



# Congleton Borough Council

## Corporate Strategy & Performance Plan

### 2007/2008



CONGLETON  
Borough Council



'To create a Borough where people can live, grow & aspire'

To create a  
Borough where  
people can live,  
grow & aspire

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# Foreword

## 1.0

# Joint message from the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive

### Dear Reader

We are delighted that you are reading the Council's eighth annual Performance Plan, in which we are not only able to share with you our successful performance over the last year, but also our ambitious aspirations for 2007/2008.

This Plan sets out how the Council will deliver the priorities within its Corporate Strategy to underpin those of our Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Cheshire-wide Local Area Agreement, both of which set out the aspirations of the community of Congleton Borough as well as the wider Communities of Cheshire.

We remain committed to our vision of creating "a Borough where people can live, grow and aspire" through creating prosperous, healthy and safe communities and by establishing a high performing Council. It is by working with our partners that we can confidently set a robust set of ambitions.

Our services continue to be recognised as being good, whilst delivering value for money and the Audit Commission reported in April 2007 that good progress has been made and improvements have been achieved in the majority of our priority areas.

The start to the new business year coincided with our moving into the Council's new corporate headquarters at Westfields, Sandbach, which now provides the infrastructure upon which the Council's momentum can continue to provide services which will delight our customers. During the year we will be providing

more emphasis on developing our tourism potential; enhancing the accessibility and affordability of facilities for young people, with clear plans to modernise delivery of leisure services; to centralise our depots; and to deliver on our commitment to equality and diversity in order to improve the quality of life within our Borough.

Of course we are quite rightly proud of our achievements and recognise that this is due to the commitment and motivation of our excellent employees. However, we are not complacent; we know that all local authorities will continue to face financial difficulties over the next five years and it is a challenge for all of us to make sure that we reduce costs whilst, at the same time, not losing the effectiveness of our services to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our customers.

In conclusion, we commend the contents of the Corporate Strategy and Performance Plan to you and welcome any constructive comments that you may have about our performance during the last year and whether or not the Council is meeting your aspirations now and in the future.



**Roland Domleo**  
Leader of Council



**Glyn Chambers**  
Chief Executive

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# Introduction

## 2.0

### Executive Summary

Congleton Borough is located in rural Cheshire, with a population of 91,800. The Borough has a low crime rate, and represents the 49th most affluent district in England.

Our 2007/08 budget of £10.99 million comes from a Revenue Support Grant, Non Domestic Rates and Council Tax and is used to deliver quality day-to-day services. We invest our capital for the future by improving our buildings and the infrastructure of the area.

Council decisions are made through our political management structure by our Executive and Full Council, and are published in our Forward Plan, available at [www.congleton.gov.uk](http://www.congleton.gov.uk) (in the “Democratic Services” section within “My Council”).

The Council’s Corporate Strategy and Vision are aimed at delivering high quality services that protect and sustain our valuable environment.

Our Vision is:  
To create a Borough where people can live, grow and aspire

This Vision is delivered through four Goals:

1. Promoting a prosperous community
2. Promoting a healthy community
3. Promoting a safe community
4. To be a High Performing Council

Our improvement journey has encompassed significant achievements during 2006/07 and we will continue to advance through our plans for 2007/08. We are also using the performance management processes outlined below to ensure we continually improve:

- making sound spending judgments
- balancing national and local priorities
- delivering the Corporate Strategy
- delivering a quality service that meets the needs of the customer
- improving our partnership working
- ensuring all staff & members understand how they contribute to the Corporate Strategy

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## 2.0 Executive Summary



The Council has a duty to use its resources wisely and so regularly monitor our performance through a variety of internal processes. Appendix 1 contains the key measures that allow us to monitor our performance against our Corporate Strategy detailing the last two years' performance and our targets for the next three years.

The Audit Commission and our External Auditors judge our performance nationally through Best Value Inspections, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and auditing of our corporate governance arrangements.

Our Corporate Strategy is aligned with the Cheshire-wide Local Area Agreement, and supports delivery of the Community Strategy, which is created jointly by public, private, voluntary and community organisations to deliver improvements to the social, economic and environmental welfare of our local community.

If you have any questions relating to this Corporate Strategy and Performance Plan, please contact Claire Soper, Audit & Performance Manager, on 01270 529604 or via e-mail at [claire.soper@congleton.gov.uk](mailto:claire.soper@congleton.gov.uk)



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# Introduction

## 2.1

### The Borough Profile



Congleton Borough is in Cheshire in North West England. The conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent is close by to the south and the centre of Manchester is 25 miles to the north. It includes the towns of:

- Congleton
- Sandbach
- Alsager
- Middlewich

A number of villages lie in the large rural area, the largest of which is Holmes Chapel.

The town centres and rural areas include a number of buildings of architectural interest constructed of red sandstone or Cheshire brick. There are also black and white timber buildings, and some former barns have been converted to homes or for employment.

The Borough of Congleton has recorded crime rates of 57 offences per 1,000 of the population (2005/06) this is well below the national average and the lowest in Cheshire.

The population of the Borough has grown rapidly in the last 10 years, but lately this

growth has slowed. It is predicted that the population of older people will grow markedly over the next ten years, whilst the school-age population will decline.

#### Population

- 91,800 a growth of almost 6.77% in 10 years
- white ethnicity 98.8%
- Asian 0.3%
- mixed race 0.4%.

The area overall is the 49th most affluent district out of 354 in England. 9 out of the 18 wards are amongst the 25% most affluent. Unemployment is below national and regional averages and car ownership is high.

Average house prices in December 2006 were 25% above the regional average. Despite its largely rural context, over 21% of jobs are in manufacturing – 40% above the regional proportion and nearly double the national proportion.

The latest unemployment figures for March 2007 are: Congleton 1.3%, North West 2.8% and Great Britain 2.6%.



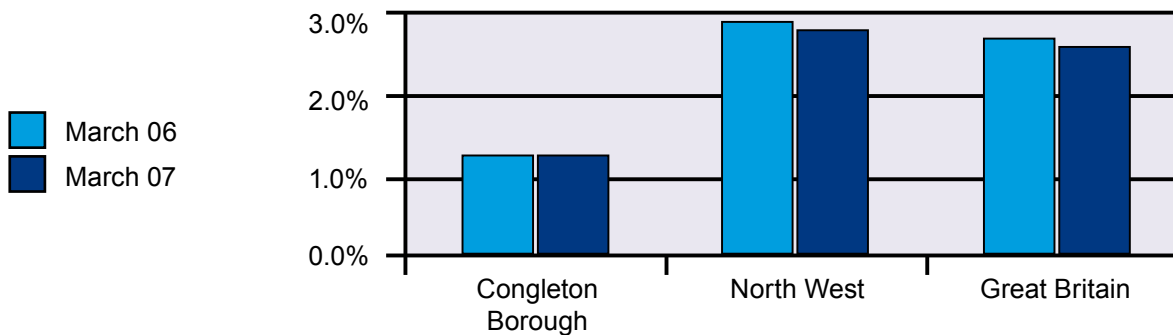
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# 2.1

## The Borough Profile



**Unemployment Figures - Percentage of working population unemployed**



Source: Office of National Statistics

The area is well served for communications, with both the West Coast Main Rail Line and the M6 running through the district. In rural areas, however, bus services are infrequent. There are very heavy flows of commuters – both in and out of the Borough.

Despite the high average affluence of the residents, the average weekly incomes of workers are 9% below the regional average. The combination of high house prices and low incomes makes the availability of affordable housing particularly important.

Regional Planning Guidance has imposed a ceiling on new house-building, with a limit of 3,800 units between 1996 and 2011.

To manage housing supply the Council now operates an annual construction rate of 200 dwellings per annum, substantially lower than annual build rate from 1996-2005, which had been 413 dwellings per annum.

# Introduction

## 2.2

# Financial Performance Budget Strategy 2007/2008

The Council updates its Medium Term Financial Strategy each year, which identifies plans for future years to ensure budgets are set in a sustainable manner and that financial commitments correlate with the Council's strategic objectives. With properly managed financial affairs the Council can continue to provide the services that are valued by its Council Tax payers.

In particular, spending plans are linked to Corporate Goals and the current priorities of the Council, as laid down in the Medium Term Corporate Strategy.

Congleton Borough Council has increased spending on services by £1.63 million in 2007/2008.

Some key areas of investment are:

- Development of key economic sites
- More partnership working
- Affordable Housing
- Supporting "Every Child Matters" initiatives
- Improved Community Cohesion
- Reducing Litter
- Improved Recycling
- Reducing Fear of Crime

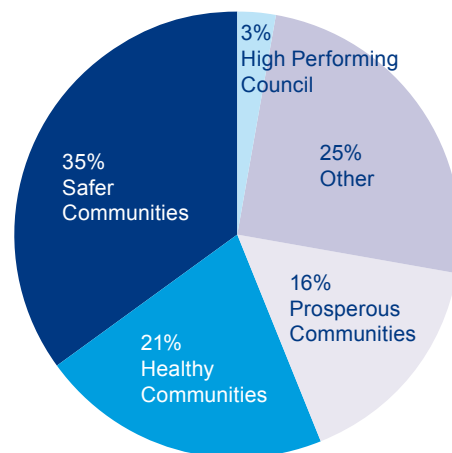
Financial standing and management are key to the Council's management. An independent assessment by the Audit Commission on the Council's 'Use of Resources' has confirmed that no area of our financial management fails to meet at least adequate

requirements. A number of areas are showing commendable progress and continue to be effective and improve.

Despite increased spending in key areas and other significant pressures (such as increasing pension costs) the Council Tax levied on Congleton residents has only increased by 4.9%. Obtaining relevant government grants and setting out proper fee structures have helped to keep this requirement down.

### Revenue Budget (Day to Day Spending) 2006/2007 Budget

The Council set a budget for 2006/2007 of £10.47 million. The following section details where the money was spent and the sources of income.



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## 2.2 Financial Performance



Revenue Budget 2006/2007	Gross spending £ million	Income £ million	Net spending £ million
Prosperous Communities	18.22	16.48	1.74
Healthy Communities	4.82	2.62	2.20
Safer Communities	9.79	6.15	3.64
High Performing Council	0.35	0.04	0.31
Other*	3.22	0.56	2.66
LABGI Funding	0.00	0.07	(0.07)
<b>Total</b>	<b>36.40</b>	<b>25.92</b>	<b>10.48</b>
<b>Less</b>			
Use of Reserves			(0.01)
<b>Borough Budget Requirement</b>			<b>10.47</b>

\*Other includes such services as Legal & Democratic Services, Audit and Property Services

The 2006/2007 Budget Requirement was funded through the following income sources:

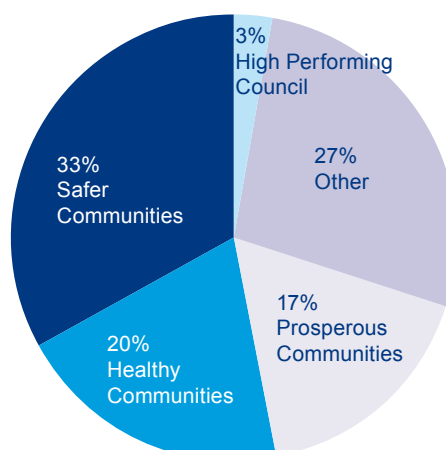
	£ million
Revenue Support Grant	0.81
Redistribution of Non-Domestic Rates	4.22
Surplus on Collection Funds	0.03
Council Tax	5.41
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.47</b>

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## 2007/2008 Budget

The Council set a budget for 2007/2008 of £10.99 million. The following section details where the money will be spent and the sources of income.

### Where will the money be spent in 2007/2008 Budget?



Revenue Budget 2006/2007	Gross spending £ million	Income £ million	Net spending £ million
Prosperous Communities	18.94	17.04	1.9
Healthy Communities	4.98	2.70	2.28
Safer Communities	10.06	6.29	3.77
High Performing Council	0.39	0.03	0.36
Other*	3.66	0.64	3.02
LABGI Funding	0.00	0.16	(0.16)
<b>Total</b>	<b>38.03</b>	<b>26.86</b>	<b>11.17</b>
<b>Less</b>			
Use of Reserves			(0.18)
<b>Borough Budget Requirement</b>			<b>10.99</b>

\*Other includes such services as Legal & Democratic Services, Audit and Property Services

The 2007/2008 Budget Requirement is funded through the following income sources:

	£ million
Revenue Support Grant	0.75
Redistribution of Non-Domestic Rates	4.49
Surplus on Collection Funds	0.04
Council Tax	5.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.99</b>

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## 2.2 Financial Performance



### Capital Budget (Investing for the Future)

As well as strategies to take forward ongoing operations (reflected in the revenue budget), the Council also invests for the future in its buildings and the infrastructure of the area (capital expenditure).



The capital budget funds expenditure on the construction and refurbishment of buildings, such as leisure centres, and on works to parks and public conveniences. We also give financial assistance to others carrying out works that will benefit the local population. The expenditure is financed from government grants, contributions from other agencies (e.g. National Lottery), proceeds from the sale of surplus assets and by use of

investment funds (the Council is debt-free). It is important to have long-term plans for capital expenditure. Investment in buildings and other assets can have a significant impact on running costs (e.g. by improving energy efficiency or minimising the need for repairs and maintenance). Additionally, the assets that we buy or build can have long lives - we need to be sure that they will be good value for money for the whole of their useful life.

The Capital Strategy covers the next five years and ensures that investment expenditure is both consistent with corporate priorities, and focused where it will provide maximum benefit within the Borough. It means that we are forecasting capital financing levels and looking to link our financial plans between the short and longer term. We are making significant improvements to the management of our asset base by rationalising the number of offices, reviewing provision of depots and looking at better ways of working with the community to utilise key assets e.g. Town Halls. In addition we are investing in our customer services provision to provide “One Stop Shops” and to ensure that the public get the service they deserve.

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## 2.3

# General Fund Budget 2007/2008

Portfolio	2006/2007 Approved Estimates Net £	2006/2007 Forecast Outturn Net £	2007/2008 Net £
Chief Executive & Assistant	2,204,524	2,315,840	2,232,829
Healthy Communities	4,252,510	4,266,240	4,087,690
Prosperous Communities (includes Investment Income)	702,161	517,234	1,328,583
Safer Communities	4,975,388	4,916,390	5,037,428
Organisational Development	546,150	556,983	733,520
In-Year Efficiency Saving Requirements	-97,875	0	0
<b>Net Direct Cost of Services</b>	<b>12,582,858</b>	<b>12,572,687</b>	<b>13,420,050</b>
Capital Transactions	-2,318,998	-2,318,998	-2,255,860
Pension Actuarial Costs	281,190	281,190	187,520
LABGI	-68,000	-503,000	-160,000
<b>Net Revenue Expenditure</b>	<b>10,469,050</b>	<b>10,031,879</b>	<b>11,191,710</b>
<b>Movement in Reserves</b>			
- Contribution to/(from) Capital Reserves	0	-102,000	-24,662
- Contribution to/(from) Specific Reserves	0	274,000	0
- Contribution to/(from) General Reserves	-8,000	327,171	-176,000
<b>Net Revenue Budget</b>	<b>10,469,050</b>	<b>10,531,050</b>	<b>10,991,048</b>
Revenue Support Grant	-814,000	-876,000	-753,000
Distribution of National Non- Domestic Rates Pool	-4,217,000	-4,217,000	-4,485,000
Surplus on Collection Fund	-34,000	-34,000	-41,740
<b>Amount To Be Met From Local Taxation</b>	<b>5,404,050</b>	<b>5,404,050</b>	<b>5,711,308</b>

Question: Why are some of the figures in this table different to the figures in tables x & y?

Answer: The 'Net Direct Cost of Services' in this table includes recharges. Charges (for things like Human Resources, Accountancy and ICT support) are added to the cost of services to reflect the full cost of providing that service to residents.

### Council Tax Base £35,051.53

Congleton Borough Council	Budget Requirement £M	£ per Band D equivalent
Cheshire County Council	35.12	1,002.08
Congleton Borough Council	5.71	162.94
Cheshire Police Authority	4.07	116.03
Cheshire Fire Authority	2.14	61.00
<b>Total Precept</b>	<b>47.04</b>	
<b>Band D Council Tax</b>		<b>1,342.05</b>

Question: What's the Council Tax Base?

Answer: It is a total of all Domestic Property Bands in the Borough, reduced for any discounts (for example where there is a sole occupier) and then expressed as if they were all in Band D (for example a Band H house counts as 2 Band D's).

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## 2.4

# Political Management Structure

The formation of the Council, outlined below, enables residents to understand how the authority is governed, and how they can become involved in the decision making process.

Congleton Borough Council has 48 councillors who meet together about 10 times per year as 'The Council'. Meetings of the Council are normally open to the public, and decisions are taken on the Borough's overall policies. The Council is responsible for setting budget and council tax levels each year.

The political composition as at 3 May 2007 is as follows:-

Conservative	26
Liberal Democrat	14
Middlewich First	6
Independents	2

**Total**                      **48**

The Council appoints an Executive consisting of six councillors (including the leader and deputy leader) who make day-to-day decisions about how the Borough is run. The Council also appoints Committees, which examine the work

and decisions of the Executive, they advise on policy changes, and may even recommend decisions be reconsidered.

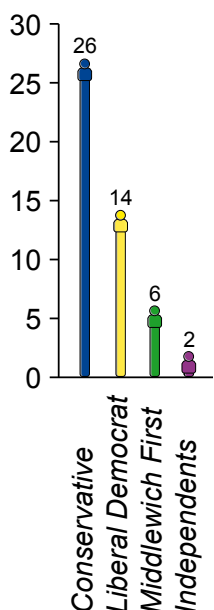
Major decisions to be made by the Executive are published in the 'Forward Plan'. This plan gives details of the meetings at which each issue is to be discussed.

There are also four Area Forums ensuring that the local distinctions of the Borough's many communities are maintained. Consisting of Borough & Town/Parish Councillors who meet twice per year within the community they serve, the meetings are very informal in nature and residents are encouraged to attend and take an active part.

Details of the Calendar of Meetings and the Forward Plan are contained on the Council's website at [www.congleton.gov.uk](http://www.congleton.gov.uk) (in the "Council Publications" section within "My Council").

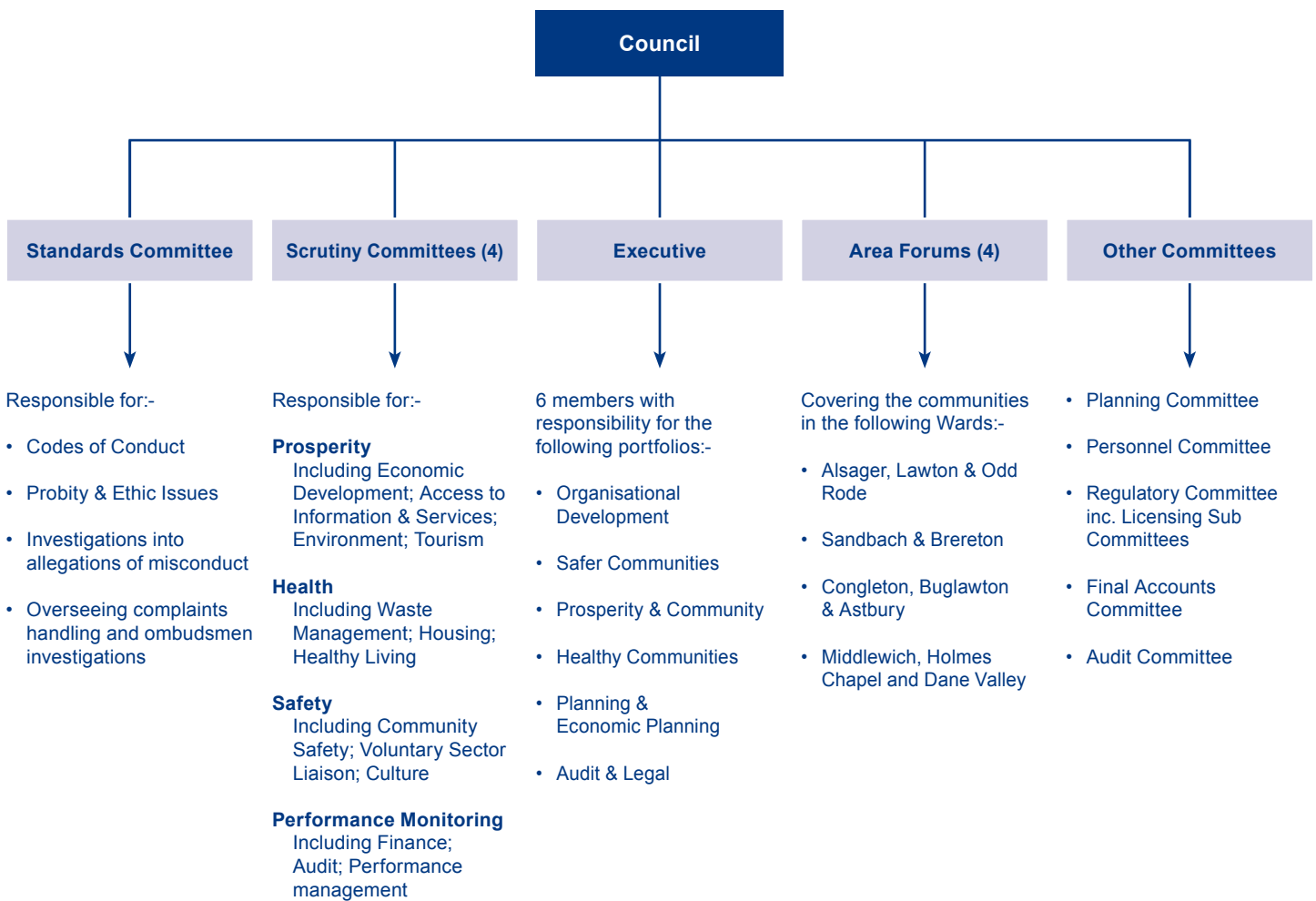
If you have any queries regarding the Forward Plan, or the location of the next Area Forums, please contact Democratic Services on 01270 529640 or by e-mail to [Mark.Nedderman@congleton.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Nedderman@congleton.gov.uk)

**Political composition**





## Congleton Borough Council's Political Management Structure



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# Medium Term Corporate Strategy

## 3.0

### Summary of Our Medium Term Corporate Strategy 2006/2010

Our Medium Term Corporate Strategy sets out what we will do over the next four years. It identifies our contribution to the wider community strategy, makes clear what our priorities are and sets accountable targets for us.

In producing the strategy we have been influenced by:

- Government priorities and nationally set targets
- The Community Strategy objectives, incorporating the common goals of our local partners
- Our past performance including external audit feedback
- Public satisfaction levels and surveys of the future needs of our communities
- The Local Area Agreement

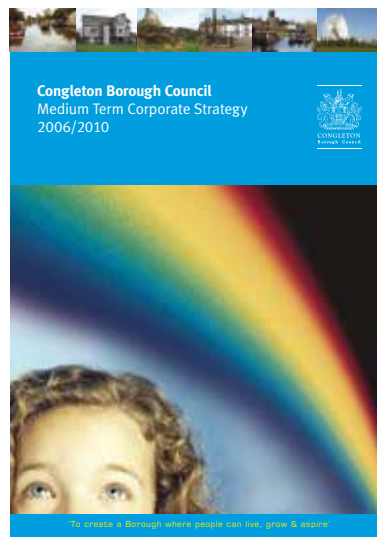
#### Vision, Goals and Corporate Objectives

##### Vision

Our vision is to 'create a Borough where people can live, grow and aspire'.

##### Goals

The Council has three outward facing goals to help deliver this vision, which are to promote:



- 1. A Prosperous Borough**
- 2. A Healthy Borough**
- 3. A Safe Borough**

We recognise that in order to achieve this we need to be an organisation that is fit and capable. Therefore we have a fourth inward facing goal:

- 4. To be a High Performing Council.**

A revised and updated edition of the Medium Term Corporate Strategy 2006/2010 will be available from Summer 2007.

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# 3.1 Objectives



## Objectives

We have 15 corporate objectives to support these goals, which are:

Prosperous	
1.	Promote employment and inward investment
2.	Enhance the standard of living
3.	Promote tourism
4.	Make best use of our resources
Health	
5.	Accessible housing for all
6.	Promote fit & healthy population and workforce
7.	Provide community cohesion
Safe	
8.	Help people to feel safe
9.	Encourage positive social behaviour
10.	Promote street cleansing & landscapes
11.	Waste management & minimisation
High Performing	
12.	Deliver accessible services that meet the needs of all residents
13.	Enhance partnership working
14.	Develop staff and Members
15.	Manage performance effectively

*The relationship between vision, goals and corporate objectives is illustrated in Figure 1 far right.*

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**Visions, Goals and Corporate Objectives**  
**Figure 1**



## 3.2 Current Priorities for Improvement



**Above:** One of the Council's top priorities for improvement is to encourage tourism. The M6 motorway acts as a gateway to our Borough.

In order to agree our current priorities we have analysed:

- How well we have delivered against previous priorities;
- Performance results in previous years across Council services;
- National priorities from government and regional and county-wide issues;
- The objectives and priorities in the Borough's Community Strategy; and
- Local public satisfaction levels and customer survey results.

In September 2006 at the State of Congleton debate of full Council we reviewed whether any of our priorities should be changed but unanimously agreed to continue with the same set. This exercise will be repeated in 2007/8.



### **Our current top priorities for improvement**

- Reduce residents' fear of crime at night in our five town centres
- Improve community cohesion in Middlewich
- Promote better access, quality and affordability of activities for young people
- Further reduce the incidence of litter
- Develop tourism – particularly our canals
- Improve the standard and affordability of housing and reduce the number of empty properties

### **Our current priorities for improving the operation of the Council**

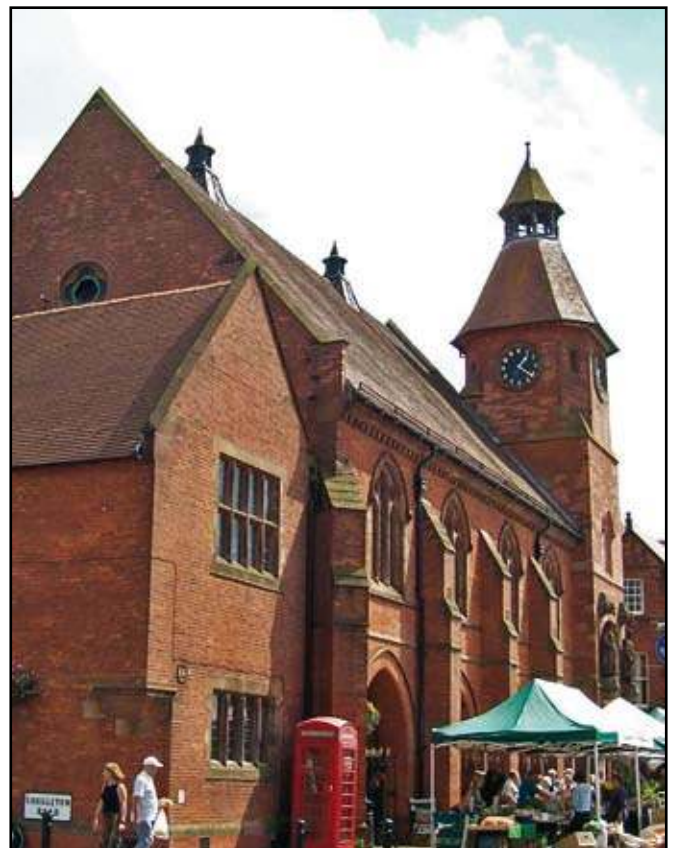
- Continue to improve our financial management processes
- Ensure equality in service delivery to all our communities
- Further improve both internal and external communications
- Complete the centralising of our three offices into one and improve physical access to our services
- Bring about improvement and centralisation of our depot facilities
- Complete the process of equalising pay and conditions for all our staff, known as 'Single Status'.

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**During this process we have identified the following areas as currently less important to improve or to invest in:**

- Crime and fear of crime is low within the Borough. Neighbourhood policing has become a priority for our police force, and so we do not see the need to invest further in our Community Warden service
- We own and manage more play areas per head of population than most other boroughs in the county. We therefore do not see this as an area for further infrastructure investment.
- We have an award-winning team in our Benefits section; their success in responding to benefit applications means this is an area where we will maintain performance but have less need to invest in.
- We recognise that our Town and Civic Halls provide a gathering place for many clubs and societies. We would like to see these halls managed locally by Town Councils bringing the service delivery closer to residents.



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## 3.3 Core Values



We recognise that the way we deliver services significantly affects the experience our customers receive, and their satisfaction levels. We have consulted and agreed a core set of values with our staff, that governs our behaviour. These values are to:

- **Focus** on the things that matter to our communities
- **Be inclusive** and tackle inequalities
- Recognise and celebrate **achievement**
- Value and encourage creativity and innovation
- **Empower** our staff and foster a culture of honesty, openness & respect
- Aspire to **excellence**

### Plans

The Medium Term Corporate Strategy rationalises and incorporates a number of separate plans, including this, the annual Performance Plan, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Medium Term Workforce Strategy.

The relationship between all these plans is illustrated above. This diagram shows the link to the wider Community Strategy objectives. The detail of how the Medium Term Corporate Strategy will be delivered and who will deliver it is provided through our Business Plans and Section Plans. Staff contribute to the plans through their own Employee Development Review Appraisals.

### Performance Management

Key performance indicators with milestones and long-term targets are set within the strategy for each of the corporate objectives. A cross-section of staff from across the Council operate as a Performance Network Group to help ensure performance data remains robust.

Performance data is collected each month, and staff have an opportunity to comment on performance and identify appropriate action. This is reported to Management Team and Executive, together with quarterly financial information detailing budget allocation against actual expenditure. Progress and achievements are celebrated and where necessary corrective action is taken.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee inspects these performance indicators and financial information throughout the year and challenges aspects of performance as appropriate. Past performance is then used to help determine future targets and areas for improvement.

To view the full version of our Medium Term Corporate Strategy, please contact Rob Barnett, Senior Performance Officer on 01270 529605 or via e-mail at [rob.barnett@congleton.gov.uk](mailto:rob.barnett@congleton.gov.uk), or view our website [www.congleton.gov.uk](http://www.congleton.gov.uk) under My Council/ Council Publications.

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**Performance management and business planning cycle**  
**Figure 2**



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# Goals

## 4.0

### Prosperous



#### Our Key Priority for Prosperous Communities

The area where we will give particular focus and invest our resources within this goal is:

#### To develop tourism – with particular focus on our canals

It is estimated that tourism generates nearly £50m worth of revenue for the Borough annually, helping to support around 61 local businesses, and over 1000 jobs, with over 800 people in direct employment. Visitor numbers to the Borough are exceeding 3 million annually, and a highly significant proportion of these are day visitors (2.7m). The Borough's main attractions include Little Moreton Hall, the Science Park and Visitor Centre at Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope, Rode Hall and Gardens and Wheelock Hall Farm Shop, all of which attract day visitors from afar.

The Trent and Mersey Canal and the Macclesfield Canal allow visitors to access the Cheshire Ring and the Four Counties Ring as well as the Caudon Canal, making the Borough well placed as a base for holidays on the Inland Waterways. Local events and festivals such as Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival and Roman Middlewich also attract visitors to the area.

We will continue to work with our partners in the development of the Weaver Valley Regional Park, which will attract new visitors to Sandbach and Middlewich.

We will provide an attractive canal-side environment by making the best use of the two major recreational waterways that pass through the Borough, and have a positive impact on the Borough economy, by encouraging new visitors to our attractions and previous visitors to return. In particular we will consult on an action plan for the Middlewich Canal Corridor designed to enhance the canal-side and identify opportunities for tourist-related development.

We will actively contribute to the Cheshire Year of Gardens 2008 by coordinating events across Congleton, producing a Congleton Year of the Garden publication, as well as exploring the possibility of holding a new cultural festival for the Borough in 2008.

We will encourage expansion of equestrian facilities in the Borough of Congleton to help them attract equestrian training camps in the run up to the 2012 Olympics.

In partnership with Road Chef, and with support from both Visit Chester and Cheshire and the North West Development Agency, we will ensure development of the Tourist Information facilities at Sandbach Services on the M6 into an exciting gateway facility for the whole of the North West.

The following pages set out our achievements over the past year, as well as our plans for the forthcoming year within this goal.

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# 4.0 Prosperous



**Above:** Congleton Tourist Information Centre received the Tourist Information Centre of the Year accolade at the third annual England's Northwest Tourism Awards.

## Promote employment and inward investment

Achievements	Plans
<p><b>We have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchased the Wesley court building in Sandbach and, with the benefit of a grant from the North West Development Agency, have refurbished it as an enterprise centre for new and developing businesses</li> <li>• Helped secure the Capricorn Business Park at J17 of the M6 near Sandbach for development, with planning permission in place and an entrance way prepared.</li> <li>• Assisted the various Market Town initiatives in the Borough in securing Rural Recovery grants from the North West Development Agency.</li> <li>• Published a site allocations document for consultation; identifying 128 hectares of land for employment development and 1430 houses for construction.</li> <li>• Served our customers well by exceeding the Government's national targets for the speed of determining planning applications and the quality of decision-making was demonstrated by the fact that no appeals were allowed.</li> <li>• In partnership with English Heritage and the Town Council, we have grant aided the repair of a number of historic buildings and have resurfaced pavements in Lawton Street, Congleton, enhancing the environment and continuing the economic regeneration of the area.</li> <li>• 9 new starter units were developed at Enterprise Court in Sandbach, ideal for new or existing small businesses and within 3 miles of junction 17 of the M6.</li> </ul>	<p><b>We plan to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support the development of Capricorn Business Park.</li> <li>• Market the Sandbach Enterprise Centre for occupation by new and expanding local businesses.</li> <li>• Subject to extensive consultation develop the Market Square in Sandbach to revitalise the town centre and encourage wider community use.</li> <li>• Support the Alsager Partnership to develop a comprehensive Town Plan for revitalising the town centre and Milton Park.</li> <li>• Support the Congleton Town Partnership in developing a similar comprehensive Town Plan and then contribute to its implementation.</li> <li>• Promote the Borough for business location, converting at least 5% of enquiries into actual relocation.</li> <li>• Support the 'Midpoint 18' development in Middlewich, including construction of the Eastern bypass.</li> <li>• Assist businesses to skill their workforce including at least 100 First National Test passes, 800 priority course completions and training for at least 25 unemployed people.</li> <li>• Develop a retail grant scheme for Sandbach Market Town Partnership</li> <li>• Support small businesses and community projects and thereby stimulate the economy of our market towns by bringing in additional rural recovery grants into the Borough.</li> </ul>

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## Enhance standard of living

Achievements	Plans
<p><b>We have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developed an Older Persons Housing Strategy to enable us to meet the needs of elderly residents and develop appropriate services.</li><li>• Worked in partnership with the Cheshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre to promote Warm Front grants and energy efficiency measures which has helped achieve a 15.4% reduction in CO2 emissions since 1996.</li><li>• Completed nearly £360,000 worth of work within the Borough to ensure that our most vulnerable residents are able to improve and maintain their homes.</li><li>• Enabled 88 residents to continue to live independently within their own homes through the adaptation of properties including installation of level entry showers and stair lifts.</li><li>• Completed hundreds of small tasks and repairs to help reduce the risk of accidental injuries amongst our older residents and people with disabilities.</li></ul>	<p><b>We plan to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop an action plan to target our resources to address the recommendations in the Older Persons Housing Strategy.</li><li>• Work in partnership with the Cheshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre to promote energy efficiency and reduce the CO2 emissions.</li><li>• Target our support to those individuals and communities most in need. In particular we will contribute to a community-wide approach to improving facilities, services and the quality of life for residents of Bromley Farm in Congleton.</li><li>• Develop an Affordable Warmth Strategy to enable us to meet the needs of vulnerable residents who need help with keeping their homes warm.</li></ul>

## Promote tourism

Achievements	Plans
<p><b>We have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Undertaken and published character appraisals for our conservation areas in Alsager and Astbury.</li><li>• Undertaken research to establish authoritative up to date information on the Tourist Economy within the Borough.</li><li>• Prepared for consultation on an Area Action Plan for Middlewich Canal Corridor.</li><li>• In partnership with English Heritage and Macclesfield Borough, continued through the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area Partnership to provide funding to repair of canal-side structures and enhancements to the canal-side environment.</li><li>• Continued to work with our partners to develop a vision for the Weaver Valley Regional Partnership which will increase the number of visitors to Middlewich and Sandbach.</li><li>• Won the award for the best Tourist Information Centre across the whole of the North West.</li><li>• Congleton Town won the 'Best Large Town' award from Britain in Bloom, and the Council-run propagation unit won a commendation for the supply of gorgeous flora. Buglawton Estate also won a merit for the Neighbourhood Award, which was sponsored by the Royal Horticultural Society.</li></ul>	<p><b>We plan to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draw up and implement a 5 year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy to both guide and campaign for improved and sustainable economic growth.</li><li>• Improve tourism information facilities at Sandbach Services to market the Borough as a gateway to the North West in partnership with Road Chef, Visit Chester and Cheshire and the North West Development Agency.</li><li>• Consult the community on our Middlewich Canal Corridor action plan and then secure its adoption as a key planning tool to stimulate appropriate economic and particularly tourism development in the area.</li><li>• Work with Visit Chester and Cheshire to coordinate the Borough of Congleton's active participation in the 2008 Cheshire Year of Gardens, the Jodrell Bank 50th Birthday celebration and the 2012 Olympic Equestrian opportunities.</li><li>• Support community events including Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival and Sandbach Transport festival.</li><li>• Complete the final year of the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area Partnership which will fund the repair of canal-side structures and enhance the environmental quality of the canal corridor.</li><li>• In partnership with Cheshire County Council and our neighbouring districts further contribute to establishing the Weaver Valley Regional Park.</li><li>• Take appropriate action to secure the renovation of Sandbach Old Hall, a Grade I Listed Building which is on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register.</li></ul>

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# 4.0 Prosperous



## Make best use of our resources

Achievements	Plans
<p><b>We have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Centralised Council offices in Sandbach securing 265 employee jobs in an energy-efficient building.</li><li>• Carried out a feasibility study into the introduction of car park charging and parking enforcement in the Borough.</li><li>• Increased our financial reserves to a more than prudent level.</li><li>• Implemented improved purchasing practices including use of e-procurement.</li><li>• Improved the efficiency of our operations around property matters by working in collaboration with other authorities.</li><li>• Increased our council tax collection levels to nearly 99%.</li><li>• Achieved investment rate returns on our accounts above the national benchmarks.</li><li>• Been commended by our auditors on improving our budget management processes.</li></ul>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make a decision about the introduction of car park charging and parking enforcement in the Borough.</li><li>• Evaluate options of retaining or disposing of Council-owned industrial units.</li><li>• Maintain financial reserves at a level consistent with sound financial management (at least 10% of net revenue budget).</li><li>• Undertake a review of our garage property, to assess whether retaining the garage stock supports our corporate goals and objectives.</li><li>• Implement improved partnerships with the County Council and other district Councils across Cheshire to reduce costs and improve value for money.</li><li>• Centralise our depots to secure improved staff facilities, recycling opportunities and enhanced value for money.</li></ul>



**Left:** The Borough Mayor hands over the keys of the old Coach House in Congleton, which will be restored to its former glory.

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## 4.1 Healthy



### Our Key Priorities for Healthy Communities

The areas where we will give particular focus and invest our resources within this goal are:

#### **Improve the standard and affordability of housing and reduce the number of empty properties**

A lack of affordable housing was identified within the Borough through the Medium Term Corporate Strategy and through consultation in the development of the Housing Strategy. Affordable housing is also a priority for the Cheshire Housing Alliance and in the Sub Regional Housing Strategy.

We will provide well maintained and accessible housing stock by working in effective partnerships to reduce homelessness, increase affordable housing provision, bring properties up to the Decent Homes Standard and bring empty properties back into use.

#### **Promote better access, quality and affordability of activities for young people**

The 2004 Crime Audit revealed that the highest priority area for investment for residents was in providing facilities for young people. The Community Select Committee (now Safety Scrutiny Committee) undertook a scrutiny exercise to look at the needs of young people and an action plan was subsequently agreed.

By establishing and understanding the needs of children and young people, we will provide a platform for better access, quality and affordability of services for young people. Providing facilities for young people is key to reducing the fear of crime.

#### **Improve community cohesion in Middlewich**

There has been a Gypsy and Traveller community in Middlewich for at least the last 50 years. Recently that community has increased, and has become highly visible through the purchase of property and the location of caravans within the curtilage of the property. At the same time nationally there has been a huge increase in the profile of the Gypsy and Traveller Community and the issues surrounding it. The key issue, both nationally and locally is the provision of sufficient and suitable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.

By bringing together the Gypsy and Traveller and the settled communities of Middlewich we will improve community cohesion. This will be achieved through leading our communities in understanding and respecting each other's cultural backgrounds and leading in finding solutions to factors such as lack of suitable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. The authority will organise its resources to promote community cohesion through community leadership, service provision and cultural change.

The following pages set out our achievements over the past year as well as our plans for the forthcoming year within this goal.

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# 4.1 Healthy



**Above:** The 'Big Cig' promotion asked smokers to keep Congleton Borough clear of cigarette litter.

## Accessible housing for all

Achievements	Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several improvements have been made to Gypsy and Traveller sites across the Borough through both persuasion and enforcement.</li> <li>• We completed a Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment, which will help us to provide sufficient and suitable accommodation in the future.</li> <li>• The Audit Commission rated the Housing Service as a Good Service with Promising Prospects for Improvement.</li> <li>• We have completed a number of schemes that have resulted in new affordable housing opportunities being made available including a major site of 43 units that will be delivered as 100% affordable housing.</li> <li>• We have secured government funding for a range of projects to improve peoples' homes to the Decent Homes Standard.</li> <li>• We have secured Government funding to improve the choice that people have in securing local authority and Housing Association accommodation.</li> <li>• We have reduced the number of people who are becoming homeless by introducing proactive homeless prevention work and early stage intervention for those at risk of becoming homeless.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will take positive action to help avoid residents becoming homeless, support them with suitable short-term accommodation if they should become homeless and quickly find permanent solutions to suit their needs.</li> <li>• We will identify suitable housing sites for affordable housing within urban and rural areas.</li> <li>• Bring private rented accommodation up to the Decent Homes Standard by working with landlords and providing suitable grants.</li> <li>• Continue to bring empty properties back into use, through partnership working and utilising all the powers available to us.</li> <li>• We will ensure that the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are considered within the Housing and Planning departments, and that their quality of life is protected through a safe and healthy living environment.</li> <li>• We will ensure that sufficient accommodation is available for vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>



**Left:** The Congleton Silk Mills are being transformed as part of a major local development.

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## Promote a fit and healthy population and workforce

Achievements	Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 100% of animal welfare, caravan site and permitted process inspections were completed.</li><li>• 526 food hygiene inspections were completed following the implementation of additional resources to maintain the service.</li><li>• The development of the Safer Food Better Business Training Programme that has involved over 100 businesses within the Borough.</li><li>• Completion of the Update and Screening Assessment for Air Quality in May 2006; this document is now an example of good practice at <a href="http://www.uwe.ac.uk/aqm/review">www.uwe.ac.uk/aqm/review</a></li><li>• The production of the Air Quality Action Plan covering three Air Quality Management Areas.</li><li>• The integration of Air Quality Action Plan requirements within the Cheshire Local Transport Plan, resulting in the commitment of financial resources to help CBC develop their Action Plan.</li><li>• In conjunction with Cheshire Primary Care Trust we continue to run cardiac rehabilitation sessions designed to help and support residents with heart-related health problems</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will redevelop Congleton Leisure Centre.</li><li>• We will develop activities to improve the health of our workforce.</li><li>• We will increase the opportunities for exercise on prescription</li><li>• We will continue to ensure that premises are inspected to maintain Food Safety and Health and Safety Standards.</li><li>• We will help to increase the number of people taking moderate exercise 3 or more times a week.</li><li>• We will continue to work towards improving air quality, particularly in areas which do not meet the Government's standards.</li><li>• We will implement the smoke-free legislation.</li></ul>



**Above:** Sports Hall athletics are just one way in which we continue to promote a fit and healthy population.

**Left:** Children enjoying the 'Guess the Veg' competition at an Active Park Event.

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# 4.1 Healthy



## Provide community cohesion

### Achievements

- Links between Gypsy & Traveller community and partner agencies have been improved through working with Middlewich Vision and the Cheshire Halton and Warrington Race Equality Council.
- We developed a varied programme of sports development opportunities for young people throughout the Borough.
- More than 500 young people took part in trials to represent Congleton Borough in the Cheshire Youth Games.
- We appointed an Equalities Officer and worked with them to review and implement a revised Equality Policy.
- We achieved Level 1 of the Equality and Diversity Standard for Local Government.

### Plans

- We will develop Service Level Agreements and 3 year funding plans with the Council for Voluntary Service and the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Implement the Equality and Diversity Standard within Congleton Borough Council to achieve Level 2 of the Equality and Diversity Standard for Local Government.
- Produce and implement a Gender Equality Policy.
- Review and publish a new Race Equality Policy and action plan.
- Carry out mediation within different communities of the Borough where it is necessary to do so.
- Improve the affordability, quality and accessibility of facilities for young people.
- Ensure that the welfare of children and young people is safeguarded.
- Use Government funding to implement the Play Strategy



**Left:** Our 'How Cool is Your Lunchbox?' campaign won third prize in the Foodlink Awards, raising awareness for food to be kept chilled until it is eaten.



**Above:** The Council gives £3,000 grant to Sandbach Gymnastics Centre.

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## 4.2 Safe



### **Our Key Priorities for Safer Communities**

Whilst all our objectives are important, we recognise the benefit of being clear about our current priorities for improving community safety. These are the areas where we will give particular focus and invest our resources:

#### **Reduce residents' fear of crime at night in our town centres**

It is a fact that Congleton Borough is one of the safest places to live in the England yet the 'fear of crime' reported by residents is disproportionately high. The aim of the Borough's Community Safety team is to address this fear of crime by providing a service that complements the services provided by other authorities operating within the area e.g. the Police and Fire services. It is accepted that roots of crime are bedded in many different issues, which can only be tackled through working in partnership with these other agencies. This partnership approach is drawn together through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, which Borough Council Officers now steer.

Particularly in Alsager where the fear of crime seems to be heightened, the Borough Council is now using crime and incident data recorded by partner agencies to target its Community Warden, Open Space maintenance and community development teams as well as its CCTV camera resources.

#### **Further reduce the incidence of litter.**

The Street Cleansing section is responsible for keeping public areas as free and clear of litter as is practicably

possible. Our aim is to continually focus on providing a cleaner and safer environment for all. The Government has identified Local Environmental Quality as one of the chief concerns of local communities and introduced a national Best Value Indicator (BV 199) as a means of assessing performance. This survey has been developed to measure the cleanliness of the local environment, as a member of the public would perceive it. The survey is a measure of 10 different land classes and assesses the varying degrees of litter and detritus that is visible. In a bid to improve results across Cheshire a Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2) has been signed by the six district councils within the county to implement sustainable reductions in these levels. Congleton Borough Council's first survey was carried out during June 2005, and showed litter and detritus levels at 34%. This figure was subsequently reduced to an average of 18% during 2006/7, demonstrating significant improvement.

Through effective partnership working, public education and operational improvements, we intend to reduce the amount of litter and detritus in our Borough. We will continue to tackle the issues of graffiti, fly tipping and fly posting, and actively pursue those who illegally litter within our Borough. However, we recognise that cleaner streets cannot be achieved solely through better cleansing, and so we will also be encouraging people to take responsibility for their litter.

The following pages set out our achievements over the past year as well as our plans for the forthcoming year within this Goal.

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## 4.2 Safe



**Above:** Our Community Safety Team continue to work with us to make Congleton Borough even safer.

### Help people feel safe

Achievements	Plans
<p><b>We have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved working relationships between the Warden Service and the Cheshire Constabulary and now carry out joint patrols and communication systems.</li> <li>• Evaluated the success of “No drinking zones” in our Town Centres showing that there has been a reduction of alcohol related assaults and complaints of Anti social Behaviour in these areas.</li> <li>• Introduced a new Taxi License plating system that gives the police and public alike clearer information on the legal status of operators’ vehicles. This will improve the safety of taxi users.</li> <li>• Implemented 7 more ‘Traffic Calming’ projects in partnership with the County Council thus improving road safety in those areas.</li> <li>• Worked with licensed premises to advise and reduce incidences of alcohol related violent crime, particularly over the festive period.</li> <li>• Carried out extensive consultation with Alsager residents regarding the refurbishment of Milton Park and how to tackle the anti-social behaviour present. Final plans have been drafted and funding is available to start work at the end of 2007.</li> <li>• Improved more Borough owned car parks to ‘Safer Parking’ standards.</li> <li>• Worked with Partners to deliver a 13% reduction in overall crime when compared to 2005/06.</li> <li>• Increased the percentage of people who feel safe in our Town Centres at night from 40% to 46%.</li> </ul>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further improve joint working with the Police particularly on tackling alcohol related crime.</li> <li>• Proactively enforce alcohol sale age restrictions from licensed premises.</li> <li>• Provide strategic leadership to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.</li> <li>• Adopt and implement powers to improve the control of premises licensed to host gambling activities within the Borough.</li> <li>• Modernise, improve and expand the public realm CCTV coverage across the Borough</li> <li>• Introduce taxi driver testing procedures to improve the taxi services offered in the area.</li> <li>• Where conventional policing methods are proved to be ineffective, carry out landscaping schemes to address anti-social behaviour on residential public open spaces.</li> <li>• Fund further traffic calming schemes in partnership with the County Council.</li> </ul>

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**Above:** The Council supported a residents' action group to tackle dog fouling in public areas.

## Encourage Positive Social Behaviour

Achievements	Plans
<p><b>We have</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported the Police-led Community Action Meetings giving particular attention to street cleansing issues raised.</li> <li>• Introduced a Designated Driver Scheme in 3 Public Houses to discourage drinking and driving.</li> <li>• Held a 2-week motorbike skills training for 20 young people who were, in most cases, nominated following bike-related antisocial behaviour.</li> <li>• Held a Public Safety Road Show to educate young and old alike in basic personal safety matters.</li> <li>• Promoted interest in the Democratic process through engaging with school councils and running an 'I'm a Councillor, get me out of here!' event with local schools.</li> <li>• Supported numerous voluntary groups in organising community events.</li> <li>• Provided continued funding for the Council for Voluntary Services operating within the Borough.</li> <li>• Promoted and organised a Community Pride event rewarding Council staff and people from the voluntary sector for their public service.</li> <li>• Refurbished 4 childrens' play areas.</li> </ul>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support schools in the delivery of the 'citizen' part of the National Curriculum.</li> <li>• Repeat the motorbike skills course from 2006.</li> <li>• Repeat the 'I'm a Councillor, get me out of here!' event from 2006.</li> <li>• Continue to provide funding and support for the CVS.</li> <li>• Support the CVS to start up a Mediation Service.</li> <li>• Deliver Cycling Proficiency training and testing in local schools.</li> <li>• Deliver 'Alcohol awareness' sessions in local schools.</li> <li>• Work with the probation Service to provide opportunities for people to serve 'Community sentences'.</li> <li>• Provide continued support for community organised events eg. town bonfires, folk and boat festivals.</li> <li>• Appoint a 'Play Co-ordinator' who will work to improve future provision of 'school summer holiday schemes' for children.</li> </ul>

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## 4.2 Safe



**Above:** Free advertising on Borough Council bin trucks promote voluntary and community sector organisations such as the Middlewich and Sandbach Clean Teams.

### Promote clean streets and landscapes

Achievements	Plans
<p><b>We have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved the deployment of our mechanical road sweepers to address prioritised areas.</li> <li>Supported the development of new litter-busting voluntary 'clean teams' in Congleton and Brereton.</li> <li>Improved the dog bin emptying process.</li> <li>Significantly improved public satisfaction with the quality of the Public Open Space provided by the Council.</li> <li>Seen a 33% reduction in the number of places in the Borough where the cleanliness has been classed as 'unacceptable'.</li> <li>Raised public satisfaction with the overall cleanliness of the Borough to 72%.</li> <li>Received an award for the quality of the plants grown and displayed by the Borough's plant propagation team.</li> <li>Won a Regional 'in bloom' award working in partnership with the 'Congleton in Bloom' voluntary group.</li> <li>Achieved 100% compliance with road verge (grass) maintenance standards.</li> </ul>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with the refurbishment programme in Milton Park.</li> <li>Implement a new externally approved 'Management Plan' in Congleton Park.</li> <li>Enter the National 'In Bloom' awards in partnership with 'Congleton in Bloom'.</li> <li>Apply for and hopefully gain 'Green Flag' status for 2 of the Borough's parks.</li> <li>Continue to improve the deployment of the mechanical road sweepers to further improve the general cleanliness of the Borough.</li> <li>Review the Borough's Ground Maintenance schedules to allow future quality and efficiency improvements.</li> <li>Review the provision of cemetery services within the Borough.</li> <li>Refurbish or renew several public conveniences.</li> </ul>



**Left:** Milton Park in Alsager will be refurbished following consultation with residents.

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### Jargon Buster! Clean Team

A clean team is a voluntary group of residents who liaise with the Council regarding grot spots, fly tipping and incidents of graffiti to ensure a rapid response and clean up. They organise litter picks, educate and encourage no littering.



Above: The Council is one of the country's top recyclers



## Waste management & minimisation

### Achievements

#### We have:

- Improved the percentage of household waste recycled from 33% to 36%.
- Recycled 460 tonnes of commercial waste that would otherwise have gone into landfill.
- Maintained some of the highest public satisfaction levels in the country for the recycling and waste collection services provided to residents.
- Reduced the number of bin collections missed by the refuse collection team.
- Obtained over £40,000 of external funding to help with preparations for implementing a plastic and cardboard recycling collection service.
- Implemented a new recycling scheme for unwanted furniture and household goods.
- Delivered one of the most cost-effective waste management services in the Country at just £37 per head per year.

### Plans

#### We will:

- Make changes to the way household waste is collected to enable recycling rates of over 40% to be achieved.
- Implement a kerbside plastic and cardboard recycling collection scheme.
- Move the recycled material 'bulking' operation to a new location to minimise disturbance to neighbouring properties.
- Improve waste management practices to further reduce the environmental risks posed by our waste management operations.
- Work with schools to educate children on the importance of recycling to environmental management.
- Work with other Cheshire Authorities to ensure that waste collection services are as cost-effective as possible (through joint purchasing initiatives and sharing best practices).

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## 4.3

# High Performing



**Above:** The Council's new centralised 'Westfields' office in Sandbach will provide a fully accessible service to help meet the needs of our residents.

**Our main areas of focus in 2007/08 for this goal include:**

### 1) Customer Service

From a public service perspective we have an obligation to improve public access to information and services. Our customers expect more from us as they experience advanced customer services from other organisations, both public and private.

During 2006/07 we embarked on an ambitious change programme known across the organisation as 'Customer First', with support from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council. This programme, which consists of 5 distinct but interrelated projects is designed to significantly improve standards of customer service and embed a genuine commitment to customer care across the organisation.

Significant progress has been made in improving access to services. The opening of the Sandbach One Stop Shop in May 07 will mark the completion of the buildings project and in March 2007 the Council's website achieved 'T-Status'.

During 07/08 the programme is planned to deliver key changes in business processes and staffing structures, skills development and service standards. The Council will also take key decisions on the potential implementation of a central telephone contact centre and a central administration function.

### 2) Office Centralisation

Presently the Council's office-based staff are working from three separate locations in Sandbach, Alsager and Congleton. The standard of these buildings and the facilities were poor and a number of our buildings do not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Council has now built a new centralised office facility at the Sandbach site providing a significant opportunity to improve access and facilities for customers and staff. We will continue work on our Office Centralisation Programme in 2007/08 with a view to ensuring a smooth transition and continued excellence in service delivery for all of our customers; integrating the Benefits, Revenues and Accounting staff in the centralised office.

### 3) Communications

Reputation matters to local government more than ever. Communication builds reputation. It raises understanding and awareness, it provides information on services and achievements and it demonstrates a positive proactive approach and a strong customer focus. Effective communication makes a critical difference and is arguably the most important factor in improving the Council's reputation.

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During 06/07 the Council developed and approved a Corporate Communications Strategy and supporting implementation plan. The strategy draws upon issues identified by the Audit Commission and the subsequent work of an external communications consultant and also addresses areas for improvement identified within the 06/07 staff survey. These can be summarised as follows:

- Issues of communication with town and parish councils
- The Council does not have a strong corporate identity
- The Council is not good at publicising its successes
- Local press reports of Council activities have tended to focus on negative stories
- The local press feel that the Council does not 'sell itself' enough
- There is a need to target young people
- There is a legacy of negative stories in the past
- Internal communication processes require improvement

The activities planned for 07/08 will further improve our external and internal communications processes and the Council will take key decisions around its future corporate image and identity.

### Transfer Undertaking of Public Employees

Congleton Borough Council certifies that all individual contracts awarded during 2006/07, which involved the transfer of Congleton Borough staff, complied – where applicable – with the requirements in the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.

## Deliver accessible services that meet the needs of all our residents

Achievements	Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our centralisation programme is being implemented effectively; on time and on cost.</li> <li>• Our website achieved the highest accolade from the Society of Information Technology Management and this placed us within the top 5% nationally.</li> <li>• There has been an increase in the numbers of positive stories within the local and national press.</li> <li>• Our new One Stop Shop opened in Congleton, providing our customers with an improved point of contact for a wider range of services.</li> <li>• Increased our customers' satisfaction with our resolution of complaints.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the centralisation of all office staff.</li> <li>• Complete a review of our most customer-facing processes, and implement improvement initiatives to increase the efficiency of the customer experience.</li> <li>• Continue to develop our website and retain Transaction Status ("T-Status").</li> <li>• We will invest significant capital into improving our buildings to make them more accessible to customers.</li> <li>• Maximise work experience opportunities for local young people to assist their vocational progression and promote the Borough as an attractive place to work.</li> <li>• Continue to implement sound project planning during the final phases of developing our centralised office in Sandbach.</li> </ul>



**Above:** The Council's new One Stop Shop in Sandbach.



**Above:** Customer Services staff at the opening of our new Congleton One Stop Shop.

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## 4.3 High Performing



### Enhance partnership working

Achievements	Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have launched the Congleton Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2016 and aligned it into the Cheshire Local Area Agreement.</li><li>• We have improved the performance management systems within our Local Strategic Partnership.</li><li>• We have formed new partnerships with Crewe &amp; Nantwich Borough Council on property maintenance and with Crewe &amp; Nantwich and Macclesfield Borough Councils on building control.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will continue to co-ordinate the performance management of the LSP and LAA to ensure alignment and monitor achievement.</li><li>• We will contribute to Cheshire Shared Services Board and implement necessary change at Congleton Borough Council to maximise joint working opportunities and improve two-tier arrangements.</li><li>• We will conduct a review of existing partnerships to identify further improvements in ways of working.</li><li>• We will respond to policy announcements on LGR and implement the actions necessary based on final decisions.</li></ul>



**Above:** Congleton Borough & Cheshire County Council staff win first prize at the Local Government Chronicle Challenge.

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## Develop staff and members

Achievements	Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The job evaluation stage of Single Status is on schedule for completion within the timescale.</li> <li>• We have formally adopted a number of new Human Resource policies including the Age Discrimination policy.</li> <li>• We have adopted a new Training and Development Strategy for staff and members to enable continuous improvement within the workplace.</li> <li>• We have developed a new corporate image and identity for consultation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop and implement an action plan to improve the results of our staff survey, with particular focus on listening to staff and improving communications.</li> <li>• We will implement the member development strategy to enhance the community leadership role.</li> <li>• We will implement the Communications Plan to improve positive media coverage and tackle the reputation agenda.</li> <li>• Continue to develop staff through our Training and Development plan.</li> <li>• Increase the number of staff receiving regular Team Briefings to improve communication and feedback.</li> </ul>



## Manage performance effectively

Achievements	Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best Value User Satisfaction Survey completed, including a broad range of positive feedback.</li> <li>• Self assessment for Direction of Travel Assessment completed resulting in a positive progress assessment.</li> <li>• New Performance Management framework in place which was commended within the Audit Commission review.</li> <li>• We have improved our Use of Resources Score so that all aspects meet minimum standard and made commendable progress in financial management.</li> <li>• We have introduced a new Performance Network Group to enable improved understanding across the organisation about performance management.</li> <li>• Our Statement of Accounts was completed on time and contained no “material errors”.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will further develop our performance management process to further improve cross-organisational awareness of corporate performance issues.</li> <li>• We will continue to develop a risk management culture, reviewing our top level risks and involving our Executive in risk review.</li> <li>• We will apply for recategorisation of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in order to recognise Congleton’s progress since the last review.</li> <li>• We will review and amend the Council’s constitution in order to ensure it is ‘fit for purpose’ and appropriately modernised.</li> <li>• We will develop our Corporate Governance Framework to ensure this meets all requirements of a public body, and to ensure best practice is exercised.</li> <li>• We will implement the “Modern Government” system in Democratic Services to enhance our democratic processes.</li> <li>• We will review and republish our Medium Term Corporate Strategy 2006/2010 to ensure that all of our targets are stretching and relevant.</li> </ul>



**Left:** Streetscape Operative Kenneth Stanier wins a Local Hero award for his 42 years’ dedicated service to the Borough.



**Left:** Middlewich resident Pam Johnson with her Local Hero award in honour of her 20 years’ service to the Sandbach Talking Newspaper, which provides vital news & information recordings for the blind and partially sighted in the Borough.

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# Our Improvement Journey

## 5.0

### Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2005/06

The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter is a joint report by the Council's External Auditors, Baker Tilly and the Audit Commission. It highlights those areas where, in the opinion of Baker Tilly and the Audit Commission, the Council should be focusing its efforts in moving forward. No recommendations were made in the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, and the key points raised for 2005-2006 were that:

#### **Council Performance:**

1. Good progress has been made. Improvements have been achieved in the majority of priority areas. For example, fear of crime has reduced, cleanliness has improved, the availability of affordable housing has increased and the Council has helped to build community cohesion in Middlewich.
2. Capacity to deliver future improvements has increased. Strategic planning and performance management are now more effective and have enabled the Council to better focus on delivering its priorities. Improved processes are in place for financial and risk management.



3. Partnership working has developed and the Council is beginning to work more effectively with partners to deliver improvements for the community.

#### **Financial Position:**

4. Financial stability is more robust. The Council's external assessment for financial standing has improved and its arrangements now meet minimum requirements. This is commendable progress given that in previous years this has been a key area of weakness.

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## 5.0 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2005/06



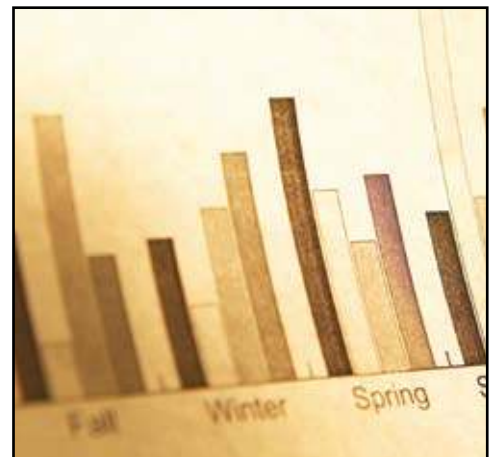
### The Accounts and Governance:

5. The Council's 2005/2006 accounts have been given an unqualified opinion

### Action needed by the Council

6. Key areas for action are:
  - Make faster progress in the priority areas of developing tourism and promoting access, quality and affordable services for young people

- Council Response: In 2007 we are investing further in our priority of developing Tourism by agreeing a new economic development and tourism strategy and engaging in a number of new projects including: consulting on a plan for the Middlewich canal corridor, developing the facilities at Sandbach Services into a gateway for North West Tourism, coordinating community actions and projects for the 2008 Cheshire Year of Gardens, encouraging development of equestrian facilities in our rural areas with ambition to host an Olympic training centre in 2012 and bringing forward development land to encourage quality hotel accommodation.



- In 2007, to further develop our services for children and young people, we invested into a full time post for this work. Over the last year, we have developed policy and strategy which aligns well with national agendas and local priorities to ensure that resources and services make the biggest difference to the needs of children and young people. Strong internal and external partnership networks are now in place to enable us to explore the accessibility, quality and affordability of services for children and young people.



- Be able to better demonstrate the impact of Council and partnership activities on improving quality of life for the community

- Council Response: In March 2007 we published a new Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2016 for the Borough of Congleton. This now clearly sets out the ambitions and priorities of the community. Eight delivery partnerships are

now also in place, each with their own action plans and projects. Improved performance management arrangements have been established both within the Local Strategic Partnership and the Borough Council to better plan and capture our achievements and we are investing further in an LSP Communications group to help celebrate what we are achieving.

- Make more progress on the equality and diversity agenda

- Council Response: Congleton Borough Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all people and has approved an Equality Policy. The supporting implementation plan is being drafted in consultation with staff and community members. Further training for officers and elected members is being commissioned and a Council-wide staff group will be formed to take priority actions forward.



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## 5.0 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2005/06



- Take the difficult decisions needed to improve value for money in high spending areas such as car parking and leisure centres
- Council Response: The Council is carrying out an appraisal of car park management and has commissioned an independent report to enable a logical judgement to be made based on local circumstances. Extensive public consultation will be held before a car parking policy is decided.
- Further develop collaborative and partnership working as a means of providing services within increasingly constrained resources.
- Council Response: The Council is committed to improved collaboration with other councils in the sub-region to deliver even greater value for money services. In the last year we have developed partnership arrangements for Environmental Health, Building Control, Building Maintenance Services payroll, procurement, and project management. We are now part of a collaborative working group across

Cheshire that involves Police and Fire Services as well as all the other councils. With support from the NW Centre of Excellence, we will recruit a core team of officers that will help design and manage change. In the year ahead options will be tested in relation to a number of service areas including waste collection, ICT services and revenue collection.



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“Congleton Borough has come a long way...it has taken a lot of hard work but the Borough has been committed to making improvements.”

Gill Orme, Audit Commission

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# Community Strategy

## 6.0



**Above:** Council members and partners at the launch of the Congleton Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2016.

The Community Strategy is created jointly by public, private, voluntary and community organisations. It devises, promotes and delivers improvements to the social, economic and environmental welfare of our local community.

The Congleton Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) develop the Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2016, which is now well placed to deliver even more benefits for residents, visitors and businesses in the Borough.

A restructured Local Strategic Partnership was agreed on 11 January 2006 following a 3-month consultation period. The partnership comprises representatives from throughout the community including Cheshire Police, the County and Borough Councils, Association of Town and Parish Councils, the Voluntary & Community Sector Network, South East Cheshire Enterprise, Dane Housing, Central and Eastern Cheshire Primary Care Trusts and Groundwork Trust.

The key purpose and benefit of the partnership is about creating a common vision for the area, sharing plans and



carrying out joint projects. Working together, the various organisations will be even more effective in bringing a better quality of life to Congleton.

**j**

### **Jargon Buster!** **LSP**

The Local Strategic Partnership is an organisation that is responsible for making sure all sectors and communities are involved in setting local priorities and for determining how they are going to be tackled.

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# Community Strategy

## 6.0



**Above:** Socialising over a tasty meal at Fellowship House.



**Above:** Children Celebrate Second Compact Commendation with a Kayaking lesson with the Borough Mayor and our Compact Development Worker.

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The revised partnership will work through an executive and delivery partnerships relating to

- Addressing the safety of our community
- Addressing the needs of our older people
- Addressing the needs of our children and young people
- Health improvements
- Creating stronger communities
- Improving the environment
- Strengthening our economy
- Promoting lifelong learning

The Congleton partnership will also be working closely with a revised countywide network of partnerships, known as the Communities of Cheshire, ensuring we all add value and that duplication of effort is avoided.

Partnership working across the Borough is already strong. Our Local Compact is recognised nationally as one of the best in the country and a number of very visible improvements are a direct result of partner organisations working together, including the redeveloped Middlewich Bullring and the restoration of Congleton Park.



**j**

**Jargon Buster!  
Compact**

The agreement between public organisations such as Congleton Borough Council, Health Trusts and the voluntary & community sector to improve their working relationship to the advantage of residents.

Whilst the quality of life in the Borough is generally good, with low crime levels, a pleasant environment and good health, there are a number of challenges. We have high levels of commuting, residents are fearful of crime in our town centres at night and we have pockets of significant deprivation. Public transport in rural communities is also a considerable issue.

Over the last twelve months, the delivery partnerships have produced a new Sustainable Community Strategy for the Borough, setting out a common vision for the area through to 2016 with specific actions and targets. The LSP held a number of stakeholder events during 2006 and 2007 to discuss draft plans and

priorities in more detail. These are now being developed into detailed action plans.

If you feel that your organisation could contribute to the priorities of the Congleton LSP, please get in contact with Craig Nicholson, LSP Co-ordinator on 01270 529610 or by email at [craig.nicholson@congleton.gov.uk](mailto:craig.nicholson@congleton.gov.uk)



**Above:** LSP Co-ordinator Craig Nicholson with Congleton Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2016.

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# Appendix One

7.0

## Performance Indicators



## GOAL 1 – Promoting a Prosperous Community

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 008	Percentage invoices for commercial goods and services, paid by authority within 30 days of receipt	96.71%	89.24%	92.20%	100%	95.60%	97%	98%	99%	A stepped improvement due to increased profile of the benefits of early payment
BV 009	Percentage of Council Tax due for the financial year, received by the authority	98.4%	96.39%	98.51%	98.80%	98.69%	98%	99%	99%	Performance has improved for the sixth successive year through improved efficiency, including new software systems
BV 010	Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority	99.26%	98.1%	98.65%	99.00%	98.74%	99%	99%	99%	Performance continues to improve with the use of new procedures
BV 076a	The number of claimants visited, per 1000 caseload	N/A	N/A	340.44	300.00	283.12	N/A	N/A	N/A	Activity on this indicator was deliberately reduced in Quarter 3 when the DWP reduced the target they expected us to achieve. The indicator has been deleted from 2007/08
BV 076b	The number of fraud investigators, per 1000 caseload	N/A	N/A	0.39	0.43	0.33	0.40	0.40	0.40	This indicator fluctuates with the changes to the benefit caseload. The achievement reflects expected staffing levels and caseload
BV 076c	The number of fraud investigations, per 1000 caseload	N/A	N/A	20.07	21.00	25.87	21.00	21.00	21.00	The process for referrals is being reviewed. This target equates to a Performance Standards CPA mark of Excellent.
BV 076d	The number of prosecutions and sanctions, per 1000 caseload	N/A	N/A	4.63	3.04	4.69	3.00	4.00	5.00	Some high profile cases have been successful. The target equates to a Performance Standards CPA mark of Excellent.
BV 078a	Average time for processing new claims	26.4 days	39.1 days	33.4 days	29.0 days	33.6 days	29.0 days	29.0 days	28.0 days	Reduced staffing levels during the year contributed to performance below the anticipated high levels. The revised target equates to a Performance Standards CPA mark of Excellent.

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Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 078b	Average time for processing notifications of change of circumstances	9.1 days	18.8 days	8.8 days	7.0 days	8.0 days	8.0 days	8.0 days	7.0 days	Reduced staffing levels during the year contributed to performance below the anticipated high levels. The revised target equates to a Performance Standards CPA mark of Excellent.
BV 079a	Percentage of cases for which the calculation of amount of benefit due was correct	99.00%	96.60%	98.40%	99.00%	99.80%	99.20%	99.20%	99.20%	This excellent performance reduces inconvenience to customers and prevents fraud entering the system. The target equates to a Performance Standards CPA score of Excellent.
BV 079bi	Percentage of recoverable overpayments (excl Council Tax Benefit) recovered in the year	79.39%	58.98%	69.02%	70.00%	57.24%	60%	66%	72%	Vacancies and replacement systems have seriously impacted on this indicator. This will be resolved in 2007/2008 and the target equates to a Performance Standards CPA score of Excellent.
BV 079bii	Housing benefit overpayments recovered during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period	39.69%	27.35%	34.53%	60.00%	30.62%	34%	37%	40%	Performance has been affected similar to BV079bi. This target equates to a Performance Standards CPA score of Excellent
BV 079biii	Housing benefit overpayments written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period, plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period	N/A	N/A	14.80%	5.00%	1.36%	5%	5%	5%	The amount of overpayments written off has reduced as a large clean-up exercise was completed last year

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 080a	Satisfaction with the Benefits service:- Contact/access facilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	88%	84%	N/A	N/A	88%	Some of these indicators have not achieved our high targets. System replacements and changes to customer services during 2006/2007 will enhance these scores in the future. The targets reflect our goal of continuous improvement.
BV 080b	Service in the office	N/A	N/A	N/A	86%	88%	N/A	N/A	89%	
BV 080c	Telephone service	N/A	N/A	N/A	83%	85%	N/A	N/A	86%	
BV 080d	Staff in the office	N/A	N/A	N/A	86%	87%	N/A	N/A	88%	
BV 080e	Clarity of forms and leaflets	N/A	N/A	N/A	64%	70%	N/A	N/A	71%	
BV 080f	Time taken for a decision	N/A	N/A	N/A	72%	81%	N/A	N/A	82%	
BV 080g	Overall satisfaction level	N/A	N/A	N/A	91%	86%	N/A	N/A	87%	
BV 106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	96.74%	62.52%	77.12%	70.00%	86.02%	77%	80%	80%	2006/7 performance is higher than anticipated because of the housing moratorium which will be relaxed during 2007/8
BV 109a	Percentage of major applications in 13 weeks (Govt control target: 60%)	74.90%	57.08%	66.66%	72.00%	81.58%	83%	83%	83%	The Council has been able to improve performance, exceed targets and outperform top quartile performance in all three planning indicators as a result of improved process efficiencies in 2006/07.
BV 109b	Percentage of minor applications in 8 weeks (Govt control target: 65%)	81.07%	69.00%	84.32%	85.00%	85.30%	86%	86%	86%	
BV 109c	Percentage of other applications in 8 weeks (Govt control target 80%)	91.39%	83.37%	93.67%	95.00%	95.19%	96%	96%	96%	
BV 111	Percentage of residents satisfied with our planning service	N/A	N/A	N/A	86%	79%	N/A	N/A	86%	Tri-annual User Satisfaction Survey, due to be monitored again in 2009/10
BV 156	Percentage of our buildings accessible to people with disabilities	N/A	N/A	12.00%	13.63%	13.64%	22.73%	22.73%	22.73%	The opening of our new centralised Westfields offices in Sandbach, in addition to work at Congleton Town Hall, will result in the Council achieving improved performance from 2007/08 onwards.
BV 200a	Did the local planning authority submit the Local Development Scheme (LDS) by 28th March and thereafter maintain a 3-year rolling programme	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 200b	Has the local planning authority met the milestones which the current Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sandbach West Area Action Plan abandoned. Middlewich Canal Corridor Area Action plan delayed due to resource issues
BV 200c	Did the Local Planning Authority publish an annual monitoring report by December of the last year?	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
BV 204	Percentage of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications	25%	36.1%	22.2%	22.0%	0.0%	20%	20%	20%	There were only 7 planning appeals determined during the year and all were dismissed, demonstrating the robust decisions made by the Local Planning Authority.
BV 205	Score against a checklist of quality of service for planning	100%	83.3%	77.8%	83.0%	61.1%	83%	83%	83%	Further resourcing of e-planning and staffing within the team is required to achieve a higher score on this indicator.
BV 219b	Percentage conservation areas in local authority area with an up to date character appraisal	31.81%	0%	27.27%	50.00%	27.27%	50%	75%	100%	Macclesfield Canal underway but not completed. Sandbach not done due to lack of resources
BV 219c	Percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals	7.7%	0%	27.27%	50.00%	27.27%	50%	75%	100%	Macclesfield Canal underway but not completed. Sandbach not done due to lack of resources.
BV 225	The overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further domestic violence.	N/A	N/A	54.55%	82%	63.6%	82%	82%	82%	The Council has implemented practices to enable improved performance in 2007/08.
BV 226a	Total amount spent by the Local Authority on advice and guidance services provided by external organisations	N/A	N/A	£154,239	£154,239	£154,240	£154,240	£154,240	£154,240	Grants to CVS, CAB and CHAWREC have been frozen for the next 3 years. At the present time, this situation will remain.
BV 226b	Percentage of monies spent on advice & guidance services provision which was given to organisations holding the CLS Quality Mark at General Help level and above	N/A	N/A	66.38%	66.38%	65.22%	65.22%	65.22%	65.22%	Performance has fallen from 2005/06 figures due to CHAWREC no longer holding the CLS Quality Mark. The grant to the CAB has been frozen for the next 3 years

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 226c	Total amount spent on advice and guidance in the areas of housing, welfare benefits and consumer matters which is provided directly by the authority to the public	N/A	N/A	£16800	£17650	£17982	£18500	£19450	£20300	Increases in costs are in line with activity in this area
LEP 180	Reduce by 10% the number of vacant shop units in our town centres by 2010	N/A	N/A	19% increase	0	11% increase	0	5% reduction	10% reduction	Data is against baseline of 75 vacant units in April 2005.
LFI 003	Number of days invoices are outstanding before payment (all years)	N/A	N/A	47 days	45 days	35	25	23	22	Performance has been positively affected by improved efficiency and appropriate procedures
LLC 002	Percentage standard searches carried out in 8 working days	N/A	N/A	45%	90%	56%	75%	100%	100%	The Council aims to ensure staffing levels are achieved in order to obtain 100% against this PI within the next two years.

## GOAL 2 – Promoting a Healthy Borough

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 064	Number private sector dwellings returned to occupation/demolished during year as result of authority action.	76.5 (All England) 38 (District)	7 (All England) 4 (District)	25	17	17	22	20	20	In 2006/07 the target was achieved via the refurbishment and conversion of a derelict former mill building. In 2007/08 the target will primarily be achieved by the refurbishment of a number of formerly vacant units above shops in Middlewich town centre.
BV 119a	Percentage of residents satisfied with the Council's Sports and Leisure facilities.	63% (2006/07)	54% (2006/07)	N/A	46%	62%	N/A	N/A	68%	An excellent improvement with plans in place for further improvement before the next Tri-annual User Satisfaction Survey, due to be monitored again in 2009/10
BV 119c	Percentage of residents satisfied with the Council's Museums & Galleries	51% (2006/07)	29% (2006/07)	N/A	25%	25%	N/A	N/A	25%	The Council's sole involvement with museums and galleries involves leasing a building to a Trust who run Congleton museum. Consequently we have little opportunity to exert any influence over the result of this performance indicator.
BV 119d	Percentage of residents satisfied with the Council's theatres/concert halls	53% (2006/07)	29% (2006/07)	N/A	40%	30%	N/A	N/A	35%	A disappointing result although we have no theatres and concert halls only Town/Civic Halls. The next Tri-annual User Satisfaction Survey is in 2009/10.
BV 119e	Percentage of residents satisfied with the Council's Parks and Open Spaces	78% (2006/07)	68% (2006/07)	N/A	60%	74%	NA	NA	77%	Tri-annual User Satisfaction Survey, due to be monitored again in 2009/10
BV 166a	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for Environmental Health	100%	85%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
BV 174	Number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population	N/A	N/A	4.36	1.00	1.09	10.89	16.34	21.79	We would expect to see a year-on-year increase over the coming 4 years as a result of increased accessibility and publicity around our racial incident reporting mechanisms.

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 175	Percentage of racial incidents recorded that resulted in further action	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	We expect to see small numbers and thus don't foresee a situation where we are not able to take each issue forward.
BV 183a	Average length of stay in B&B accommodation	1 week	4.25 weeks	2 weeks	1 week	2 weeks	2 weeks	1 week	1 week	As the levels of homeless approaches and acceptances reduce as a result of our prevention work, those who are unavoidably homeless tend to have complex needs. There is a lack of specialist accommodation, so finding suitable settled accommodation is difficult. We are currently undertaking a review of our temporary accommodation.
BV 183b	Average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households, including dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	0 weeks	17 weeks	12 weeks	6 weeks	14 weeks	11 weeks	10 weeks	9 weeks	One family were in temporary accommodation for an excessive period of time due to outstanding rent arrears which needed to be cleared before accommodation could be secured.
BV 202	The number of individuals sleeping rough on a single night in local authority area	0	5	0	1	0	1	1	1	There are currently no individuals recorded as sleeping rough within the Borough.
BV 203	Percentage change in average number of families with dependent children or a pregnant woman placed in temporary accommodation under homelessness legislation compared with previous year	-16.00%	19.09%	33.33%	-10.00%	-25.00%	-10.00%	-10.00%	-10.00%	We are continuing to see the levels of families in temporary accommodation reducing due to the homeless prevention work.
BV 213	Number of households who considered themselves homeless, who approached the local housing authority's housing advice service and where housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation.	5 per 1000 households	1 per 1000 households	1 per 1000 households	1 per 1000 households	2 per 1000 households	2 per 1000 households	2 per 1000 households	2 per 1000 households	Following the restructure of the Housing Options Team to concentrate on prevention work the team have been able to prevent 76 applicants from becoming homeless.
BV 214	Proportion of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were previously accepted as statutorily homeless by same Authority within last two years	0.37%	4.23%	0%	0%	3.23%	1%	1%	1%	We had 2 repeat homeless within the financial year which were unavoidable.

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Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 216a	Number of sites of potential concern within the local authority area with respect to land contamination	N/A	N/A	411	380	380	365	347	330	Despite exceeding target in previous years, this has been due to 'easy win' work with landfill sites. Future years will see more technical and resource intensive sites being investigated, which may impact on the annual target. *Awaiting Malkins Bank Investigation outcome as this may have detrimental effect on future targets.
BV 216b	Number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of all sites of potential concern	9%	1%	8%	5%	7%	5%*	5%*	5%*	
BV 217	Percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time	100%	83%	94%	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
BV 219a	Total number of conservation areas in the local authority area	N/A	N/A	11	11	11	11	11	11	
LCH 090	Provide affordable housing throughout Borough	N/A	N/A	45	50	50	50	50	50	The number of completions reflects the work done to raise the profile of affordable housing and represents maximisation of S106 agreements.
LCH 150	Proportion unfit private sector dwellings made fit/demolished as result of authority action	N/A	N/A	43	28	43	28	28	28	This result has been primarily achieved through financial grant assistance to vulnerable householders.

## GOAL 3 – Promoting a Safe Community

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 082ai	Percentage total tonnage household waste recycled	20.87%	14.25%	12.81%	14.00%	13.30%	18%	20%	22%	Additional street cleansing waste has adverse effect.
BV 082aii	Total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for recycling	15126.10	6140.14	5470.43	7075.00	5891.33	7969.00	8854.00	9740.00	Delay in implementation of plastic and cardboard kerbside recycling service have prevented us from achieving our target for 2006/07.
BV 082bi	Percentage total tonnage household waste sent for composting	13.05%	3.55%	20.76%	24%	22.71%	25%	26%	28%	Increase in total waste collected offsets improved performance
BV 082bii	Tonnage of household waste sent by the Authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion	8770.30	1823.30	8867.67	10400.00	10059.36	11068.00	11511.00	12396.00	The Council continues to exceed top quartile performance against this PI.
BV 084a	Number of kgs of household waste collected per head of population	394	480	465.34	478.00	482.61	482.00	482.00	482.00	Increased garden waste and street cleansing activity unfortunately have a negative impact on performance against this PI, as our excellent performance in recycling waste is included within the result.
BV 084b	Percentage change from the previous financial year in the number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population	-3.79%	1.01%	6.83%	1.88%	3.71%	0%	0%	0%	Increased recycling collections combined with additional street cleansing increases the total waste collected.
BV 086	Cost of waste collection per household	£39.48	£52.43	£42.61	£45.08	£37.53 (est)	£39.00	£40.95	£43.00	Increased recycling income reduces actual costs.
BV 089	Percentage of residents satisfied with the cleanliness of our highways	73% (2006/07)	62% (2006/07)	N/A	77%	72%	NA	NA	75%	In order to achieve top quartile results the Council is further engaging local residents and implementing a series of operational improvements.
BV 090a	Percentage of residents satisfied with household waste collection service	85% (2006/07)	74% (2006/07)	N/A	88%	89%	N/A	N/A	90%	We are delighted that our residents have rated our waste collection and recycling services within the top quartile following consultation as part of the tri-annual Best Value User Satisfaction Survey.
BV 090b	Percentage of residents satisfied with waste recycling facilities	75% (2006/07)	66% (2006/07)	N/A	74%	75%	N/A	N/A	76%	

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 091a	Percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by a kerbside collection of recyclables	100%	93.5%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
BV 091b	Percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by a kerbside collection of at least two recyclables	100%	90.1%	94.40%	94.00%	94.39%	96%	98%	100%	Engagement with multi-occupancy residents to increase percentage.
BV 126	Number of domestic burglaries per 1000 households	6.4	13.7	8.42	8.13	6.69	6.50	6.30	6.10	Pro-active campaigns including Smart Water, Persistent & Prolific Offenders (PPO) scheme and security upgrades for vulnerable premises have had significant impact, helping us to well exceed our target for the year.
BV 127a	Violent crimes per year per 1,000 population in the local authority area	12.5	22.9	9.90	9.55	10.59	9.84	9.14	8.49	The Council continues to set stretching targets based on excellent performance which significantly outperforms top quartile performance.
BV 127b	Robberies per year per 1,000 population in the local authority area	0.3	1.3	0.22	0.21	0.27	0.26	0.25	0.24	Low numbers of robberies within the Borough continue to enable the Council to outperform top quartile performance, and set stretching targets for the next 3 years.
BV 128	The number of vehicle crimes per year per 1,000 population in the local authority area	7.3	14.6	7.72	7.44	6.74	6.54	6.34	6.15	The Council experiences the lowest numbers of vehicle crime within the Eastern Basic Command Unit (BCU).
BV 199a	Proportion of land and highways with combined deposits of litter and detritus below an acceptable level	8.8%	21%	27%	23%	18%	15%	13%	12%	Street cleansing performance continues to improve. The targets for 06/07 were exceeded and residents' satisfaction with the service has increased by 13% over the last 3 years. Further improvements will be made during 07/08 including more effective sweeping routes and increased manual sweeping levels.

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 199b	Proportion of relevant land and highways from which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible	1%	6%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	The Council has taken measures to further reduce graffiti by employing dedicated Town Centre Cleansing Operatives.
BV 199c	Proportion of relevant land and highways from which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	The Council has met its target for removing fly posters and actively pursues offenders.
BV 199d	The year on year reduction in total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with fly-tipping	N/A	N/A	1	1	3	3	3	3	A change in waste regulation has seen fly tipping increase across the county, but the Council has increased the number of enforcement actions.
BV 218a	Percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours	96.64%	73.00%	100%	100%	69.74%	100%	100%	100%	Existing practices have been updated and improved to enable the Council to achieve 100% performance from 2007/08.
BV 218b	Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24hrs from point at which the Authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle	95.00%	61.11%	100%	100%	28.57%	75%	100%	100%	Legislation has changed part way through the year and our processes have yet to be amended to reflect this, which has impacted on our performance this year. This has now been addressed which is reflected in our targets for the next 3 years.
LCS 012	Increase the percentage of people that feel safe in our town centres at night	N/A	N/A	N/A	40%	46%	N/A	N/A	50%	This represents one of the Council's top priorities for improvement, and performance will be assessed using the tri-annual User Satisfaction Survey, due to be monitored again in 2009/10
LSS 004	Number of missed bins per 100,000 collections	N/A	N/A	39.35	40	34.20	34	33	32	We have implemented improved reporting mechanisms for crews to help ensure continuous improvement against this PI.
LSS 016	Increase the amount of industrial/commercial waste diverted from landfill through recycling and partnership working with local businesses	N/A	N/A	220	240	461.02	420	450	500	Expansion of paper banks and commercial glass collections from mini bring sites situated on pub car parks.

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**GOAL 4 – High Performing Council**

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 002a	Level of Equality Standard for Local Govt to which authority conforms	N/A	N/A	Level Zero	Level One	Level One	Level Two	Level Two	Level Three	The Council aims to achieve level two during 2007/08 by implementing the commitments made in our Corporate Equality Policy.
BV 002b	Score against checklist to promote racial equality	79%	53%	37%	53%	37%	47%	68%	100%	The checklist requires an up-to-date Race Equality Scheme and measurable progress made by delivering the scheme.
BV 003	Percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service delivery	58% (2006/07)	48% (2006/07)	N/A	57%	50%	57%	65%	75%	Consultation in 2007/08 with the Customer Panel
BV 004	Percentage of complainants satisfied with the handling of their complaint by Authority	37% (2006/07)	30% (2006/07)	N/A	40%	44%	50%	60%	70%	
BV 011a	Percentage of top 5% of earners that are women	42.45%	22.22%	32.00%	38.50%	31.58%	40%	41.5%	43%	Creating a new Management Team structure in 2005/06 had a negative impact on this performance indicator. The Council's recruitment policy actively encourages equality of opportunity for all, and makes recruitment decisions based upon a fair and open process based upon relevant skills.
BV 011b	Percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities	4.33%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.5%	We recognise that we remain in the worst quartile for this performance indicator. However, the Council's recruitment policy actively encourages equality of opportunity for all.
BV 011c	Percentage of top paid 5% of staff who have a disability (excluding those in maintained schools)	4.83%	0%	0%	0.50%	5.26%	6.00%	6.25%	6.50%	Better information provision has had a positive impact on this PI.
BV 012	Number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence	8.34	10.94	10.1 days	8.5 days	10.6 days	8 days	7.5 days	7 days	Performance has dropped over the past 12 months. There have been a number of long term sickness cases that have impacted on the overall figures although these are being managed and we are starting to see the benefit of this.

Ref No.	Performance Indicator	Top Quartile 2005/06	Bottom Quartile 2005/06	Actual 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Commentary
BV 014	Percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce	0.17%	0.78%	4.79%	0.45%	0.30%	0.28%	0.25%	0.23%	Following the service efficiency review in 2005/06 we have been able to effectively manage performance in order to successfully exceed our target this year.
BV 015	Percentage of employees retiring on grounds of ill-health as a percentage of the total workforce	0.10%	0.37%	0.56%	0.40%	0.61%	0.35%	0.30%	0.25%	Our performance in 2006/07 has seen a downturn due to the management of long term absence cases that have resulted in ill health early retirement.
BV 016a	Percentage employed declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 definition	3.89%	1.86%	1.78%	3.50%	5.51%	5.50%	6.00%	6.50%	Due to excellent performance in this area we have set stretching performance targets for the next 3 years.
BV 016b	Percentage of economically active people in the local authority area who have a disability	N/A	N/A	11.95%	11.95%	11.95%	11.95%	11.95%	11.95%	Based on census information.
BV 017a	Percentage employed from minority ethnic communities	4.8%	0.9%	0.5%	1.0%	0.5%	1.0%	1.0%	1.3%	Although performance has maintained on last years figures we have set clear objectives to continue to impact on this PI through our recruitment strategy.
BV 017b	The percentage of economically active population from ethnic minority communities in the authority area	N/A	N/A	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	Based on census information.
LCU 027	Increase the response rate to enquiries at the first point of contact.	N/A	N/A	N/A	30%	30% estimated	55%	65%	75%	Implementation of the CRM system will improve management information available including the volume of enquiries handled at the first point of contact
LCU 032	To establish baseline performance data on abandoned telephone calls by 2007 and reduce this by 5% by 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	32%	28.85% estimated	25%	20%	10%	A new telephone system has been procured and implemented providing improved management information data
LMI 001	Increase percentage of staff feeling communication across the Council is effective	N/A	N/A	N/A	60%	31%	50%	60%	70%	An action plan is being developed and incorporated into our Communication Plan and HR Section Plan
LMI 004	Increase the percentage of staff receiving a monthly team brief	N/A	N/A	N/A	55%	50.74%	70%	75%	80%	Centralised offices should enable more effective return of traceable feedback sheets and enable the Council to significantly improve performance from 2007/08 onwards.

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# Appendix Two

8.0

## Questionnaire



**Your chance to have your say**

The Council welcomes your comments on this Corporate Strategy & Performance Plan. Your views and comments will help us in the preparation of the plans in future years. It costs nothing to take part, simply complete and post.

1. Is the plan easy to understand in terms of its layout and the language used? *(Please tick)*

- Not at all  Not very
- Fairly  Very
- Totally

*(If not, what elements are difficult to understand?)*

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2. Do you feel that the plan covers the whole range of services provided by the Council?

- Yes  No

*(If no, what services do you think should be included?)*

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3. The Council's main objectives are shown within the plan. Do you think we are tackling the right issues?

- Yes  No  Don't know

*(If no, what issues should we be prioritising?)*

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4. The Council's main targets are also listed within the plan. Do you think that they are challenging enough?

- Yes  No  Don't know

5. Does the plan enable you to make an assessment on how well the Council is performing?

- Yes  No  Don't know

*(If no, what additional information would you like to see?)*

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6. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Congleton Borough Council is performing?

- Very satisfied  Satisfied
- Neither  Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied  Don't know

7. Please provide any other comments you wish to make on the plan

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Finally, if you would like any feedback on your comments, please complete your name and address below.

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode: .....

Tel: .....

**Thank you for your comments**

Please detach, fold and post.

Or e-mail comments to [lesley.seal@congleton.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.seal@congleton.gov.uk)

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2. Fold here

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1. Fold here



3. Remove tab to seal

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3. Remove tab to seal



[www.congleton.gov.uk](http://www.congleton.gov.uk)



For further information or to comment on any aspect of this strategy please contact:

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**If you require a copy of this strategy in:**

- Large Print
- Audio tape format
- Braille

**Please let us know**

**Are we accessible to you? If not tell us.**

আপনাদের কাছে আমরা কি সহজেই লভ্য? যদি তা না হয় - তবে আমাদের জিজ্ঞাসা করুন।

閣下能否容易地向我們取得資訊? 假如是否的話, 請向我們查詢。

શું તમે અમારો સંપર્ક સાધી શકો છો? જો નહીં - તો અમને જણાવો.

Czy masz dostep do nas? Jezeli nie to zapytaj nas o pomoc.

Baĩn coũ tieáp xuộc ñõõĩc vòuĩ chuòng toãi khoãng?

Neáu khoãng, haõy hoũĩ chuòng toãi.

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**'To create a Borough where people can live, grow & aspire'**