

June 2010



# Annual performance report for 2009-10



**CHELTONHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

# Introduction

Welcome to Cheltenham Borough Council's annual report which summarises how well we have delivered our services and commitments during the previous year.

Overall the council performed well during 2009-10. We continued to get recognition for our high standards, good performance, sound financial management and value for money. The Audit Commission gave us an overall score of 3 in its Use of Resources assessment, indicating that the council performs 'consistently above minimum requirements - performing well'. They concluded the following:

*"Overall, Cheltenham Borough Council performs well. The Council delivers value for money well. It manages its performance well."*

This year we completed 95% of our business plan actions with only 2 out of 133 (2%) not being completed in the year, the rest being cancelled or deferred into 2010-11. This is a significant improvement on last year.

Our performance against a range of indicators has continued to improve. Particularly pleasing has been the reduction in levels of crime in Cheltenham which has been achieved through working in partnership with the police and others; overall crime levels are down 8% compared with 2008/09 against of a 2% year on year reduction target. This was achieved despite concerns about crime increasing due to the recession. Our community-based activities have proved successful; nearly 6,000 children attending our holiday playschemes, there were 280,000 visits to leisure@ (including 47,000 free swims for the under 16s and 15,000 £1 swims for the over 60s) and over 3,000 people attended our annual Fiesta in the Park.

Meanwhile we have explored a range of ways of making savings and increasing income. Through effective financial management and our Bridging the Gap initiative we closed the budget gap of £1.2 million and limited the 2010-11 council tax increase to just 2.5%.

You can read more about our financial performance in the annual statement of accounts and reading them in conjunction with the annual report will give you a balanced view of the council's work and finances.

If there is anything that you would like to tell us so that we can improve things further, then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Cllr. Steve Jordan

Andrew North

Leader

Chief Executive

## For further information about this report, please contact

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## **The council's business plan**

The council's Business Plan 2009-10 was agreed in March 2009 and set out how the council would deliver its three year aims and ambitions which were originally set out in the 2007-2010 business plan as agreed in March 2007. The nine community aims were:

- Promoting community safety;
- Promoting sustainable living;
- Promoting a strong and sustainable economy;
- Building healthy communities and supporting older people;
- Building stronger communities and supporting housing choice;
- A focus on children and young people;
- Investing in environmental quality;
- Investing in travel and transport; and
- Investing in arts and culture.

Along with the nine community aims, we had an aim to focus our internal work:

- Being an excellent, efficient and sustainable council.

## **The importance of performance management**

Performance management is a critical element of the council's management processes. The council is committed to a joined up approach to performance management that involves members and employees working together to ensure that the council keeps on delivering on the issues that matter most to local people and keeps on improving the quality of services at all levels. Our performance management system helps the council to identify what does and does not work and what the factors are that support or hinder economic, efficient and effective service delivery.

The annual report provides an assessment of our performance against our business plan targets as set out in "Our plans for 2009-10" and includes the following information:

- Summary of performance highlights;
- Business plan milestones;
- Business plan indicators;
- Performance indicators;
- Review of our three year ambitions; and
- Customer relations overview.

## Performance Highlights

<b>Business Plan aim</b>	<b>performance highlights</b>
Promoting community safety	The Cheltenham Safe Co-ordinator is now embedded in the community safety unit and is working with businesses including those in the night time economy to bring together agreed initiatives/projects to reduce alcohol related violence. The number of crimes committed under the influence has reduced by 25% since the baseline year of 2007-08. Overall, all crime levels are down 8% compared with 2008/09 against a 2% year on year reduction. This was achieved despite concerns about crime increasing due to the recession.
Promoting sustainable living	This year, the council rolled-out kerbside cardboard collections for households – 175 tonnes of cardboard were collected and recycled. Communal recycling facilities for flats were improved at 125 locations and expanded the range of materials collected. The amount of waste collected per head was 429.5kg against a target of 463kg. The 2008-09 figure was 442kg.
Promoting a strong and sustainable economy	The council invested £50,000 of LABGI (Local Area Business Growth Incentives Scheme) funds enabling a grants-based project that local businesses benefitted from. A further commitment £42,500 was made for 2009/10 to help businesses during the recession. The overall employment rate in Cheltenham was maintained at 83.7% despite the recession. The TIC had 1,217,000 visits in 2009-10 against a target of 670,000. (figure includes visitors, phone calls and emails and visits to the web-site.)
Building healthy communities and supporting older people	The council extended the range of "Active Life" activity sessions for people over the age of 50 at Leisure@. We set a target of 18,000 attendances but the actual figure for 2009-10 was 27,811. The council provided 47,235 free swims for under 16s, against a target of 20,000 and 15,244 swims for £1 for the over 60s against a target of 9,000.  788 energy-efficiency measures were installed through the Warm and Well scheme in Cheltenham (against a target of 500) and 635 properties were improved through the Gloucestershire Energy Efficiency Grant (GEEG), funded by the council. Of the properties improved, 217 properties related to householders over 70yrs of age.
Building stronger communities and supporting housing choice	Planning permission was secured for the St. Pauls regeneration scheme and in March, we heard that Cheltenham Borough Homes had secured £2.5m Homes and Community Agency funding to implement phase 1 of the regeneration of St. Pauls (including providing 48 new homes and transformational improvements to the retained stock).  The council supported the annual community Fiesta in the Park which celebrates Cheltenham's diverse communities and was attended by over 3,000 people. In addition through our work to support black and minority ethnic communities, the council established a network of 12 voluntary community ambassadors who have been recruited to disseminate information to the Sikh, Bangladeshi, Arab, Chinese and Gujarati communities.

A focus on children and young people	The council supported Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council to build the Brizen Young People's Centre and helped to upgrade the Naunton Park Pavillion. We provided a range of school holiday playschemes which attracted 5,905 children against a target of 5,000 and provided £30k to support local groups tackle child poverty. In addition, the council agreed its new safeguarding policy and put in place additional training and support to ensure safeguarding practices are embedded in the organisation.
Investing in environmental quality	The council continued to invest in its parks and facilities; in Pittville Park, all capital projects were completed including a multi-use games area, fishing platforms and seating, play area refurbishment and a natural play area at a total cost of £150,000. The council also refurbished three other play areas; Sandy Lane, Hatherley Park and Prestbury Playing Fields. In October 2009, Hatherley Park, Naunton Park and Montpellier Gardens were each awarded a prestigious Green Flag Award.
Investing in travel and transport	<p>On line parking enforcement went live on 22nd June 2009 and has been well received by users. The system not only allows motorists to pay on line, it permits access to information about the reasons why they have received a penalty charge notice and photographic evidence taken at the time of issue by the enforcement officer. This enables motorists to make a reasoned judgement about whether to challenge the notice or to quickly pay in order to qualify for a reduced rate.</p> <p>Through the concessionary transport scheme, the council provided free travel to 18,053 older people and 2,490 disabled people</p>
Investing in arts and culture.	Plans for the Art Gallery and Museum were significantly progressed in 2009-10; in terms of fund-raising, we have reached a target of c.£4m with news from Garfield Weston of a £100k grant. HLF have also confirmed that the development scheme has achieved a first-round pass for £750k - and we are now starting work on the second-round application. The plans for the development scheme received planning permission in July 2009. Fee income from the Town Hall and Pittville Pump Room exceeded the target and brought in £465,852.
Being an excellent, efficient and sustainable council.	In 2009-10, the council retained its level 3 Use of Resources score which makes an assessment of how well the council provides value for money. The council achieved £72,000 of savings from its service improvement work, implemented single status and completed 100% of appraisals. The numbers undertaking NVQ2 courses was 73 against a target of 28.

## Business plan milestones

In the 2009-10 business plan, we identified 133 milestones to track our progress. Out of these:

- 95% (126) of milestones were on target or completed at the end of the year
- 3% (4) of milestones were deferred
- 1% (1) milestone was cancelled.
- 2% (2) milestones were below target. The red milestones are:

<b>milestone</b>	<b>commentary</b>
agree a unique selling point for Cheltenham	Both these milestones reflected the slower than anticipated development of the new tourism and marketing strategy. Progress on this is being made and this is anticipated to come to cabinet for approval in 2010.
develop and agree a marketing strategy	

The milestones that were deferred were:

<b>milestone</b>	<b>commentary</b>
Agree and adopt an updated asset management plan	Delay in developing the asset management plan. Now scheduled to go to cabinet for adoption on 27 July 2010.
Complete a feasibility study of neighbourhood wardens	This action was deferred and has now been superseded by work developed by the Operations division to establish 'street scene' service.
Have an action plan in place for the achievement of the GO award (skills for life)	We have been promoting skills for life in partnership with Gloucestershire Adult Education team and a number of individuals have elected to attend the course arranged by the unit. We will continue to take this approach and encourage employees to participate where appropriate. In addition numeracy and literacy skills testing is incorporated into NVQs and addressed where necessary in this qualification. Approximately 45 employees will participate in NVQs over the next 12 months.
Review the waste collection policy to encourage behavioural change to reduce waste generation	This action was deferred until a decision is made regarding future collection systems and policies. Work will continue in the meantime to promote waste reduction and responsible waste management.

The milestone that was cancelled was:

<b>milestone</b>	<b>commentary</b>
Working with the Playhouse Theatre in their quest to extend through the acquisition of the lease of the adjoining property	This project was no longer required so did not proceed

Overall this is a vast improvement on the previous year when only 75% of milestones were completed within the financial year.

## Performance indicators

The new National Indicator set (NIs) was introduced in April 2008 and replaces the best value performance indicators. The NIs contains a total of 198 indicators for local government, 62 of which are relevant to district authorities with 18 of these indicators being drawn from the Place Survey which measures citizen perspective. Although only a few are fully recorded and reported directly by CBC we aim to keep track of all NI data that may be reported as a Cheltenham figure.

In the 2009-10 business plan, we identified 66 key indicators to track our progress. Out of these:

- 85% (56) of all indicators are on or above target;
- 15% (10) indicators were below target. These below target indicators are:

<b>division</b>	<b>indicator</b>	<b>target</b>	<b>actual</b>	<b>commentary</b>
CAST	Money saved through procurement	£80,000	£56,000	The savings target for the year was not met. This was mainly due to the demand for procurement resources from the GO7 project. However, additional staff resources and the use of the category management technique has enabled a workplan to be prepared for 10/11 with predicted cashable savings in excess of £100,000.
Community services	Tackling fuel poverty - % of people receiving income-based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating	4.71%	6.05%	The response from the questionnaire is statistically questionable as the level of return out of the 5000 surveys in Cheltenham failed to reach 500
Human Resources	Sickness absence	7	8.9	The 7 day target was aspirational given the 8.4 day out-turn from 2008-09. The target has now been “re-set” to 8 days in the new corporate strategy, which is stretching but hopefully achievable. In terms of 2009-10, the number of days lost due to sickness absence remained consistent with both the previous quarter and the corresponding period for 2008/09 with the reasons for absence also remain unchanged, with very few absences attributed to the flu pandemic that had been forecast.
Operations	% of Commercial waste recycled	20%	3.3%	The new service was only launched as a trial for 50 existing customers on 1 <sup>st</sup> October. Due to a re-categorisation of the waste streams, waste that was previously thought to be commercial is now recycled with as household so impacting on delivery of the target.
Operations	Waste and recycling	35%	32.85%	Despite additional investment into cardboard recycling, the amount of waste being recycled or composted did not hit the target.

Policy and Performance	Repeat incidences Domestic violence	22.4%	32.1%	Despite the overall number of incidents decreasing this year from 220 to 190, the number that were repeat incidents increased from 55 to 61 so increasing the percentage that were repeats. Tackling domestic violence remains a priority for the Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership.
Policy and Performance	Anti-social behaviour	7,181	7,226	Despite ASB incidents decreasing by 10% since 2007-08, when there were over 8,000 incidents, the total narrowly missed the council's target. Tackling anti-social behaviour remains a priority for the Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership - this summer, for instance, we will be working with the police to tackle anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces in the Leckhampton INA area which is a new priority identified through the neighbourhood management process.
Wellbeing and Culture	Leisure@ income	1,379,500	1,346,466	Overall, the target was missed by £33,000 (2%). Earlier in the year, income was below expectations in the 1st quarter due to the slower than anticipated pick up within learn to swim programme and educational swimming, combined with a degree of fall in memberships due to cancelled instructions after the scheduled price increases. In addition, the cold weather impacted trade as casual trade stayed away, having a particular impact on pay and play business and swimming in particular. Leisure@will continue to pro-actively market the range of facilities available to ensure performance targets are hit in 2010-11.
Wellbeing and Culture	Number of visits to the art gallery and museum and the arts and crafts websites	280,000	227,327	The Arts and Crafts website has been closed down since the end of January 2010 due to a serious operating problem. A new site for the collection will be re-launched in September 2010. The AGM is proposing to explore interaction on social networking sites.
Wellbeing and Culture	number of GP exercise referrals	100	38	Slower than anticipated uptake of the scheme; Extra time has been allocated to work with surgeries to move the programme forward and boost uptakes.

Overall, performance matches last year when 15% of milestones were also below target.

## Review of our 3 year ambitions 2007-2010

In the 2007 business plan, we set out a series of three year ambitions with accompanying measures of success. In this section of the annual report, we summarise progress that has been made over the past three years to deliver these ambitions.

### Aim 1: Promoting Community Safety

Community aim ref	Ambition	Measure of success for 2010	Progress at 31 March 2010	Summary
1A	Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership (CCSP) will have coordinated a programme of activity that will reduce the level of crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime in Cheltenham.	CCSP to achieve a 2% reduction in recorded crimes year on year to 2011. (Changed from 2008-09).	The CCSP achieved the previous three year target to reduce British Crime Survey (BCS) crime by 17.5% in June 2008. Subsequently, the CCSP has set a new 2% reduction target and achieved a 8% reduction when compared with 2008-09.	
1B	CCSP will have delivered a programme of investment and preventative work to build respect in our communities and reduce anti-social behaviour.	CCSP to have helped meet the LAA stretch target SSC 4 (iii) to reduce the number of people who perceive anti-social behaviour as being a problem in their area.	CCSP has supported a partnership approach to tackling anti-social behaviour; a part time coordinator is in place who is supported by a dedicated police officer and together they facilitate a successful anti-social behaviour working group. The number of incidents has reduced by 10% since 2007-08, when there were over 8,000 incidents; though we narrowly missed the council's own 2009-10 target.	

### Aim 2: Promoting Sustainable Living

Community aim ref	Ambition	Measure of success for 2010	Progress at 31 March 2010	Summary
2A	We will expand our recycling services to include plastics and cardboard, commercial recycling, and communal recycling activities to meet demand.	Recycle or compost 40% of household waste and 20% of commercial waste collected by the authority.	We are currently recycling or composting 33% of household waste and only 3% of commercial waste.	
2B	We will attempt to contain the amount of household waste generated in Cheltenham through education and promotion of best practice.	To contain the growth in the weight of household waste collected per head of the population to an average 2% over a three year period (2008/09 to 2010/11) as part of a longer term aim to reduce growth to 0% by 2020.	The weight of waste collected per head went down from 454kg in 06-07 to 413kg in 07-08. The indicator has now been changed to per household - The amount of waste collected per household has reduced over the period, rather than grown; the 2008-09 figure was 442kg and in 2009-10 this figure was 429.5kg	

2C	We will implement our sustainable construction action plan to reduce our impact on the environment.	To embed sustainable construction principles in all aspects of our development activity to include planning policy, housing developments, regeneration activities and civic pride.	The sustainability check-list has been approved by planning committee and sustainable construction principles underpin our development activity.	
2D	We will integrate sustainability issues into all our purchasing decisions.	To achieve level 3 of the requirements of the Sustainable Procurement Taskforce.	Level 3 has been achieved.	
2E	We will save energy and encourage the use of renewable sources of energy both in our own activities and premises and in the community to help us achieve our ambitions set out in our climate strategy.	To reduce CBC energy consumption by 20% from 2005/06 levels.  To reduce CBC carbon emissions by 15% from 2005/06 levels.	In 2008-09, the council agreed a carbon reduction programme that has helped reduce the carbon footprint of the council and so demonstrate community leadership on the low carbon agenda.  In terms of energy consumption, we only achieved a 14.6% reduction – so missing the target, but we did achieve a 18% reduction in our CO2 emissions.	
2F	To deliver the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy and identified supplementary planning documents which implements the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West as set out within Cheltenham's Local Development Scheme 2009.	To have achieved the key milestones set out in Cheltenham's Local Development Scheme.  To have consulted with stakeholders and members of the public on the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury joint core strategy and put in place arrangements for the joint core strategy to be examined, adopted and published with sustainability goals.	In 2008, the council signed up to the principles of working in partnership with Tewkesbury Borough and Gloucester City Councils to develop a Joint Core Strategy for the three council areas. This has not yet been finalised due to ongoing uncertainty about the regional spatial strategy. Now that the RSS has been cancelled, the council will proceed to move forward with the JCS programme.	

### **Aim 3: Promoting a strong and sustainable economy**

Community aim ref	Ambition	Measure of success for 2010	Progress at 31 March 2010	Summary
3A	To retain existing business investment, while supporting our growth sectors and small businesses and ensure that investment can be accommodated within environmental goals.	To increase overall employment rate.	The recession posed the greatest risk to achieving the measure of success; at end of March 08 the figure was 83.5% and at the end of March 2010 this was 83.7%.  Official unemployment rates have also decreased and now stands at 3.4% in May 2010 compared to 4.1% in May 2009.	
3B NEW	To market Cheltenham to mitigate against the impact of the recession and to ensure that it is best placed once we are in a recovery stage.	To maintain the existing level of visitors.	The TIC had 1,217,000 visits in 2009-10 against a target of 670,000. (figure includes visitors, phone calls and emails and visits to the web-site.). Footfall in the town centre remained buoyant.	
3C	We will work with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to help them meet identified gaps in the skill levels of employees.	To help the LSC meet the LAA stretch target to increase the number adults gaining NVQ 2 level skills.	The numbers undertaking NVQ2 courses was 73 against a target of 28. We also have eight full time apprentices and three people on a future jobs fund programme.	

#### **Aim 4: Building Healthy Communities and Supporting Older People**

Community aim ref	Ambition	Measure of success for 2010	Progress at 31 March 2010	Summary
4A	The Health and Wellbeing Partnership (HWB) will have helped to reduced health inequalities and improved the health of our communities for all age groups.	<p>HWB partnership to reduce health inequalities in Cheltenham through targeting resources to priority communities with a focus on; Healthy eating; Smoking cessation; Alcohol reduction.</p> <p>The longer-term aim is to reduce the life expectancy gap of 6 years between those living in the most deprived quintile and the least deprived.</p>	We have worked with partners to set up a new Health and Wellbeing Partnership that has developed an action plan and allocated £25k to a range of good causes. We have also worked to develop a community outreach physical activity programme and established an exercise referral scheme linked to Leisure@Cheltenham. The latest data on life expectancy shows that the gap is now 4.4 years.	
4B	We will have provided a programme of sports provision to attract and encourage broad participation in sporting and recreational activities delivered through leisure@ and through our sports development work.	To have helped partners meet the LAA targets, to increase the percentage of adults that engage in regular sport and physical activity.	<p>We have secured £72k worth of funding through CSPAN to support a wide-range of community projects including establishing a Wheelchair Football Club linked to our local football club and a project to encourage KS4 girls to participate in physical activities.</p> <p>Overall we have helped reach the LAA target; in 2007-08 this was 22.9%, in 2009-10, 24.9% of adults were engaged in regular sport and physical activity.</p>	

## Aim 5: Building Stronger Communities and supporting Housing Choice

Community aim ref	Ambition	Measure of success for 2010	Progress at 31 March 2010	Summary
5A	We will work with our partners to create an improved structure for regeneration activities that will improve financial stability, governance and service delivery in our communities.	To increase the percentage of residents in areas of multiple deprivation that are satisfied with their neighbourhoods.	The council worked in partnership to open two community resource centres, one in Oakley opened on 30 May 2008 and one in Springbank. Through the Stronger Communities Partnership we explored the opportunity to create a single regeneration company but this was not taken forward.  In terms of levels of satisfaction, the county council have carried out a survey in St. Marks and St. Pauls for the past 2 years – this shows that levels of satisfaction have <u>declined</u> in St. Marks (from 69.2% to 65.1%) but <u>increased</u> in St. Pauls (from 69.2% to 75.4%). The Cheltenham average is 84.4%.	!
5B	We will have improved our housing stock through coordinated programme of investment and maximised the freedoms and flexibilities available to our arms length management organisation (ALMO).	To have all council owned residential properties meeting the decency standard by the end of 2008-09 and to have agreed a sustainable future for our ALMO post-2010.	Cheltenham Borough Homes, the council's ALMO has completed the £63m decent homes programme for 3,000 homes, 24 months ahead of the 2010 cut-off date and the council has now agreed a new 10 year management agreement. Tenant satisfaction with their landlord has increased from 80% in 2006 to 85% in 2009.	✓
5C	We will continue to negotiate for new affordable homes through the planning system, working with other local authorities in Gloucestershire and partner landlords, to secure more affordable homes to rent and for shared ownership, to which the Council has nomination rights.	In light of the economic downturn, which has had a particularly significant impact on private house-builders, we will fall short of our target of delivering 340 affordable homes in partnership with affordable housing providers over the three years to 2010. A more realistic outcome is now forecast to be 290 affordable homes completed over the original three year business plan period.	The council has continued to enable the delivery of affordable homes by working in partnership with others and this has delivered 206 affordable homes in the three year business plan period. The delivery of affordable homes continues to be a major challenge for the council.	✗

5D	We will work in partnership to implement the successful and sustainable regeneration of the St Paul's estate in housing, social and environmental terms.	To have improved 175 homes whilst demolishing 85 homes to carry out mixed tenure redevelopment in partnership with CBH.	Although the physical regeneration work has not yet started on-site, planning permission has now been secured and in March 2010, we heard that Cheltenham Borough Homes had secured £2.5m Homes and Community Agency funding to implement phase 1 of the regeneration of St. Pauls (including providing 48 new homes and transformational improvements to the retained stock).	
5E	We will have worked in partnership to increase the number of older and vulnerable people supported to live independently at home.	To have established the baseline of the number of older and vulnerable people supported to live independently at home across all the organisation's services and then to have increased this number year on year.	Through our housing services we have provided lifeline alarms to 1,300 customers, provided grants to 144 households. Both these figures have increased since 2007-08. We have also worked to install energy efficiency measures in 788 households of which 217 were aged over 70.	
5F	We will have implemented choice based lettings to give people more choice of their housing options.	To have successfully implemented the choice based letting scheme by end 2009.	Gloucestershire Homeseeker went live in October 2009.	
5G NEW	We will work to involve local people in informing and improving the services which impact on their lives.	To increase the percentage of local people who feel that they can influence decisions in their neighbourhood.  To increase the general level of satisfaction with the neighbourhood.	NEW AMBITION – the results from the place survey show that 30.1% of residents feel that they can influence decisions in their neighbourhoods and 84.5% are satisfied with their neighbourhood. The results from the next place survey will be available in 2011.	

#### Aim 6: A focus on Children and Young People

Community aim ref	Ambition	Measure of success for 2010	Progress at 31 March 2010	Summary
6A	We will have rolled out a coordinated programme of investment into children and young people's facilities and activities across the borough.	To continue the programme of refurbishment of our sports pavilions so that more of them can be used as a base to deliver youth activities.	We have refurbished Agg Gardner Pavilion to provide a positive safe environment for 20 young people, helped to refurbish the Naunton Park pavilion and have worked with local residents to realise their ambitions to create a new young people's centre at Brizen.	

6B	Working in partnership through Children and Young People's Partnership, we will foster the talent and energy of Cheltenham's young people so that they may play a full and active part in the social, cultural and economic life of the borough.	To play an active part in the Cheltenham Young People's Partnership, and help provide leadership and resources to enable children and young people to lead healthy, prosperous, and safe lives.	The Cheltenham Children and Young People's Partnership was established and now has its own action plan and support officer. It allocated £20k of small grant money to a range of good causes.	
6C NEW	Work with partners to ensure processes are in place to fulfil the council's statutory obligations for safeguarding children.	That "safeguarding" and Common Assessment Framework (CAF) protocols are in place and working, and numbers of reported CAF cases are monitored within the Borough to ensure effective management.	NEW AMBITION – The council has agreed an updated safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy and is working through the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board to ensure that our processes are fit for purpose.	

### ***Aim 7: Investing in Environmental Quality***

Community aim ref	Ambition	Measure of success for 2010	Progress at 31 March 2010	Summary
7A	We will begin implementation of our masterplan for Civic Pride, including the introduction of improved traffic management arrangements and our desire to relocate offices.	<p>To have a detailed strategy for the removal of through-traffic from the town centre. To have commenced the detailed street and public space design process for the initial implementation phase in conjunction with our principal partners GCC.</p> <p>To have plans for one development site at an advanced stage.</p>	<p>In 2008, council agreed the urban design framework and governance structures for the project. In 2009 the civic pride advisory board was established and we are continuing to work in partnership with the county council to agree plans for traffic management.</p> <p>We recognise that as a result of the global economic downturn, much of this work will be a longer term ambition, where details of the implementation are likely to develop during the period of the Council's 2010 – 2015 corporate strategy.</p>	

7B	We will have delivered a coordinated programme of investment into our parks, gardens and green spaces and also improved their cleanliness through a more effective enforcement programme.	To have agreed our outline Green Space Strategy.  To ensure that three parks have green flag status and that we maintain our very high customer satisfaction rating.	The council's green space strategy was agreed in July 2009 and is a comprehensive strategy for the borough's green spaces that joins-up the various elements of green space provision and management with strategic land management, sustainability, biodiversity, and resilience to climate change. In October 2009, Hatherley Park, Naunton Park and Montpellier Gardens were each awarded a prestigious Green Flag Award.	
7C	We will ensure that the best possible resilience measures to future incidents of flooding are developed.	To have a clearly defined emergency response plan in place and agreed with our partners.	We have completed the actions to reduce the flood risk associated with non-enmained rivers and watercourses which has comprised around 250 separate work instructions and a total spend of around £990k.	
7D NEW	We will endeavour to improve the resilience of our natural and built environment to the impact of the changing climate through joint working on the Gloucestershire Climate Change Adaptation Project.	To have achieved Level 2 of National Indicator NI188 in line with all other Gloucestershire authorities, as set out in the Gloucestershire Local area Agreement.	NEW - We have achieved level 2 of the indicator which includes an assessment of our vulnerabilities to weather and climate, now and in the future, and the development of adaptation responses for council strategies, plans, partnerships and operations.	

### **Aim 8: Investing in Travel and Transport**

Community aim ref	Ambition	Measure of success for 2010	Progress at 31 March 2010	Summary
8A	We will ensure that the council has an effective working relationship with the county council and its contractor, Gloucestershire Highways, in terms of highway issues within the borough.	We will have developed a more effective working relationship with GCC on highways and transport related issues.	Relationship with GCC continues to improve. We have now appointed an integrated transport manager who is leading on this work.	

### **Aim 9: Investing in Arts and Culture**

Community aim ref	Ambition	Measure of success for 2010	Progress at 31 March 2010	Summary
9A	We will deliver a programme of investment into our cultural venues and develop a wide range of cultural opportunities that maximises partnership working with our fellow cultural providers.	To build a long term sustainable financial future for our cultural activities and venues.	Plans for the Art Gallery and Museum were significantly progressed in 2009-10; in terms of fund-raising, we have secured c.£4m. We have also completed the refurbishment programme of the Pittville Pump Room and Town Hall, including Drawing Room & kitchens.  We have signed up to a new management agreement with Cheltenham Festivals who increased ticket sales by over 10% last year to a new total in excess of 150,000. The value in cash and kind of our support is almost £300k pa.	
9B	We will seek to develop and improve sports facility provision through direct investment and maximising partnership working opportunities.	Leisure@ will achieve performance and business plan targets set.	Following the devastating floods in the summer of 2007, we reopened leisure@cheltenham in September 2008. The improved equipment and facilities have received positive feedback from customers and the centre has had 8,000 more customer visits than expected. Although the wide range of subsidised leisure activities have been very popular the income target for 2009-10 was missed by 2% (£33k) though footfall hit the 280,000 target.	

## **Aim 10: We will be an Excellent, Efficient and Sustainable Council**

<b>Community aim ref</b>	<b>Ambition</b>	<b>Measure of success for 2010</b>	<b>Progress at 31 March 2010</b>	<b>Summary</b>
10A	We will address the budgetary challenges in 2009-10 and beyond.	We will monitor the budgetary initiatives developed in 2008-09 and develop and implement new work streams for 2009-10 to bridge the projected gap for 2010-11 of £708,000.	Although the council was able to agree the 2010-11 budget through identifying additional income and savings worth over £1.2m, we predict having to make a further £2m worth of savings for the 2011-12 budget. The predicted gap for the next five years is estimated to be around £3.4m, assuming a 15% decrease in rate support grant.	
10B	We will have identified and implemented the best means of providing services that deliver highest performance at an affordable cost.	To have reduced the cost of service delivery by at least 3% (baseline costs) year on year without reducing service quality.	The council continues to explore a range of ways of making savings including shared services initiatives, service reviews and other ways on increasing productivity. Performance against this target is positive and is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2008-09 we achieved £916k against a target of £901k.</li> <li>In 2009-10, we achieved £968k against a target of £932k.</li> </ul>	
10C	We will have a flexible, confident, forward thinking organisation, one where we all feel we can make a difference.	To have delivered the agreed organisational development projects, and have fully implemented single status.	We have retained our Investors in People accreditation, embedded a competency framework and launched our Organisational Development Programme.  We have implemented single status, completed a flexible working pilot and rolled out further leadership development work.	
10D	We will ensure that we have effective governance arrangements in place for ourselves and our partnerships to ensure that our services provide value for money and deliver better outcomes for local people.	Ensuring that we are delivering sustainable improvements in our priority services and outcomes that are important to local people and that we have the leadership, capacity and capability we need to deliver future improvements.	We have made significant steps to improve our governance and this has been validated through external inspection that awarded us a “3” – with the conclusion that “Overall, Cheltenham Borough Council performs well. The Council delivers value for money well. It manages its performance well.”	

# Customer Relations

This section of the annual report sets out how the Council has dealt with complaints (and service improvements) including those forwarded to the Local Government Ombudsman and information requests made under the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations.

## Local Government Ombudsman – 2009/2010

Based on provisional statistics received in April 2010, in advance of our Annual Letter due in June, the Ombudsman has released decisions on 11 complaint investigations concerning Cheltenham Borough Council whereas in 2008/2009 there were only 8. Some of the 2008/2009 investigations were not decided upon until 2009/2010 and therefore form part of the 2009/2010 figures. It is important to note that out of a total of 19 decisions published for both years, only 1 complaint was upheld by the Ombudsman, and that 1 decision was only partially upheld and found no maladministration.

The summary for the three years is as follows:

- 2007/2008 10 complaints to LGO (prior to the new reporting format)
- 2008/2009 12 new complaints to LGO
- 2009/2010 7 new complaints to LGO

This is the second year the Ombudsman has adopted its new reporting format which includes not only new complaint investigations but also other forms of contact including advice given.

For 2009/2010, in addition to the 7 new complaint investigations, the Ombudsman dealt with 14 other contacts from the public which includes advice given by the new customer contact centre in Coventry making a total of 21 different contacts by the public. This is slightly less than last year, 2008/2009, when the Ombudsman dealt with a total of 22 different contacts about Cheltenham Borough Council, of which 12 were new complaint investigations so it is pleasing to see the number of new complaint investigations dropping from 12 to 7 this year.

Average response times on first enquiries to the Ombudsman

- 2005/2006 31.3 days
- 2006/2007 21.2 days
- 2007/2008 22.3 days
- 2008/2009 18.8 days
- 2009/2010 25.4 days

The Council's average response time for 2009/2010 of 25.4 days is 6.6 days higher than last year and this is likely to be due to the complexity of some of the issues being investigated.

## Complaints, comments and compliments

The Council logged a total of 196 complaints in 2009/2010 (172 at stage 1, 10 at stage 2 and 14 at stage 3) – which is 17 more complaints than last year. More detail is shown in chart 1.

Year	2008/2009	2009/2010
Stage 1 complaints	166	172
Stage 2 complaints	6	10
Stage 3 complaints	7	14
Total number of complaints for all 3 stages	179	196

The Council encourages feedback from customers and is being more proactive in ensuring that customer feedback is recorded. This is likely to result in higher complaint figures until the learning from these complaints translates into service improvements ensuring that such complaints are less likely to reoccur. As part of its wider remit, the Customer Relations team will be taking on a more active role in pro-actively seeking, analysing and reporting customer feedback, whether negative or positive, which will be combined with greater customer information and profiling to help the Council improve its services.

### **Freedom of Information requests**

The Council responded to 339 formal requests for information in 2009/2010 which is again significantly up on the previous year (an increase of 25% or 87 requests) however the previous year, 2008/2009, saw a 36% increase so there has been a smaller reduction in the rate of increase year on year. More detail is shown in chart 2.

2007/2008	155 requests
2008/2009	252 requests (up by 97 requests/36%)
2009/2010	339 requests (up by 87 requests/25%)

In 2009-10, the customer relations team now use the website to publish quarterly disclosure logs that summarise FoI requests and responses in attempt to reduce the number of new FoI requests.

**Chart 1**

<b>Summary of customer interactions logged on the corporate complaints system for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010</b>				
	Number of Stage 1 Complaints	Number of Stage 2 Complaints	Number of Stage 3 Complaints	Number of Compliments
<b>Chief Executive's Group</b>				
Policy and Performance	2	0	0	2
<b>Corporate Services</b>				
Human Resources	0	0	0	0
Customer Access and Service Transformation	14	3	3	4
Finance and asset management	1	0	0	0
Legal services	5	0	0	0
<b>Social and Community</b>				
Wellbeing and Culture	32	2	2	14
Community Services	17	1	2	2
<b>Environment</b>				
Built environment	37	3	4	27
Operations	64	1	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>54</b>

**Chart 2**

<b>Summary of Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) and Data Protection Act (DPA) requests received between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31st March 2010</b>				
	DPA	EIR	FOI	Request Total
Multiple Services	2	1	12	15
<b>Chief Executive's Group</b>				
Policy and Performance	0	1	35	36
<b>Corporate Services</b>				
Human Resources	1	0	21	22
Customer Access and Service Transformation	0	0	80	80
Finance and asset management	0	0	15	15
Legal services	0	0	18	18
<b>Social and Community</b>				
Wellbeing and Culture	0	0	12	12
Community Services	9	2	59	70
<b>Environment</b>				
Built environment	0	2	25	27
Operations	0	0	38	38
<b>Cheltenham Borough Homes</b>				
Housing	1	0	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>339</b>

\* There were an additional 28 freedom of information requests that were referred to Gloucestershire County Council