Change Policy and Sustainability Strategy.	Working Party Report	Working Party Report	Working Party Report
<b>Corporate Objective 3 : Purpose Through Partnership</b> Improving Performance and Efficiency Strong Community Leadership			
Maintain Chartermark and prepare for Move Towards Customer Service Excellence	Achieved	Maintained	Prepare
Deliver efficiency savings year-on-year	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved
Work with Parish and Town Councils to provide facilities more in keeping with local demand.	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved
Review our charges to maximise income, but at the same time support the community by making the services available at moderate cost.	Annual review of Charges	Annual review of Charges	Annual review of Charges

## Risk

The risks to delivery of the Service Plan centre on staffing and the ability of staff to cope with, and accommodate, the high and significantly increasing workload being placed upon us. We are now largely occupied by responding to the very highest priority and most urgent work; long-term service requirements have continued to be put on hold. Follow-through and the ability to quickly or adequately respond continue to be problematic and cause stress within the organisation.

There is a moderate risk of losing staff in any given year. Service areas are in some cases highly specialised and specialist (both in industry terms and in public service terms) and the knowledge and experience associated with those posts is extremely difficult to replace when staff loss occurs. The impact is therefore significant, with work not completed during any

period of staff vacancy and at reduced levels dependent on the skills and experience of any new appointment and the time it takes them to become established within the Council and with partner organisations and to acquire the specific knowledge necessary to successfully fulfil their role.

The above risks lead to a danger of reputational risk, particularly in the inability to provide sufficient follow-through and depth of involvement and this is compounded by our inability to provide resources to properly plan and prepare strategies for the future.

Financial risk is also a consequence of the above, particularly the lack of proper land and property strategies.

## **Other Considerations**

### **Customer Satisfaction**

This is difficult to measure due to the above risks, but also because it contains widely differing service areas and, customer expectations are very high and increasing. Officer workloads and roles have expanded leading to a dilution of officer focus and insufficient time to apply skills consistently, with the consequent result of some programmed works being delayed and/or deferred. This has led to some internal customer dissatisfaction. However, examples such as the rapid improvement of security measures following a breach have had a positive impact on internal customer satisfaction levels.

Assets and facilities (offices, car parks, etc) have markedly declined in quality of provision over recent years and now suffer from significant under-investment. Offices/facility management was not specifically resourced and continues to be at a low level of input from officers prioritised to other task areas. Estates Management is becoming more crucial to the corporate priorities of the organisation and to service areas, but are poorly resourced and lead to bottle-necks.

Car parks - the customer satisfaction survey was placed on hold due to political sensitivity, but is now available on the Council's website. Complaints continue to run at very low levels considering the emotive nature of the service (eg enforcement).

Emergency Planning - the training exercise was well received.

Systems and support - the Time and Attendance (T&A) system was rolled out very successfully and has introduced more management control and clearer audit trails.

### **Customer Involvement**

This is difficult to gauge as customers are both internal and external and cover areas as diverse as caretaking, negotiating sale of land (to achieve major capital receipts), rating appeals, car park enforcement, maintenance of closed churchyards and provision of leisure facilities and property. However, the customer panel and senior officer attendance at equality, etc group meetings all assist customer involvement. We also work closely with Parish and Town Council's, not least, to provide Emergency Planning and Business Continuity advice and guidance.

### **Access to Services**

As mentioned above customers are both internal and external and have widely differing and increasing requirements and expectations. All customers have considerable and easy access to services and in some respects this has contributed to the problem, eg car park usage has led to increased wear and tear and increased frequency of insufficient capacity.

Access to services is achieved by letters from the public, emails from staff. Complaints are a valuable tool in measuring customer access.

## Value for Money

Again, difficult to compare so measurement in absolute terms is used. For example, on the one hand, it is nationally recognised that we are very badly performing in car park provision, but this is due to the fact that the Council does not generally charge for parking. On the other hand, all of the car park enforcement is carried out by three officers, a very low cost to the organisation. Core corporate estates management is provided by two officers, again a very low level of cost to the council. Caretaking services are provided by two full time officers, boosted by four part-time staff but which often leads the service wanting and exposed. The courier service is provided by one full-time officer and resilience is provided by an occasional relief courier.

Through the Transformation Programme we will review all services to determine how we could improve the value for money over the next three years. The following options will be explored:

- Service cessation (where the service is discretionary)
- Reduce the service
- Improve the service by doing it differently
- Shared service with partner / other local authority
- Service provided by others

## Workforce Priorities

The Service has been under regular review since the last reorganisation, particularly at times of MTFs. The following key workforce areas will be investigated as part of the Service Transformation programme during 2009/10.

- We will need to consider the current structure and roles.
- We will investigate early retirement options which enable us to retain the significant expertise of existing staff whilst reducing salary costs through the reallocation of other staff within the team or the procurement of less expensive resources.
- We will use any such opportunities to develop other staff within the team and encourage them to assume new responsibilities and skills.
- In the event of any vacancy we will seek to utilise available resources across the Council in preference to the engagement of agency staff.

## Learning & Development

The service is committed to continuing professional development for all staff and the pursuit of relevant qualifications by individuals, subject to available resources. We regularly support members of the team who wish to further or achieve technical, professional or managerial qualification, which has ongoing benefits for the organisation. In the short term, the research and learning undertaken by the individual contribute significantly to keeping up to date with new developments in that professional field. In the longer term, the benefits are from more efficient working from suitably qualified staff who have a stronger loyalty to the organisation as a consequence of the support they have received.

## Equalities and Diversity

Equality is embedded in all aspects of the service. We strive to be fair and transparent in the way that we provide our services and ensure that they are accessible to all in our communities. This is reflected in our Customer Charters and in the Council's Statement of Values. Our Action Plan is the outcome of our Equality Impact Assessments.

## **Sustainability**

We have a track record of providing sustainable services and solutions for the Council. Our energy management, monitoring and control has achieved all national and local targets and reduced the Council's impact on climate change and the environment, and the actions taken in the past will continue to deliver well into the future (not least the significant and ongoing annual savings on fuel purchase). Long-term, sustainable decisions and actions have been taken even when they have been difficult and controversial.

The Cuckoo Trail provides alternative means of transport and other options to locals and visitors to the District as well as a valuable leisure facility.

## **Rural impact**

All of the Council's property assets have a strong rural aspect, with car parks providing a vital economic facility to local villages and tourism. Amenity land, woods, common land and leisure facilities such as the Cuckoo Trail provide leisure, transportation, access, etc alternatives. The Council's landholdings form a major part of the rural landscape of the weald.

## **Communication**

Direct communication with appropriate and responsible officers is available to the media, public, government bodies and businesses and is regularly and frequently used. We have a high profile and visible presence in the community due to the nature of the work and the role of outside officers where communication forms a major part of their activities.

## **Health and safety**

Health and safety legislation and culture is an integral and important part of service provision, with a strong emphasis on our duty of care.

## **Outlook**

Significant restructure and resource allocation and/or major shift in priorities and standards will be necessary to bring the resources and workload into balance. Until such times as that balance is achieved the situation will not improve.

## **Standards**

All service areas have strong and stringent requirements of standards of provision, not least amongst which are;

Health and Safety, etc at work Act.

Construction Act.

Building Regulations

Contract Law

Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

Asset management guidance from central Government. Asset Management Plan.

Disability Discrimination Act.

Civil Contingencies Act.

Property Law

Landlord and Tenant Act.

Local Government Act 1972. Burial Act 1853.

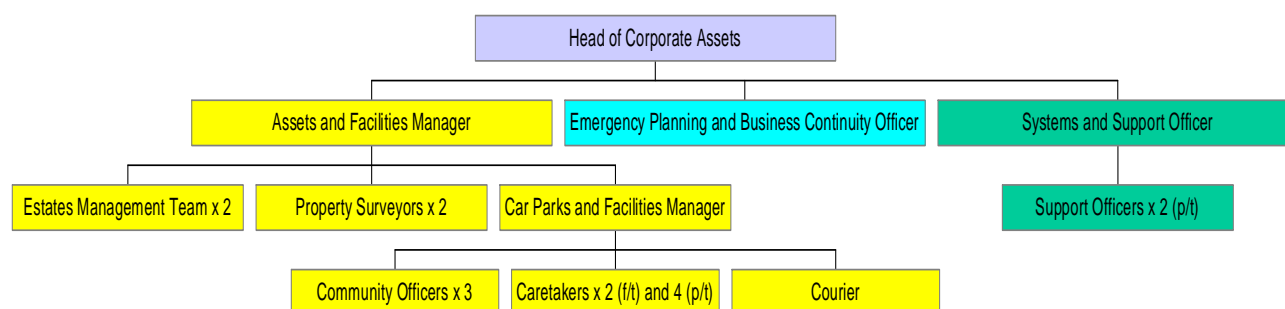
Emergency Incident Resource Pack. Business Continuity Plan.

Wildlife and Countryside Act. Weeds Act.

Parking Act 1989

## Resources and budget

### Staff Organisation Chart (19 FTE)



### Budget

2008/09 £		2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £
266,940	Systems Support and Administration	292,910	292,910	292,910
79,470	Estates and Valuation	103,400	103,400	103,400
-	Farningham Road	6,000	15,000	25,000
50	Mead House	2,050	2,050	2,050
(53,360)	Beaconwood	(26,910)	(26,910)	(26,410)
28,290	Land sites and Open spaces	46,440	32,440	32,440
(200)	Castle field, Pevensey	(200)	(200)	(200)
130	Wilmington Green	130	130	130
320	Monken Pyn, Wilmington	320	320	320
200	Diplocks Wood	200	200	200
300,070	Vicarage Lane, Hailsham	299,370	299,370	299,370
233,840	Pine Grove, Crowborough	242,660	237,660	237,660
123,740	Offices, general	187,470	184,970	184,970
2,920	Pinegrove, ESCC	3,170	3,170	3,170
31,700	Pinegrove Canteen	31,760	31,760	31,760
(19,500)	Vicarage Lane Committee Room	(19,500)	(19,500)	(19,500)
63,230	Emergency Planning	57,150	57,150	57,150
7,200	Argos Hill Windmill	7,210	7,210	7,210
(13,820)	66/70 High Street, Hailsham	(13,820)	(13,820)	(13,820)
(19,100)	Leap Cross	(13,900)	(13,900)	(13,900)
(37,600)	Station Rd Ind Estate Hailsham	(37,600)	(37,600)	(37,600)
4,200	Amenity Areas	7,000	7,000	7,000
164,070	Car Parks	193,050	193,050	193,050
48,600	Cuckoo Trail	50,200	50,200	53,200
(560)	Maresfield Camp	(560)	(560)	(560)
39,110	Closed Churchyards	39,110	39,110	39,110
<b>1,249,940</b>		<b>1,457,110</b>	<b>1,444,610</b>	<b>1,455,110</b>

## Performance indicator targets

The National Indicator Set was introduced from 1 April 2008. In 2008/09 we have commenced gathering baseline data which has been used to set targets for 2009/10 and beyond.

PI No.	Description	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
NI 37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area	16.2%	N/a	20%*
Part NI 14	Reducing avoidable contact: minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer	Data Assembly underway	To define	To define
Part NI 185	CO2 reduction from local authority operations	Data Assembly underway	To define	To define
Part NI 188	Planning to Adapt to Climate Change	Data Assembly underway	To define	To define
Part NI 194	Air quality – % reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations	Data Assembly underway	To define	To define
WL CA1	Reduction in Energy Use in Corporate Buildings.	Data Assembly underway	To define	To define
WL CA2	Consultations carried out	0	1	1
WL CA3	Customer Surveys carried out	1	3	4
WL CA4	% Estate Management Option Appraisals completed	100%	100%	100%
WL CA6	% Occupancy of Business Units	95%	90%	90%
WL CA7	% Satisfaction with Car Parking	Data Assembly underway	To define	To define
WL CA8	% Satisfaction with Offices	Data Assembly underway	To define	To define
WL CA9	Cost per sq m of office accommodation	Data Assembly underway	To define	To define

\* Achieving this will depend on the publication of new Government Guidance and Legislation, which includes the response to the Pitt Review.

## How this Service Plan will be monitored

The Council's performance management framework is critical to monitoring and reporting the achievements of the Service and as a catalyst for improvement when targets are not achieved.

In the same way that targets cascade down to individual appraisals, the achievement of those targets is managed at individual, team or service level. Day to day management is used to identify good performance and also those areas where delivery is slower or below the standard expected. There is an underlying principle of "no surprises".

At the end of each quarter, performance against key targets is collated and reported to a directorate management meeting. Based on the above system, management should already be aware and have taken appropriate action to improve a situation subject to the availability of appropriate resources. This quarterly meeting and information review should allow the

Corporate Director to balance the outcomes from each of the service areas for which they are responsible and take appropriate action within their directorate.

A quarterly report is prepared by each directorate, which is then collated by the Policy Officer with responsibility for Performance Management. This report then forms an appendix to a Cabinet report, with Portfolio Holders commenting on performance for their respective portfolios and recommending any improvement to Cabinet. The Cabinet report is circulated to all Members. Cabinet recommendations are then implemented by officers.

In the Scrutiny cycle following Cabinet's consideration of performance, the three Scrutiny Committees review the decisions of Cabinet and scrutinise the actions taken to improve performance and whether these have been effective.

At the year-end, provisional outturn figures are prepared and considered by Cabinet. These must then undergo a process of data quality checks internally and external validation by the Audit Commission prior to final publication around June 2010.

### **Other key reference documents for the service**

[Corporate Plan](#) - setting out the Council's overall strategic direction and priorities

[Performance Management Framework](#) - the Council's arrangements for monitoring and acting on performance information and ensuring data quality

[Wealden Sustainable Community Strategy](#) - Wealden Local Strategic Partnership's arrangements for organisations working together for the good of the district

[East Sussex Local Area Agreement](#) - a three-year agreement between East Sussex County Council on behalf of service providers, including Wealden District Council, and central government. which identifies priorities for improvement in East Sussex and how they will be delivered

[East Sussex Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy](#) - a description of East Sussex as it is now and a vision of how it should be in 20 years time and the key priorities for people in East Sussex

[Communications Strategy](#) - the Council's approach to communicating with people in the district and local and national media

[Wealden Sustainability Strategy](#) - how the Council will seek to enable the current needs of the district to be met without compromising the ability of future generations living in Wealden to meet their own needs

[Climate Change Policy](#) - the principles by which the Council is responding to climate change

[Climate Change Action Plan](#) - what we will do to respond to climate change

[Community Engagement Strategy](#) provides a framework for co-ordinated and effective engagement of stakeholders and individuals by the Council in its decision-making.

[Wealden Equality Scheme 2007-2010](#) which sets out how we will ensure that all our services and employment opportunities are provided with equity and fairness to everyone.

[Energy Management Annual Report](#)

[Asset Management Plan](#) sets out our position and strategy for land and property use, including acquisition, use and disposal.

[Emergency Incident Resource Pack](#) sets out our response to emergencies.

[Business Continuity Plan](#) sets out our response to enable the organisation to perform at the time of an emergency.

Terry Crone  
Head of Corporate Assets  
T:01323 443354  
E : [corporate.assets@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.assets@wealden.gov.uk)