

Corporate Assessment - Self Scoring

Theme	Score	Strengths	Weaknesses
Ambitions	4	<p>Improvement (high quality) to address historical issues of chalk extraction/industrial despoliation/economic decline</p> <p>Dartford Strategy for the Year 2000 (1990), through to Kent Thameside Community Strategy April 2003.</p> <p>New Council has reviewed policies and priorities and produced draft Corporate Plan, - emphasis on Quality Services and local Communities to ensure balance with regeneration.</p> <p>Leads Community with considerable influence at County, Regional and National level, e.g. ODPM's Sustainable Communities Plan and also on local issues.</p>	<p>Impatient for success, with:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ambitions sometimes being affected by capacity; • extra effort needed to ensure other partners/stakeholders are following same programme.
Prioritisation	3	<p>Corporate Plan outlines priorities, which drive the targets for staff, Service and other Plans and Strategies.</p> <p>Formal 3 year budget setting process - review/realignment annually and staff targets to reflect priorities.</p> <p>Consultation - Broad: e.g. Community Strategy; Corporate Plan; Local Plan; - Specific:- e.g. Swanscombe Neighbourhood Renewal; Greenhithe Planning for Real exercises.</p> <p>Dartford Talking events, Forums, Dartford Talking Trailer, Borough News - outlining priorities/initiatives and seeking feedback/views.</p>	<p>Can only prioritise for activities directly under Council's control - pending completion of Community Strategy Action Plan should assist re. partners/stakeholders</p> <p>Non priorities not previously identified in a transparent way</p> <p>Consultation and Communications framework has only recently been established.</p>
Focus	2	<p>Directed through Corporate and Service Planning processes.</p> <p>Cabinet agenda structure revised to emphasis Strategy issues - also ensures focus at Cabinet Advisory Panels. Cabinet Forward Planning arrangements revised to give longer term work plan (Peer Challenge action)</p> <p>Council can still be reactive and flexible e.g. resources reallocated for focused action e.g. graffiti, Illegal Encampments works.</p> <p>Detailed Scrutiny of service standards/delivery and Overview work on policies/standards etc - O & S and BV Cttees.</p>	<p>Revised targets just flowing from the updated Corporate Plan</p> <p>Cabinet Agenda Planning arrangements not embedded</p> <p>Directors and Senior Staff drawn into service /day to day issues which will be addressed through the restructuring</p> <p>Need to ensure partners/stakeholders maintain same focus</p> <p>Location means Government initiatives and priorities can detract</p>

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Capacity	3	<p>Enthusiastic, committed and good quality staff, experienced in dealing with major development, assisted by benefits package, recruitment of graduates, with ongoing Staffing restructure.</p> <p>Appraisal scheme, training initiatives, sickness monitoring, health initiatives and development of Staff Competency scheme are proving beneficial.</p> <p>Members are dedicated and engaged with extensive induction/training. Junior Ministers to assist Portfolio Members and regular dialogue between Members, Directors and Heads of Service.</p> <p>3 year budget, with specific identified initiatives budget and reserves provide a degree of certainty and Section 106 agreements utilised.</p> <p>Extensive Partnerships working - Partnership review underway to ensure appropriate focus and utilisation of resources.</p>	<p>Demanding ambitions/agenda means:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member/Officer team working needs further enhancement. • Increased empowerment, greater flexibility and improved communications needed - specific items will be identified from staff survey and addressed by restructure - this should address blame culture <p>Engagement of back bench members needs further development</p>
Performance Management	3	<p>Performance Management/Monitoring ethos since 1990, with scheme being refocused over last two years to align with Corporate Plan and Targets. Cabinet, Portfolio Members, BV O&S Cttees and line managers monitor.</p> <p>Assessment of Strategic and Operational risks with Zurich Municipal and risk assessment built into targets, BV process for improvement plans and staff appraisal schemes.</p> <p>Debt free and Capital resources recycled, with Two Complimentary Fund Managers to ensure better returns on investment and Value for Money assessment by External Audit work and during procurement and Best Value.</p>	<p>Revised framework only operational since Oct 03, and more work needed to ensure staff are aware of wider picture - through communication arrangements</p> <p>Risk management needs to be fully embedded in processes.</p>
Achievement in quality of service	3	<p>Revenues and Benefits assessed as 2** and still improving - Benefits verification framework - high user satisfaction.</p> <p>Planning and Land assessed as 2** following BV inspection, with Public Speaking being introduced for Development Control - high user satisfaction.</p> <p>Quality development occurring through Planning Service and affordable housing provided through Planning and Housing policies with >60% of development on Brownfield sites</p> <p>All residents served by kerbside recycling and missed bins low.</p> <p>No cases of maladministration.</p>	<p>Quality services are leading to increased costs and budgetary pressures</p>

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Achievement of Improvement	3	<p>Recycling performance doubled</p> <p>Street Scenes with Deep Clean, Cubit and Graffiti action.</p> <p>Community Safety aspects with Town Centre and Rural Wardens, and PCSO's.</p> <p>Housing back in house:- revised cleaning arrangements for flatted communal areas, Joint 'Street Scenes' inspection,</p> <p>Young Persons initiatives with Dartaround travel, Playground refurbishment programme and Youth Council increasing communication linkages.</p> <p>E-service projects implemented.</p>	<p>Level of public satisfied with the Council and satisfaction with complaints handling falling, which will be improved by Contact Centre.</p> <p>Housing stock option appraisal taking longer than anticipated</p> <p>Private Sector Housing - stock requires substantial investment. There remains considerable pressure on bed & breakfast accommodation as a result of homelessness.</p>
Investment	3	<p>High levels of developer investment</p> <p>Significant Building Blocks including:-</p> <p>E-Gvnt project with CRM linking to back end and new IT systems</p> <p>ODPM vehicle;</p> <p>Improved Contract Standing Orders with greater empowerment of staff and facilitation of Partnering contracts;</p> <p>First phase of Fastrack public transport system</p> <p>Communication linkages with youth and public with 'Friends of' parks and heath.</p> <p>Significant levels of external funding</p> <p>Internal and External Challenge</p>	<p>Issues arising from Government funding:-settlements do not reflect scale and pace of regeneration; time limited funding for some initiatives</p> <p>Whilst Overview and Scrutiny has assisted in development of Council policies, the O&S role is still developing</p>
Learning	3	<p>Good use of research, internal review and implementation of change</p> <p>Use of pilots to develop initiatives</p> <p>Use of consultation and complaints</p> <p>Learning from others e.g. Visits to other authorities including Beacon Councils, on Housing, Waste, and illegal encampment issues. Resulted in change to Estate cleaning practices; adoption of blue bag recycling which was subsequently amended following experience during pilot.</p> <p>Some cross directorate working groups to share and improve arrangements in specific areas.</p> <p>Welcomes external challenge and learnt from Peer Challenge.</p>	<p>Generally concentrates on concern/failings and does not publicise achievements/success to inform residents/partners.</p> <p>No formal systems for sharing e.g. excellence groups or learning from Corporate Complaints process.</p>

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Future Plans	3	<p>Robust Corporate Planning and Performance Management Staffing restructure will enhance capacity</p> <p>Staff training and development plan being progressed following training needs analysis.</p> <p>Policy framework being updated/completed with Local Development Framework / other Regeneration and Housing Strategies/Policies ; Community Safety; Comprehensive Equality Policy</p> <p>Housing Stock Options appraisal</p> <p>E-Government plan and initiatives progressing, with planned One call one voice customer contact service.</p> <p>Continuing programme of Service Improvement:- BV Service Improvement Plans being progressed and monitored to ensure quality environment and services,</p>	<p>Scale and pace of change and Govt initiatives/priorities can have impact on achievement</p> <p>Scale and rate of change has impact on some staff's acceptance of need for change.</p> <p>IEG statement not yet compliant</p>