

Chapter 5

Improving Performance

IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Following the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2004, an Improvement Plan was drawn up which set out key actions to improve in four priority areas: Ambition; Performance; Community Focus, and Capacity. The Improvement Plan had a 3-year timespan to April 2007.

The Council's ambition to be an organisation of excellence continues to drive improvement. The key actions needed to transform the organisation are now set out under the Maximising Capacity and Impact priority, making improvement planning part of our core business.

The Council has made real progress in the past three years in improving performance in the delivery of services. There will continue to be a focus on service delivery and a culture of continuous improvement, with a revised performance management framework being developed. The Council's targets and progress updates are included in the annual Performance Report which is published in June every year.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The Council is assessed annually by the Audit Commission on its direction of travel and use of resources. An overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council is set out in a report called the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. This is a public document and is published on the Audit Commission's website.

The Audit Letter contains the Council's Direction of Travel (DoT) statement which sets out the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council's progress against its key priorities.

The Use of Resources (UoR) assessment evaluates how well councils manage and use their financial resources. It is scored against five themes, including value for money. Test Valley has scored well against all areas of the Use of Resources judgment in previous assessments, and we aim to improve on our performance in future. Some of the key actions to improve performance in this area are contained within the Maximising section of this Plan.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Council has made significant progress in ensuring effective risk management processes are put in place, and that they become embedded in corporate processes. The Council's Corporate Risk Register contains all significant corporate risks for the authority and identifies the key actions needed to mitigate against these risks. All of the key actions in the Corporate Risk Register are reflected within this Corporate Plan.