

# Corporate Plan 2007-10



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If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in this document in large print, Braille, tape/CD; or in another language please contact, Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or [info@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:info@wealden.gov.uk) We have tried to keep the Corporate Plan as free from jargon and operational details as possible. Appendix C, available on our website, provides background to some of the things covered in this document.



# Welcome – Leader of the Council

The Council is keen for Wealden to continue to enjoy its reputation as a great place to live. This Corporate Plan for 2007-2010 explains the importance of the work of the Council and how the services it provides help to improve the quality of life in the District along with maintaining and improving the environment for future generations.

The Council is committed to delivering its corporate priorities; the things that you have told us are the most important. This builds on the hard work and our achievements over the past few years. Much of it has been driven by the self-assessment document we prepared for our Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2003, and on which all political parties in the Council were agreed. Our successes and achievements are detailed more fully in the pages that follow.

Wealden is proud of the services it delivers and the value for money for the local taxpayer. Consultation with the community tells us that public expectations of public services are increasing, and we are working to respond to that expectation. We are reorganising our services to be faster to respond and be more efficient. Financial pressures have led us to prioritise what we provide and look for new, innovative and cost-effective means of delivery.

These are just some of the key challenges that we face with our partners in 2007/08:

- ▶▶ Financial pressures caused by reduced Government grants and increasing demands on council tax
- ▶▶ An expectation that all authorities will perform better each year and deliver efficiency savings
- ▶▶ New duties for local councils
- ▶▶ The local impacts of global climate change
- ▶▶ Implementation of the South East Plan and the pressure to provide more housing including affordable housing
- ▶▶ The outcome of the 2007 District elections
- ▶▶ Partnership and shared working with other councils and the private sector
- ▶▶ Free national bus travel
- ▶▶ Accommodation strategy towards a single HQ
- ▶▶ Helping our communities to be healthier; for example through introducing a ban on public smoking

Corporate Plans in previous years have been written in government-speak to satisfy Government expectations.

My desire is that this year's plan is a document for our Wealden communities – easier to read and leading to a better public understanding of what local councils such as Wealden do, and why they do it. I hope that the public recognise that we have delivered what we said we would, and how daily, we improve the quality of life in Wealden.

We always welcome, and listen to your views, so tell us what you think of this publication and our plans. You can contact us by telephone, letter or via the web and the details are set out on the page opposite.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pam Dadds".

Leader of the Council

May 2007



# Working for our District

## Our Mission, Corporate Objectives and Values

Our mission statement and corporate objectives are drawn from the Council's Community Strategy.

The Council's mission is to work together to improve the quality of life in Wealden by:



▶▶ Protecting and enhancing a sustainable environment



▶▶ Promoting healthier and safer communities



▶▶ Developing a more prosperous and sustainable economy



▶▶ Striving for excellence

In all our work we aim to:

- ▶▶ Provide services which give value for money
- ▶▶ Conduct our business in the public interest with integrity, being even-handed, open and accountable
- ▶▶ Have the highest ethical standards
- ▶▶ Ensure that services are accessible to all



## Community Leadership

The role of local authorities is constantly changing. Many of the issues facing local communities today – health, community safety, the environment, social inclusion, regeneration – can only be tackled effectively if the wide variety of public, private and voluntary sector organisations involved at local level work together.

Increasingly, Wealden's role is moving away from directly providing local public services to one of community leadership. Like all public sector organisations, Wealden regularly looks to work with partners to provide services jointly in order to achieve the value for money and efficiency savings expected of us. The Local Strategic Partnership provides a forum where Wealden's partners can be brought together. Government funding through Local Area Agreements is encouraging a more structured approach to the identification of common priorities for improvement across county areas, such as East Sussex, and how these will be tackled by the partners.



## Services we Provide

The Council provides many services either under our legal duties or under national priorities or because they are needed by the people of Wealden. We also work to promote the interests of the District as a whole and give good leadership to our communities. We are best known for:

- ▶▶ Collecting and recycling household and commercial waste
- ▶▶ Cleaning streets and public areas
- ▶▶ Protecting the local environment
- ▶▶ Looking after public safety, health and well-being
- ▶▶ Providing housing and supporting other providers of social housing
- ▶▶ Managing and improving the Council's housing stock and other property
- ▶▶ Providing housing and council tax benefit
- ▶▶ Regulating development to maintain and enhance Wealden's valuable environment
- ▶▶ Encouraging sustainable economic growth
- ▶▶ Controlling building works to ensure public safety



## Wealden as a Place

In the coming year, you will see many references to 'place shaping'. This role includes building and shaping local identity, and making sure that the right services are provided to local people based on local needs and preferences. To achieve this we need to have a clear understanding of what sort of place Wealden is now and will be in the future.

Outside of its five towns, the Wealden District is mostly rural. We have a lower number of residents per square mile than most of the South East. The closeness of Wealden to Greater London, Crawley/Gatwick and other major employment centres, coupled with the attractiveness of the District as a place to live, creates pressures for housing and infrastructure. The Government has set a target for a substantial number of new homes to be built in the District in the next four years.

Future projections point to the population and the number of households increasing in Wealden. Demand for affordable housing will remain high and the needs of an ageing population will present new challenges in providing services for our residents. In 'shaping' Wealden, we will also need to meet public concerns about climate change whilst maintaining and improving the quality of life in the District. We have begun work on this through our Greener, Cleaner, Brighter initiative designed to make:

### Wealden **Greener** by:

- ▶▶ Extending kerbside recycling to rural areas
- ▶▶ Recycling plastics
- ▶▶ Embedding sustainability issues in the planning process
- ▶▶ Improving public awareness of sustainability issues
- ▶▶ Buying energy for our offices from non-fossil sources

### Wealden **Cleaner** by:

- ▶▶ Increasing street cleaning for visibly better roads, particularly on the Districts "A" roads
- ▶▶ Introducing a voluntary surrender scheme for unwanted cars

### Wealden **Brighter** by:

- ▶▶ Promoting a brighter future for everyone living and working in Wealden
- ▶▶ Enhancing locations in the District for more pride of place
- ▶▶ Passing down services to local community councils



# Priorities for Wealden

## Priorities for 2007/08

Each year, the Leader of the Council presents a report setting out the key priorities for the Council. Some of these are high level priorities and others identify how we need to respond to an urgent need or national requirements; for example to address performance in a given area. The eight priorities for 2007/08 (shown below) are detailed within pages 6-13 of the Corporate Plan and restated within the appropriate individual Service Plans for our 12 business units in Appendix A. In some instances, more than one business unit will be responsible for the delivery of a priority. For example, the Planning and Housing services both have responsibilities in securing affordable housing within the District.

### Wealden's priorities for 2007/08:

- ▶▶ Continued action on environmental issues of recycling and waste reduction
- ▶▶ Affordable housing and sustainable housing development
- ▶▶ Getting our services closer to our communities
- ▶▶ Promoting the safety, health and well-being of our communities
- ▶▶ Economic revitalisation and proactive business support
- ▶▶ Improving planning performance
- ▶▶ Keeping council tax increases low
- ▶▶ Promoting a Wealden of confident communities



## Setting out our Priorities

### Continued action on environmental issues of recycling and waste reduction

#### Why is this a priority?

The Council has previously worked on a number of issues to sustain the local and global environment. Practical initiatives have focused on developing a waste management service that has achieved a combined recycling and composting rate for the household waste it collects of 30% – above the national average and the Government's performance standards. Alongside this success has been a national trend of increasing levels of household waste.

#### What we are doing

- ▶▶ Working towards a target of recovering 50% of waste for recycling, composting or producing energy by 2010
- ▶▶ Working towards extending kerbside recycling of at least two materials to all households in the District by 2010 – investment in better recycling facilities and kerbside collections at Forest Row and Danehill are significant steps towards this
- ▶▶ Developing plastics recycling
- ▶▶ Reducing the Council's carbon dioxide emissions
- ▶▶ Waste minimisation and recycling trials





## Affordable housing and sustainable housing development

### Why is this a priority?

The numbers of people requiring affordable housing is growing. The average house price in Wealden in September 2006 was £270,743, the average weekly income in 2006 was £387.20. This widening gap between the earnings of local people and the market cost of local housing needs to be tackled. Encouraging 'green' design in new housing and reducing the environmental impact of existing housing helps to address climate change.

### What we are doing

- ▶▶ Working with developers to encourage them to build more affordable housing and 'greener' homes
- ▶▶ Ensuring our Local Development Framework requires affordable homes to be part of our sustainable communities – we are in the first year of a programme to deliver 1,300 affordable homes through the Local Plan
- ▶▶ Working with our parish councils to provide affordable housing in rural locations
- ▶▶ Improving understanding of the need for affordable housing across the District
- ▶▶ Preventing homeless households having to stay in temporary accommodation and, where this is necessary, to reduce the length of stay
- ▶▶ Improving our response to housing needs by providing local people with more choice about where they will live
- ▶▶ Encouraging housing development which conserves natural resources, minimises harm to the environment and enhances our quality of life
- ▶▶ Developing water and energy conservation for council houses



## Getting our services closer to our communities



### Why is this a priority?

The public funding which the Council receives must be used to closely meet the needs of the communities it serves.

### What we are doing

- ▶▶ Improving local access to services through Community Help Points delivered jointly with East Sussex County Council at Heathfield, Uckfield, Crowborough and Hailsham
- ▶▶ Developing the Wealden Equality Scheme to further improve our approach to all equality areas and in providing services for all
- ▶▶ We have recently consulted people with disabilities across the District and are implementing service changes to meet their needs more fully
- ▶▶ We are currently reviewing all aspects our equalities strategy to improve the accessibility of services for all
- ▶▶ We will implement the Wealden Play Strategy to provide better play facilities for children and young people in District and we are currently seeking help with this through lottery funding





## Promoting the safety, health and well-being of our communities



### Why is this a priority?

Our residents enjoying good health and feeling confident about their own safety are major contributors to local quality of life and sense of well-being. We intend to ensure that our residents are provided with safe food, drink and water. We also want them to enjoy safe workplaces and homes, have opportunities to improve their physical and mental health through exercise and have access to leisure pursuits and cultural and social activities. Our residents should be able to live without fear of crime or threat to their personal safety.

### What we are doing

- ▶▶ Funding leisure centres operated by our partners Freedom Leisure
- ▶▶ Working closely with Sussex Police and other agencies in the Safer Wealden Partnership to target crime and disorder and keep Wealden one of the lowest crime areas in the country
- ▶▶ Removing around 5,000 tonnes of waste picked up from fly-tipping each year
- ▶▶ Removing around 300 tonnes of dog waste each year
- ▶▶ Ensuring compliance with food safety and health and safety at work laws with around 1,500 inspections each year
- ▶▶ Processing around 1,600 alcohol licence applications each year
- ▶▶ Improving health in the District through child safety initiatives, tackling childhood obesity and the introduction of the ban on smoking in public places
- ▶▶ To meet the needs of our changing population we will be:
  - ▶▶ Upgrading sheltered housing
  - ▶▶ Developing options for housing older people
  - ▶▶ Undertaking Age Well and Living Well initiatives in partnership with the County Council



## Economic revitalisation and proactive business support

### Why is this a priority?

Approximately 40,000 people work in the District. Tourism is the main sector having a value to the Wealden economy of £248 million and accounting for around 6,800 jobs. Although unemployment is low, Wealden has a number of areas and features of deprivation. Organisations with local knowledge work in partnership with the Council to ensure that a 'joined up' approach is taken to build prosperity in the District and enable the right services and support to be delivered.

### What we are doing

- ▶▶ Supporting our towns with free car parking and town partnership
- ▶▶ Promoting Wealden to tourists
- ▶▶ Enabling rate relief for rural shops and businesses
- ▶▶ Acting to bring all areas of the District up to the highest performing on economic activity
- ▶▶ Working on the Eastbourne/Hailsham Economic Blueprint with other councils and organisations to ensure economic development in the south of Wealden and in Eastbourne is achieved in a structured way
- ▶▶ Helping our small businesses to understand and comply with the complexities of the law through the services of our Regulation Adviser, the Wealden Business Help website [www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk](http://www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk), a newly introduced 'Helping Hand' CD ROM and an email alert service



## Maintaining planning performance

### Why is this a priority?

With the housing growth targets allocated to the District it is in the interests of our communities, residents and people making planning applications for Wealden to have an efficient and effective planning service. Our performance has improved since 2005 and we are now a top performing authority. We are also embarking with our communities on a new Local Development Framework which will shape the future built and natural environment of the District.

### What we are doing

- ▶▶ Maintaining fast levels of turnaround of planning applications
- ▶▶ Maintaining the quality of our planning decisions measured by the proportion of appeals against them that are dismissed
- ▶▶ Setting the overall scene for future development in the District with an 'Issues and Options' consultation paper – the preferred options coming out of that consultation will be reported by May 2008
- ▶▶ Starting consultation on a Sustainability Appraisal for the District
- ▶▶ Consulting on and adopting a Design Guide for Wealden





## Keeping council tax increases low

### Why is this a priority?

The Government gives us the lowest amount of grant of any council in East Sussex so it's a challenge to keep the council tax down whilst improving services. The Council has a track record of achieving efficiencies while improving the quality of services, and keeping council tax to a manageable level. Pressures for continuing with this work have increased with the reduction of government Revenue Support Grant and its implications for residents on fixed incomes.

### What we are doing

- ▶▶ Continuing to maximise the benefit for our District of the public funding we receive using our Medium Term Financial Strategy
- ▶▶ Rationalising our office accommodation to use the Council's assets more effectively and delivering an improved quality of service to our customers
- ▶▶ Reviewing all of our budgets and moving money to our priorities
- ▶▶ Publishing our financial plans three years ahead to improve our service planning and the financial planning of all our stakeholders including council tax payers
- ▶▶ Reducing costs through effective procurement
- ▶▶ Working with other councils to provide services jointly where economies of scale can be identified
- ▶▶ Reorganising our staff arrangements for more flexible working, using the Council's assets more economically
- ▶▶ Further underpinning the value for money we offer in the context of the national Comprehensive Spending Review for 2007



## Promoting a Wealden of confident communities



### Why is this a priority?

Where people have pride in their locality, their quality of life is enhanced. To encourage pride of place we support our communities in developing their identity and enable local people to confidently shape their local environments. Confidence is also about building community ownership. Citizens need to have the right opportunities to engage with councils and other providers of key services.

### What we are doing

- ▶▶ Providing leadership to grow confident communities
- ▶▶ Working in partnership to enable sustainable place shaping within existing resources
- ▶▶ Enabling parish councils to achieve quality status
- ▶▶ Working on gateway enhancements to localities in the District
- ▶▶ Developing the roles of our town and parish councils through consultation on the Local Development Framework
- ▶▶ Exploring opportunities to devolve services closer to local people through town and parish councils whilst ensuring that value for money is maintained
- ▶▶ Providing financial support to local projects through community grants
- ▶▶ Supporting the Safer Wealden Partnership
- ▶▶ Increasing engagement with young people in the District as the citizens of tomorrow through Local Democracy Week and support for initiatives like the [www.w4y.co.uk](http://www.w4y.co.uk) website for local youth



## Our Achievements in 2006/07

Each year, the Council reports on its performance and this is traditionally done through the Corporate Plan. The performance of all local authorities is audited annually by the Audit Commission. Only when this national process is complete, detailed information becomes available that allows us to compare ourselves with neighbouring and other authorities. Appendix B provides a detailed analysis of our performance, but all the data for 2006/07 needs to be viewed as provisional until the Audit Commission's work is completed. We expect to publish the audited figures on our website in January 2008.

Based on the provisional data, some of the Council's key achievements are set out below and overleaf.



## Delivering our Priorities

Our speed in making planning decisions has improved with all of the national targets on the speed of processing planning applications being exceeded. Meanwhile, the quality of our decisions has remained robust with 76% of appeals against them being dismissed.

Public access to the planning process has been enhanced with redesigned planning pages on the Council's web site.

We are successfully phasing in plastics recycling and preliminary work has been done on trialing a kerbside recycling scheme in rural areas.

Although delivery has been slow, the Council will have delivered a large proportion of the 1,300 affordable homes in the Non-Statutory Local Plan by 2011. In addition, the Council anticipates delivery of an additional 500 homes through windfall and exception sites.

We have helped local businesses to protect their future by assisting in their business continuity planning. We have also provided a variety of innovative resources for training, education and information to help local businesses meet health & safety and food safety requirements and we continue to support local town centres with parking free at the point of delivery.

Service provision and points of contact have been spread more widely across the District and electronic access to the Council and its services has been further improved along with reception facilities at Council offices.

We were awarded Investor in People status for the fifth consecutive time and are an accredited Positive About Disabled employer. We also meet the requirements of the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts in any transfers of staff.



# How we've Improved the Quality of Life in Wealden

Public perception of the Council and the services it provides cannot be measured purely by how well it is doing against national performance indicators. Our reputation in the local press, how we handle a particular incident, the experience that a customer has personally in dealing with their local authority all influence the answer to the big question: "How good is your local council?"

National indicators are used by the Audit Commission and others to understand how a local council is performing compared to other English councils. A standard methodology for assessing performance in each area allows like-with-like comparison in a way that a subjective opinion about the level of service cannot.

Taking Wealden's audited performance in a number of national performance indicators for 2005/06, the last year for which national data is available and comparing that performance with councils across England, shows that in 83% of the indicators we have to measure, Wealden rates as a high performing or average authority.

Although given equal weighting by the Government, not all of the prescribed indicators will be readily aligned to the Council's corporate objectives. Some examples of how we performed in 2006/07 on those issues which are of the highest priority to Wealden residents are shown below.

Protecting and enhancing a sustainable environment		
Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	up 6%	✓
Minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	up 9%	✓
Other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	up 9%	✓
Score on local street and environmental cleanliness	up 4%	✓
Promoting a healthier and safer community		
Violent crime	down 12%	✓
Burglary	down 20%	✓
Overall offences	down 8%	✓
Developing a more prosperous and sustainable economy		
Time to process new benefit claims	4 days faster	✓
Striving for excellence		
Council tax rise limited to	4.2%	✓

Pleasing as these improvements are, they do need to be set against a national picture of continuous improvement.



# Working With Partners

## Community Strategy

Wealden has a duty to produce a community strategy based on local consultation and developed through a local strategic partnership.

The Wealden Community Strategy is designed to enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being of our area and promote sustainable development. It enables services for people in the District provided between the various bodies to be co-ordinated in response to our residents' needs and concerns.

The first strategy was published in 2002. This has since been updated to include information from Parish, Town and Village Plans, and views from a Wider Partner consultation event held in June 2006. The updated Community Strategy was adopted by Council in February 2007.

The Strategy identifies eight themes of real significance to people in Wealden. With the exception of transport and access, these are listed opposite. Wealden District Council helps to implement the Wealden Community Strategy through the activities listed under each theme.



## Environment

- ▶▶ Protecting and enhancing rural and urban environments
- ▶▶ Reducing waste, pollution and environmental crime
- ▶▶ Underpinning decisions about local development and the future of Wealden with sustainability principles
- ▶▶ Encouraging wise use and enjoyment of natural resources
- ▶▶ Providing for healthy lifestyles and improved quality of life

## Health and Social Care

- ▶▶ Promoting healthy lifestyles and social inclusion often through partnership working

## Housing

- ▶▶ Providing increased numbers of affordable homes for local people including key workers
- ▶▶ Providing special needs accommodation and support
- ▶▶ Ensuring new housing is part of mixed, balanced and sustainable development to meet the projected needs of existing and future communities

## Learning

- ▶▶ Continued development of the vocational training centre in Wealden

## Cultural Activities and Leisure

- ▶▶ Encouraging walking, riding and cycling
- ▶▶ Funding good quality, affordable, locally-based leisure facilities
- ▶▶ Providing facilities for people with disabilities
- ▶▶ A range of sporting opportunities

## Prosperity

- ▶▶ Regenerating Wealden's towns and run-down rural areas
- ▶▶ Provision of advice and support for business, especially in the agricultural and tourism sectors
- ▶▶ Supplying business sites and units through the Local Plan

## Community Safety

- ▶▶ Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
- ▶▶ Reducing the fear of crime
- ▶▶ Improving personal and community safety
- ▶▶ Helping those affected by discrimination



Under each theme, the strategy sets out the community vision and steps towards achieving it. There are 64 objectives in all, and these allow the Community Strategy to be used to provide information on local priorities for a range of frameworks and plans for delivering services on the ground, for example through the:

- ▶▶ County-wide Local Area Agreement
- ▶▶ Wealden Local Development Framework
- ▶▶ Healthier Wealden Partnership (Health Improvement Partnership)
- ▶▶ Safer Wealden Partnership (Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership)
- ▶▶ Wealden Housing Partnership
- ▶▶ Corporate plans of partner organisations

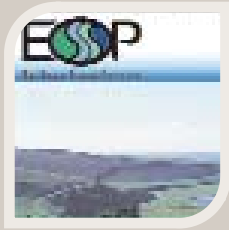
## Local Strategic Partnership

The District Local Strategic Partnership is a single multi-agency body, which matches the District Council boundaries. It brings together local partners from the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to work together to influence the delivery of the Community Strategy providing local services meeting the needs of local people.

The Wealden Partnership develops the Community Strategy adopted by the Council. The Partnership also oversees its delivery. To date, the Local Strategic Partnership has been strong on bringing partners together, setting the Strategy, developing initiatives, and giving direction and support to the parish planning process. It has also supported some strong, innovative projects such as a youth web site ([www.w4y.co.uk](http://www.w4y.co.uk)), the 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive' initiative and 'Wheels 2 Learn', providing individual transport to enable young people to attend vocational training inaccessible by public transport.

The three key mechanisms for delivery of the Wealden Community Strategy are:

- ▶▶ Local Area Agreement
- ▶▶ Local Development Framework
- ▶▶ Other plans and frameworks such as the Wealden Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy



## Wealden's Role in the East Sussex Local Area Agreement

The Local Area Agreement is a three-year agreement between East Sussex County Council, district and borough councils in the County, other service providers and central government. The Agreement identifies common priorities for improvement across East Sussex and how these will be tackled by the partners.

The Agreement is structured around four key service areas:

- ▶▶ Children and young people
- ▶▶ Healthier communities and older people
- ▶▶ Economic development and enterprise
- ▶▶ Safer and stronger communities

Wealden is contributing towards the achievement of county-wide targets including:

- ▶▶ Increasing the number of enquires at community help points resolved at first visit
- ▶▶ Increasing take up of housing and council tax benefit
- ▶▶ Increasing the take up of grants for central heating, insulation and energy efficiency
- ▶▶ Increasing the number of council houses meeting the fitness standard
- ▶▶ Increasing the number of empty homes brought back into use
- ▶▶ Improving homeless prevention
- ▶▶ Reducing the average stay for homeless families in B&B and the number of households in other temporary accommodation
- ▶▶ Delivering new affordable homes through the planning system
- ▶▶ Maximising rural affordable housing
- ▶▶ Removing more abandoned cars within 24 hours
- ▶▶ Tackling fly tipping
- ▶▶ Reducing the amount of household waste going to landfill



## Local Development Framework

The Local Development Framework implements the Community Strategy in the District's physical environment. It is more wide-ranging in scope than a Local Plan, with a more integrated approach. The topics being researched for the Framework include:

- ▶▶ Housing
- ▶▶ Business
- ▶▶ Transport
- ▶▶ Environment
- ▶▶ Waste
- ▶▶ Infrastructure (including access to services)
- ▶▶ Sustainability (including issues like local flooding risks)

The Framework also refers to national and regional spatial strategies which take precedence over local priorities. The development process for the framework is intended to be inclusive and participative at local level, rather than remote or distant. Our elected Councillors as leaders in their communities are working with professional officers, the Local Strategic Partnership, elected representatives at county and town and parish levels, partners from the public, business and voluntary sectors as well as members of the public, to ensure that the Wealden Framework secures appropriate sustainable development for our communities.





# Managing our Finances

## What we do and What it Costs




In spite of continuing cuts in government funding, Wealden's finances are in better shape when compared with surrounding councils and, on average; our council tax increases over the past five years have been lower. The Audit Commission has judged Wealden to be a provider of good value-for-money services.

Our main tool for managing the public money the Council receives is our Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Strategy plans the Council's budget over a rolling three-year period. It enables resources to be targeted at priorities whilst keeping future council tax increases to a minimum. Use of the Strategy will be crucial in responding to the likely further reduction in the amount of central funding available to the Council as a result of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review to be announced in 2007.

The Council has planned its 2007/08 budget to keep council tax increases low. The budget is set out in the tables on the following two pages.

# Wealden District Council's Spending Plans for 2007/08

What we plan to spend on services


	2006/07 £ (000)	2007/08 £ (000)
<b>Promoting and enhancing a sustainable environment</b> 		
Planning	2,657	3,116
Culture & heritage	43	50
Coast protection, flood defence & drainage	385	381
Refuse collection, recycling & street cleansing	4,124	4,196
Environmental initiatives	307	317
Concessionary fares	799	979
<b>Promoting healthier and safer communities</b> 		
Recreation & sport	1,382	1,195
Environmental & public health	1,772	1,835
Community safety	30	75
Housing strategy, standards & homelessness	1,507	1,565
<b>Developing a more prosperous and sustainable economy</b> 		
Tourism & economic development	250	124
Car parking	507	247
<b>Striving for excellence</b> 		
Corporate management	2,246	2,063
Housing benefits (net of government grant)	607	618
Local tax collection	1,216	1,223
Elections	260	352
Community grants and local strategic partnership	443	481
Other services	729	593
<b>Inflation</b>		
Provision for inflation	550	485
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>19,814</b>	<b>19,895</b>
Interest receivable	-555	-583
Interest & capital financing	-1,903	-1,043
Use of reserves & balances	-412	-716
<b>District Council budget requirement</b>	<b>16,944</b>	<b>17,553</b>
Where the money comes from	2006/07 £ (000)	2007/08 £ (000)
Government grant	1,228	1,124
Business rates	6,399	6,697
Council tax payers	9,264	9,687
Collection surplus	50	45
<b>Total income</b>	<b>16,944</b>	<b>17,553</b>

## Our overall spending

	2006/07 £ (000)	2007/08 £ (000)
Expenditure	47,777	51,044
Less income (including specific government grants)	-30,421	-32,775
Less use of funds and balances	-412	-716
<b>Wealden District Council budget requirement</b>	<b>16,944</b>	<b>17,553</b>

Band D council tax	2006/07 £	2007/08 £
Wealden District Council band D council tax	150.71	157.03

Capital spending on assets to improve and maintain our services is planned for 2007/08 as follows:

Capital programme	2006/07 £ (000)	2007/08 £ (000)
<b>Promoting and enhancing a sustainable environment</b> 		
Recycling containers	–	85
Land drainage	190	190
<b>Promoting healthier and safer communities</b> 		
Leisure centres	–	250
Capital grant for Hailsham flume replacement	–	120
Housing associations	250	250
Disabled facilities grants	490	620
Housing renewal grants	510	250
<b>Striving for excellence</b> 		
IT equipment	60	60
Capital grants to voluntary organisations	30	45
<b>Total capital programme</b>	<b>1,530</b>	<b>1,870</b>

Where the money comes from	2006/07 £ (000)	2007/08 £ (000)
Government grant	293	373
Capital receipts from the sale of assets	762	998
Council tax payers	475	499
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>1,530</b>	<b>1,870</b>

To put these large figures into context, the average cost of Wealden District Council to each household in the District works out at around £3 per week.



# Working With Partners to Save Money

District and borough councils are small enough to identify and understand local needs but are large enough to deliver good quality services with the resources available to them. In some cases their activities have enough in common for the work of different councils to be joined up to achieve economies of scale whilst keeping a close focus on those local needs. Through the East Sussex Joint Improvement Project, Wealden is working on opportunities jointly with neighbouring councils to deliver services together to achieve savings that can be passed on to the council tax payer.

The Council is also developing partnerships with town and parish councils in the District that want to take a more active role in providing services to their community and help save money. Our approach is to test practicalities, costs and effectiveness of options for more locally based delivery.

The following initiatives are already underway:

- ▶▶ A Value for Money Study with the Audit Commission and Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council to reduce overlaps between services
- ▶▶ A pilot study with Forest Row Parish Council to explore the potential devolution of a package of services for delivery at parish level

## Appendices to the Corporate Plan

This Corporate Plan is designed to be simple and accessible. More information is available on our website [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk) in three appendices:

Appendix A ▶▶ Service Plans

Appendix B ▶▶ Performance Indicators

Appendix C ▶▶ Background Information



