

Council Plan 2009-2012

Update 2011



Solihull in 2018: where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous

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About Solihull

Our Governance Arrangements

Performance and Planning Cycle

Foreword from the Leader and Chief Executive

Welcome to the 2011 update of the three year Council Plan. The Plan sets out the challenges we face and the priorities we seek to address. Following the results of the local elections in May, the Council is once again a Conservative led administration and we remain committed to promoting civic pride in the Borough as well as pursuing our Vision of making 'Solihull a place where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous'.

We remain focussed on the delivery of our Top 5 Business Critical areas of North Solihull Regeneration, Putting Solihull People First (Transforming Adult Social Care), Integrated Delivery of Children's Services, New Ways of Working (The Solihull Way) and Going Lean Faster (The Solihull Way). These top priorities are about delivering well designed cost effective services around the needs of our citizens and which also address the fundamental differences in life expectancy and life chances within our Borough.

Similarly, we have, following a detailed review, identified 11 priorities that we will focus on with our partners in the Solihull Partnership with a particular emphasis on the issues of Domestic Violence, Youth Unemployment and meeting the complex needs of certain Families who may require the services of several partner agencies.

We will also seek to expand upon successful initiatives such as the Environmental Champions that promote civic pride and responsibility through providing opportunities for people to contribute time and effort to enhancing their local environment. The Council is required to identify land to meet future housing and employment needs but we will want to ensure that the revised Local Development Framework supports sustainable and affordable development within the Borough whilst protecting the character of Solihull that people value. Similarly, in delivering the best value we can for our local taxpayers, we will continue to explore the potential benefits of shared service arrangements, building upon the success of our shared procurement arrangements with Coventry and Warwickshire and the recent shared mobile library service with Warwickshire.

We are undoubtedly in very challenging times but have set out a sound financial strategy for the next four years and we are confident that with the continued commitment, enthusiasm and innovation shown by our staff and by working alongside our partners, including the third sector, we will continue to make great progress in addressing our priorities and securing best value for our taxpayers whilst at the same time ensuring we protect and enhance the life chances of the most vulnerable members of our society.



Councillor Ken Meeson
Leader of the Council



Mark Rogers
Chief Executive

Purpose

This plan is the key direction-setting document for Solihull Council and sets out our priorities and our contribution to the improvement priorities identified by the Solihull Partnership.

The Council Plan is refreshed annually and rewritten every three years and is supported by a range of strategies and delivery plans.

The Council Plan is underpinned by the four year [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) which is designed to ensure that decisions around the allocation of resources are made in line with our priorities.

Intended Audience

The primary purpose of the Council Plan is to communicate our priorities to elected members, staff and partners. The plan allows all staff and service areas to align their personal and service objectives to those of the Council overall and to better understand how they are contributing to delivering improved outcomes for local people.

For our partners within the Solihull Partnership it clearly signals the alignment of our resources and priorities to delivering the jointly agreed outcomes for local people.

The plan may also be of interest to the public but we will utilise a number of other accessible ways to publicise our priorities and progress in support of a drive towards greater public accountability.

Our Vision

In 2009, we concluded that there was sufficient similarity with the vision statement in the Sustainable Community Strategy to adopt it as our own. This has the benefit of clearly signalling our full commitment to the Solihull Partnership and also reflecting our key community leadership and 'accountable body' responsibilities.

Our Vision

**Solihull in 2018:
where everyone has an
equal chance to be healthier,
happier, safer and prosperous.**

Key Drivers for Change

In reviewing our priorities and outcomes, we are clear about the challenges we face. The key drivers for change are:

Drivers

- Closing the gap of inequality.
- Understanding the needs of customers.
- More for less.
- Our Brand.

Closing the gap of inequality

'Closing the Gap' is about delivering faster rates of improvements between the most vulnerable and disadvantaged within the Borough and the majority.

There are big differences in the outcomes for people living in communities in our Borough. The reasons for this are well known but hard to tackle and include prosperity, lifestyle, health and education. A key ambition is to narrow this gap in life chances.

In October 2009 we were recognised for our work to ensure that local people are treated fairly when we were assessed as 'Achieving' under the national Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). This demonstrates our commitment to closing the gap of inequality in the Borough and to making sure that everyone is treated fairly. It also means that we are working to understand the needs of local residents and involving communities in the services it provides. It recognises our progress in making sure that people are treated fairly – regardless of their race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

In delivering our Top 5 priorities, the Council will ensure that 'due regard' under our Statutory Equality duty is taken account of, when determining our tactics.

Understanding the needs of customers

More and more people are coming to expect personalised services and expect us to know their needs in detail to be able to respond appropriately. We are, therefore, increasing our capacity and skills to understand the needs of all sections of the Borough.

Customers should also have easy access to information that enables them to reflect on provision and make considered choices.

This understanding of need is multi-faceted and requires reliable information in the right format and at the right time to be made readily available to those responsible for delivering integrated and cost effective services.

More for less

Local government has learned how to adapt to an ever decreasing pot of money and has earned a reputation in the public sector for being able to successfully implement efficiencies whilst minimising the impact on service delivery.

With the current economic conditions and the tightening of the public purse, we are facing the need to address a year on year reduction in income. It, therefore, requires more creative and sophisticated approaches to delivering efficiency whilst at the same time optimising the quality and effectiveness of services.

Key Drivers for Change

We have set ourselves the aim of continually improving services whilst striving for efficiency by doing 'more with less'. Inevitably, there will be some difficult decisions to make over the next couple of years as we find new ways of working smarter. We will have to give significant consideration to what range and level of services we are able to provide going forward.

Our Brand

Our Brand

- **Open**
- **Honest**
- **Approachable**
- **Keeping our promises**

Our Brand is about the way we behave as a council. It is the key to tackling with integrity the challenges that face us.

Our Brand was developed in 2005 following consultation with local people about whether they trust us to do the right things. In this consultation we found that people wanted us to be 'open, honest, approachable and keep our promises'! Our brand was born. It is the personality of the Council and we know if we behave in the right way, local people will trust us.

[View the Key Drivers on our website](#)

National and Local Policy Context

Since the local elections in May 2011 the Council is now under the control of the Conservative Group, following a year of no overall control during which the Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups formed a coalition administration.

There are a number of significant policy changes that will impact upon the Borough in the next year and the years ahead, the following are some of the more significant ones not set out in any order of priority that we will need to consider locally.

The Localism Bill was published on 13 December 2010. It includes measures to devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities more control over housing and planning decisions. The specific provisions relating to local authorities include giving councils a general power of competence; giving residents the power to instigate local referendums on local issues and veto excessive council tax increases; providing new powers to help save local facilities and services threatened with closure; and giving voluntary and community groups the right to challenge local authorities over their services. We have set up a Task and Finish Group to coordinate our response to the Bill (including government consultations), with a view to recommending an overall policy direction for the Council on the future role of the Council and Councillors.

The Local Development Framework (LDF) was introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and consists of a series of documents, known as local development documents which contain the planning policies for the Borough. The LDF will eventually replace our current development plan which is the Solihull Unitary Development Plan 2006. The LDF will contain the key policy documents that will shape the future of Solihull up to 2026. For further information, see web page on the LDF: <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/ldf/default.htm>. We will be seeking to ensure that future developments within Solihull build upon the high quality environment and addresses issues of sustainability and affordability.

The Council will be producing the LDF, the plan that will set out what Solihull will look like in the future and what kind of place it will be to live in, work in and to visit.

We are committed to working with communities to shape the vision and priorities for communities, identifying local solutions to local needs. To do this we have to understand what are the needs and aspirations of all our neighbourhoods, communities and villages. This includes looking at whether we have enough housing that young people can afford to help them stay in the area and whether we have enough specialist housing for our growing number of older people. We also need to consider local employment opportunities; whether we have the range of services and businesses in our local centres that people need and what and whether the facilities we do have are sustainable in the longer-term.

We will be exploring the issues that affect us as a Borough – housing; jobs; having vibrant local centres offering local services; leisure facilities; green space; and the needs of our local communities, as well as people moving into the Borough, including travelling communities. We will be looking at what neighbourhood planning means to us all, and how it will give the community genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places they live in; how we can make growth work for our communities and how we can meet local housing needs. One of the key issues for the LDF and Core Strategy will be meeting the future accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Solihull. We are currently working on the production of a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document which will identify sites and include planning policies and guidance against which Gypsy and Traveller development will be considered.

High Speed Two is a proposed high-speed railway between London and the Midlands, the North of England, and potentially the central belt of Scotland. The Council's Cabinet resolved to support high speed rail, in principle, recognising the need for a station to serve Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre. Solihull responded to the formal consultation and will seek to ensure that the final proposals maximise any economic benefits for Solihull whilst minimising any environmental impacts.

The Munro Review was a wide-ranging review in to frontline child protection practice launched in June 2010 and led by social policy expert Professor Eileen Munro. Its final report, 'A Child Centred System', was published on 10 May 2011. Its key recommendations are that:

- Local authorities should be given greater freedom to develop their own approaches to handling case work, rather than being bound by statutory guidance.
- Councils should develop ways of keeping experienced senior social workers in front line work so they can better supervise junior practitioners.
- The excessive burden of inspection on child protection departments should be lifted, and the inspectorate, Ofsted, should not evaluate serious case reviews into child deaths.

In respect of service to Children and Families within the Borough the Integrated Delivery of Children's Services Top 5 project will be considering the findings of the Munroe review.

The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) is a set of agreed outcome measures for demonstrating the achievements of adult social care. Nationally, the ASCOF will give an indication of the strengths of social care and its success in delivering better outcomes for people who use services. Locally, the ASCOF can be used for benchmarking and comparison between areas. However the ASCOF is not a national performance management tool and the Government will not seek to set targets or manage the performance of councils in relation to any of the measures in the framework.

In Transforming Adult Social Services, another of our Top 5 projects, a key test will be how we improve delivery against the nationally agreed outcomes during 2011/12. In the longer term, **The Dilnot Commission**, an independent commission set up by the Government in July 2010 to recommend a fair and sustainable funding system for adult social care in England, published its report 'Fairer Care Funding' on 4 July 2011. Among the recommendations in the report are:

- Individuals' lifetime contributions towards their social care costs should be capped. After the cap is reached, individuals would be eligible for full state support;

- The means-tested threshold, above which people are liable for their full care costs, should be increased from £23,250 to £100,000;
- National eligibility criteria and portable assessments should be introduced to ensure greater consistency; and
- All those who enter adulthood with a care and support need should be eligible for Free State support immediately rather than being subjected to a means test.

We will be following this debate and responding to further consultations, as like many other councils around the country, we are facing significant cost pressures in this area arising from demographic changes.

Sector Self Regulation - In addition to revised inspection frameworks by Ofsted for Children and Families services there will be a sector led self evaluation model for Adult Social Care, Taking the Lead – Sector Self Regulation is the approach that the Local Government Group has developed to self-regulation in the local government sector following the demise of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the National Indicator Set. It aims to help councils strengthen their accountability and transform the way they evaluate and improve services. We will be considering how and in what format it will want to participate in the new sector self regulation models as a valuable peer review mechanisms to assist with our own improvement activity.

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill was published on 30 November 2010. It includes provisions to make the police service more accountable to local people by replacing police authorities with directly elected police and crime commissioners and to overhaul the Licensing Act by giving more powers to local authorities, police and local communities. It is currently being scrutinised in the House of Lords. Again, we will want to ensure that any new more regional response to the organisation of police services does not weaken the effective local arrangements we have in place currently.

Local Enterprise Partnerships are locally owned partnerships between local authorities and businesses which aim to promote local economic development. These were initiated by the Government following the abolition of Regional Development Agencies. In 2010, we formed a Local Enterprise Partnership with Birmingham City. The partnership now includes four Staffordshire Districts (Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield and Tamworth) and three North Worcestershire Districts (Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forrest). Its vision is to “create and support a globally competitive knowledge economy, the natural home for Europe’s entrepreneurs and wealth creators”. It has submitted Enterprise Zone and Enterprise Belt proposals to Government, with a decision anticipated later in the year, and currently has five workstreams addressing: Funding, Planning, Economic Strategy, Communications and Business Support.

The White Paper *Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England* sets out a bold vision for a reformed public health system in which local authorities take new responsibilities for public health. Giving this role to local government opens new opportunities for community engagement and to develop holistic solutions to health and wellbeing embracing the full range of local services (e.g. health, housing, leisure, planning, transport, employment and social care).

Local authorities’ new public health responsibilities will be supported by a ring-fenced budget. Directors of Public Health will lead this work, as the principal adviser on health to the local authority; Local authorities will be supported by a new integrated public health service, Public Health England, which will drive delivery of improved outcomes in health and wellbeing and protect the population from threats to health. Public Health England will bring together in one body the diverse range of public health expertise currently distributed across the health system. There will be a stronger focus on the delivery of specific health outcomes as set out in a health outcomes framework to be published later in the year.

As we move into autumn and the new year we will ensure detailed plans are in place to underpin the transition of public health responsibilities to local authorities and the establishment of Public Health England. Both will take on their full responsibilities from April 2013.

In Solihull, it is planned that the transfer of local public health functions from Solihull Primary Care Trust (PCT) to Solihull Council, in shadow form, will take place during the autumn of 2011. This will mean that Solihull Council will be given responsibilities across three domains of public health, namely: Health Protection; Health Improvement, and; Healthcare Public Health.

A Project Board, led by Dr Stephen Munday, with senior representation from Solihull Council, Solihull PCT and the Clinical Commissioning Group, has been established to oversee the safe and timely transition of local public health provision.

Further details on the Government’s vision for public health, can be found by clicking [here](#).

Anti-Poverty Strategy: Solihull Action-Against Poverty Strategy: Against the backdrop of the economic downturn Solihull’s Action Against Poverty Strategy is being developed to tackle poverty in all its forms across all generations, we recognise that to sustain any reduction in poverty we must ensure that today’s children do not become the parents of tomorrow’s poor children.

The views of local partners, service providers and residents will be incorporated and the focus will be wider than measures of income, and instead will seek to eradicate inequalities through good education, employment, housing and health outcomes.

The 'Top 5' Business Critical Areas for the Council

The Council delivers a wide range of services that are essential to the Safety, Wellbeing and Quality of Life of local people and we will continue to deliver these services to the highest standard whilst at the same time ensure the most effective use of our resources. There are also a number of key areas where we are aiming to deliver a step change in performance and we have identified 5 of these business critical areas which we will be focussing on over the next 3 to 5 years. We believe that significant improvements in these 5 areas will have a major impact on the delivery of improved outcomes for local people.

We are reviewing all of our operations to ensure we can maximise the resource we can bring to bear on delivering our top 5 priorities.

North Solihull Regeneration

**Putting Solihull People First
(Transforming Adult Social Care)**

**Integrated Delivery of
Children's Services**

New Ways of Working

Going Lean

[View the Council's 'Top 5' Business Critical Areas on our website.](#)

North Solihull Regeneration

Background and Longer Term Vision

Initially established as a 15 year comprehensive regeneration programme to reverse the social and economic decline of North Solihull and to close the gap of inequality. A public/private sector partnership was established to prepare a strategic framework for the area and then deliver a comprehensive programme investing £1.8 billion in the following strands:

| | |
|--|--|
| More than 8,000 (4000 net) new homes | A tenure mix of 60% private, 30% social and 10% shared ownership |
| 10 New, state-of-the-art primary schools, | 5 vibrant new village centres |
| New health care facilities | New leisure facilities |
| Local environment and transport improvements | A positive change to almost 40,000 people's lives |
| Employment and training opportunities | Mixed use developments |

Other regeneration activities including; the Building Schools for the Future Programme, the new Woodlands college campus and town centre Phase 1, complemented the work of the Partnership.

In 2008/09 a review of the Strategic Framework was carried out followed by two reviews of the five year business plan to take account of changed circumstances particularly the economic downturn. The original funding model combined with the current reductions in public sector grant funding mean that the original pace and scale of change cannot now be delivered

The 'Top 5' Business Critical Areas for the Council

Funding, therefore, remains a challenging issue for the programme, with the Council and partners working to maximise resources and secure external funding to maintain momentum in the programme and bring forward key developments such as North Arran Way Village Centre. To respond to this climate, the planned programme of activity has been extended for a further 5 years, and the pace and scale of activity has been reduced.

The comprehensive regeneration of North Solihull remains a Council priority. As one of the top 5 corporate priorities it requires us to be clear about its contribution and how our resources can be better used and aligned to this priority to reinvigorate the pace and scale of change. The following strategic objectives set out the key statements of intent for the next 3-5 years, followed by the goals, tactics and impacts which are our more immediate tasks. These attempt to focus our efforts where we can achieve the greatest impact.

Our Long Term Objectives

1. Vibrant Village and Town Centres created at North Arran Way and Craig Croft by 2016, with further investment in Chelmsley Wood Town Centre.
2. A model of Integrated Facilities and Services for each village centre established, including delivery of the primary schools programme.
3. Increased Economic activity and participation and reduced rate of worklessness in top 10% Super Output areas.
4. High Quality Lifetime Neighbourhoods created with a greater mix of affordable housing choice and tenure.

Our Medium Term Goals

Our medium term goals for the next twelve months include the completion of the first phase of North Arran Way and preparation for Phase 2. We will progress our scoping and planning work for the New village Centre at Craig Croft and have an investment strategy in place for Chelmsley Wood Town Centre. We hope initial works will have commenced to build the new Bishop Wilson School and to have agreed the plan for which schools will be rebuilt, setting out location sites for new development.

Another goal is to present the preferred development option to other public sector organisations and the third sector and agreed the extent of their involvement.

Job creation, upskilling and supporting an entrepreneurial culture are other key aims for this year, securing job opportunities available to North Solihull residents through contracts for the Village Centres, schools and housing with the intention of reducing high levels of unemployment in specific areas. Improvements in Transport and accessibility to jobs and services, the provision of new homes and a wider choice of tenures, with more homes suitable for older and disabled people are other medium term goals with standards for the design of homes and neighbourhoods to be applied to all developments, maintaining the quality and improving the energy efficiency of all homes.

Our Tactics

We have identified a number of actions which will allow us to achieve these goals, which are also short term and must be achievable within the 12 month timescale. Examples include the completion of Access Routes, exploring options for the provision of health related services at North Arran Way Village Centre, securing planning permission and concluding negotiations to allow Craig Croft to commence and exploring funding options for Chelmsley Wood Town Centre. Commencing initial works on Bishop Wilson School, securing partnership agreement for remainder of Primary Schools, establishing a Village Centre sub group for and agreeing with partners the operational model for Integrated Public Service Delivery. Consulting with Community groups and identifying services for integration, securing new Inward Investment in Village Centres and Securing New business and commercial space within the master plan by March 2012.

Measuring success

The comprehensive nature of the regeneration programme means that our measures of success will vary from specific output type indicators such as numbers of new homes delivered and job opportunities created to more outcome based measures such as the extent of community involvement or service integration achieved.

The 'Top 5' Business Critical Areas for the Council

Putting Solihull People First (Transforming Adult Social Care)

The delivery of Adult Social Care returned to the Council in April 2011, with a budget deficit in the region of £5.2m. In addition, new services are being transferred to the Council from Health under Transforming Community Services.

The financial priority for Adult services is to deliver a 3 year recovery programme in the context of transforming Solihull adult social care, creating a new, higher quality care and support system, which is fair, accessible and responsive to individual user and carer-assessed need. This will be challenging given both the national and local financial constraints.

Commissioning capacity, better commissioning, market development and rigorous procurement practices are critical to delivery and to producing the required budget savings.

Our Long Term Objectives

We are committed to the Modernisation and Transformation of Adult Social Care in order to improve outcomes for Adults in Solihull and particularly those who are vulnerable and in greatest need. We have identified 3 areas for step change improvement over the next 3 years to March 2014.

1. Redesign of Assessment and Care Management through the provision of a range of services which are fit for personalisation and will meet the needs and aspirations of current and future service users.
2. The Modernisation of Provider Services through re-modelled services which will ensure people are supported to take greater responsibility for their own health and well being, to exercise choice and control and to gain efficient access to an increased range of high quality personalised services.
3. The Integration of Commissioning, Contracts and Performance functions including partnership working to ensure the efficient, effective use of resources within the limits of available budgets.

We will also proactively ensure that a preventative ethos dominates the culture of all parties, including the contributions of public, independent and third sector agencies with reablement as the core activity before any intervention.

Our Medium Term Goals

Our medium term goals for the next twelve months in respect of Adult Social Care include a Review of Residential Services. The redesign of the Assessment and Care Management function so that we can deliver an efficient, effective, Social Work service. We are aiming for all eligible people to be on a personal budget whilst working hard to deliver the required budget savings. We hope to establish a voluntary organisation within Greenacres Day Centre to support the development of a User Led Organisation in the borough and we will be developing our workforce plans to increase support capacity, productivity and competence.

All this is supported by a reablement service to ensure all service users are considered for this option at point of entry into Adult Social Care.

Our Tactics

We have identified a number of actions which will allow us to achieve these goals. Completion of draft structures for Assessment and Care Management provider Services. Reviewing all existing Service Users and using outcomes of surveys to improve access to universal services including transport, leisure, housing, education and community safety. We will be looking to shape the local market to ensure sustainable and affordable services are in place to support independent living, choice and control and developing the reablement service to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The forthcoming return of the Public Health Function to the Local Authority presents an exciting opportunity to more fully integrate our approach to a range of public health issues in order to maximise our impact on tackling Health inequalities.

Measuring success

Our measures of success will range from delivering our budget savings to 100% of users on a personal budget to visible remodelled service with reablement at its core.

The 'Top 5' Business Critical Areas for the Council

Integrated Delivery of Children's Services

As a Council we are relentless in our focus on getting the best outcomes for children and young people in Solihull, particularly those who are vulnerable or underachieving. The safety, health and wellbeing of all children in Solihull remains our priority.

Our Long Term Objectives

We have identified three areas for 'step change' improvement over the next 3 years to March 2014:

1. An issue tackled early is less likely to become an intractable problem later. Early intervention improves the lives of children and young people and saves money. The Council will strengthen the availability and range of evidence based early intervention services. This approach will reduce the demand for specialist and emergency services and keep children safer.
2. A strong, supportive extended family and community is key to achieving better outcomes for children and young people. The Council will support children, young people, families and communities to identify and act on their needs, concerns, ideas and aspirations and strengthen their own capacity to tackle the problems they face.
3. Children and young people who are unable to live with their own family benefit from retaining a strong connection to their local community including school, extended family and friends. The Council will develop more local family based placements' and reduce the cost of externally commissioned placements'.

Schools, early years settings and other learning providers are the universal services at the heart of the community - working collaboratively, in partnership with the local authority, public services, other agencies and organisations - providing high quality education and services to effectively meet the needs and aspirations of children, families and the community.

In keeping with the new national priority to focus attention and investment on the most disadvantaged, we will review spending and activity in the borough. There will be changes to some services that we commission for children and families, including scaling back some provision to enable targeted spend on those most in need.

Our Medium Term Goals

Our medium term goals include all schools involved in a community collaborative with explicit links to children's centre and other providers and improved educational achievement and attainment across all key stages for Children and Young People. An increase in the number of children and young people helped by evidence based early intervention services and an increase in the number of commissioning decisions informed by the views of children, young people and parents. We also aim to have fewer Looked after Children in externally commissioned placements by March 2012.

Our Tactics

The identified activities to achieve these goals include developing community collaboratives of schools and the redesign of Council support services to schools. Implementing revised school improvement plans and developing a Solihull Schools Guarantee. Establishing an early intervention baseline for 2010/11 and profile for 2012/14 and remodelling the children's (and adults) commissioning function/approach. Conducting early intervention value for money reviews and wider service reviews. Confirm the transition pathways from children's to adults services, including for young carers, young offenders, disabled young people and Looked after Children. Drafting a strategy for securing community led commissioning and voluntary action and strengthening involvement in user groups, including the Young People's Network, Parents Forum, Parent Councils and Solihull Children with Additional Needs (CAN).

The 'Top 5' Business Critical Areas for the Council

Measuring Success

We will know that we have been successful in achieving our medium term goals through all schools being involved to some degree in community collaboratives.

Gaps in educational attainment narrowed, the Schools building programme delivered to schedule, an increase in the number of children and young people helped by evidence based early interventions and a reduction in placement costs including a reduction in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) operating costs.

New Ways of Working

Our Long Term Objectives

The overall aim of this project is to ensure that we get the most out of our office and other accommodation in terms of efficiency effectiveness and service delivery. Specifically:

1. Ensure the four key office locations of Solihull Town Centre, Blue Bell Centre Chelmsley Wood, North Arran Way and Craig Croft are completed in line with the approved corporate accommodation strategy to ensure good access to and provision of services and to support the economy and regeneration programme.
2. The creation of a public sector hub in new accommodation within Solihull Town Centre to achieve significant reductions in accommodation costs and to provide comprehensive and coordinated public services to local residents
3. Improve the usage of office space and reduce the capital costs, running costs and carbon usage so that by March 2016 total office space, costs and carbon usage have reduced by 30% of August 2011 levels.
4. By March 2015, ensure the implementation of shared facilities and asset management services with Coventry and Warwickshire Councils.

Our Medium Term Goals

Our Medium Term goals are to agree the preferred development option for Solihull Town Centre which will propose the new office accommodation for the Council and make provision for a public sector hub, involving other public sector organisations and the third sector and agreeing the extent of their involvement.

As construction of new Council office accommodation at North Arran Way Village Centre and Craig Croft begins, we will ensure all are designed in accordance with corporately agreed occupancy densities of 7:10 and that all office moves within existing offices are carried out in accordance with these corporately agreed densities. This will be with the aim of identifying Poplar Road as potential disposal value.

We will be looking to agree our Green Travel Plan to support the implementation of the Council's accommodation strategy for the four office locations in order to support employees travel and day to day working alongside identifying the proportion of the Council's workforce who could work from home in order to determine what contribution home working can make.

Finally we will be looking to agree the level of involvement and expected benefits from 5 areas of shared service, based on a sub-regional business case produced by Deloitte.

Our Tactics

To achieve our Medium Term goals we have identified a number of actions which include securing Funding for North Arran Way and Craig Croft. Designing Craig Croft and North Arran Way in accordance with corporately agreed occupancy densities and creating a standard design/layout model for both existing Council Office accommodation and new offices. We will continue to develop a Master plan for Solihull Town Centre to include a proposal for new Council office accommodation and options for shared services and we will also develop a Green Travel Plan.

The 'Top 5' Business Critical Areas for the Council

Measuring Success

We will measure the success of this work by:

1. Looking for an increase in the proportion of staff that are employed from communities local to our office provision.
2. Measuring progress to achieving an overall 7 to 10 ratio of workstations to staff.
3. See a reduction in the Council's Carbon footprint.
4. Reducing the overall public sector spend on facilities management and premises costs.
5. Increased use of Council facilities by other public sector partners and the voluntary sector.

Going Lean

Adopting the Lean methodology is a way for the organisation to improve, reduce waste and become more successful. The approaches of Lean will help us to deliver more for less and we will be working towards the whole organisation adopting and implementing lean principles. At its most basic, this is about the elimination of waste and focusing on activities that add value to the customer.

These include improvements in customer waiting times, service performance, processing times; generating a better understanding of all processes; more joined-up working; improved use of performance data; increased staff satisfaction and confidence and embedding a continuous improvement culture.

Our Lean work plan will consist of deep reviews and a continuing programme of wide awareness raising, to spread and embed the principles of lean working.

As Lean projects are completed and process capability improves, customers will experience an improvement in the services they receive and employees will learn new skills and improve performance and efficiency.

All of our staff will be responsible for improving processes and the customer experience, whilst at the same time rigorously challenging any activities that do not add value. Our Managers will also receive training to support staff in understanding and implementing Lean principles.

While the customer is very much the focus of Lean, employees who have the skills, knowledge and mind-set to be able to understand and improve value creating processes will, as an outcome, improve the customers' experience.

It is our ambition that a culture of Lean working will reside in our workforce, specifically with the people who serve customers day in day out, using simple techniques to create brilliant processes on behalf of customers. It will be about creating a culture of continuous questioning and reflecting, always challenging ourselves. 'How can we make it even better?'

- Going lean will increase the scale and pace of our already successful lean transformation work. It aims to deliver a significant proportion of the required savings through service transformation.
- We expect to deliver ongoing savings in the order of £2.3 million per annum through an intensive programme of lean reviews and these forecast savings have been built in our Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011/12-2014/15.

Our Long Term Objective

The long term objective of this project is to ensure that Solihull is a "lean" organisation.

A lean organisation is one that puts its customers first, is committed to continuous improvements, eliminates waste and maximises the use of its financial resources

The 'Top 5' Business Critical Areas for the Council

Our Medium Term Goals

1. To ensure that the whole organisation has a basic awareness of lean tools and principles.
2. To undertake a programme of deep reviews to generate cashable efficiencies and improved customer service.
3. To cascade the skills and techniques of lean through the organisation to enable us to grow our capability to go lean faster

Our Tactics

1. To create a "lean office" which will act as the base and focal point for lean reviews and training.
2. Deliver a programme of reviews to a new 6 week standard for each review.
3. To create a rolling programme of "learning through doing", which means more and more staff will have the opportunity to experience and participate in lean reviews and in turn then be supported to take the lean principles back to their team and/or work place.
4. Create and implement a master schedule of reviews.

Measuring Success

We will measure our success through:

1. Maintaining progress against the master schedule of reviews.
2. Achieving cashable savings of at least £2.3 million by April 2012.
3. Increasing the number of staff that have actively experienced and participated in a lean review.

Solihull Partnership Priorities

Solihull Council is a key member of the Solihull Partnership. Following a detailed review of a range of initiatives, the Solihull Partnership has identified 11 key priorities which support our vision for an equal chance for all in Solihull.

1. Economic Growth;
2. Worklessness;
3. Alignment of 14-19 Education Strategy to Future Jobs and Skills Needs;
4. Housing Stress;
5. Engaged, Involved and Inclusive Communities;
6. Volunteering;
7. Fear of Crime and Anti Social Behaviour;
8. Keeping Children Safe from Harm;
9. Best Start in Life for Children;
10. Ill Health Prevention; and
11. Substance Misuse (Drugs and Alcohol).

The prioritisation process recognised that these priorities require a multi-agency response to make a significant improvement in narrowing inequalities experienced by some people living in Solihull. All priorities have undergone an assessment against fair treatment and sustainability to proactively promote a positive contribution to equality, diversity and the environment through reducing carbon and responding to climate change.

The Partnership has agreed to have a particular focus on youth unemployment, domestic violence and families facing multiple problems who may be in need of services from a number of partner agencies.

The Partnership will be drawing up commissioning plans to address these priorities. For further information on the Solihull Partnership, please see:

<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/solihullpartnership/default.htm>

Our Financial Priorities

Our financial context

As already set out, we are faced with a range of significant pressures on its finances over the medium term. This is the result of several factors:

- Downward pressure on the funding available through government grant, a 25% reduction over the next two years;
- Limited scope to increase council tax;
- Demand for, and cost of, key services (for instance due to demographic pressures in social care);
- Changing expectations from government and the public on the level of service (for example in response to high-profile child protection cases); and
- New government initiatives or legislation which can increase pressure on existing budgets.

We have established a sound 4 year financial strategy. The main objectives for the strategy are;

- To provide a stable financial base from which to deliver our priorities.
- To move us forward towards a more strategic longer-term approach to delivering our revenue and capital plans; and
- To set a sound financial planning framework to underpin the effective financial management of the Council.

The key approaches to address our financial challenges the medium term are:

- Aligning resources to key service priorities;
- Improving efficiency and value for money;
- Exploiting shared service and partnership opportunities; and
- Identifying and optimising income opportunities.

Aligning resources to key service priorities

In the light of future financial constraints, it has become even more important that we move towards a genuine alignment of increasingly limited revenue and capital resources with key policy priorities. This will involve us focussing more clearly on core services and priorities, whilst making some difficult decisions to reduce or cease activity in other areas.

Improving efficiency and value for money

Savings facilitated by the corporate procurement service through the review and renegotiation of contracts will continue to contribute to the corporate savings target as will the joint procurement work with Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council which seeks to benefit all three authorities through greater economies of scale.

The Council remains committed to meeting the standards of service that it is statutorily required to provide and where it is possible and appropriate to improve these standards. At the same time it will be necessary to challenge all areas to justify the continued provision of discretionary elements of services. This may mean reducing the amount of activity undertaken in some areas or even stopping some services altogether. For those services that the Council continues to deliver there will always be a need to increase both value for money and the effectiveness of delivery.

Exploiting shared service and partnership opportunities

Some of the most successful local authorities are the ones that are able to work in innovative ways to maximise the availability of resources to deliver services. This may involve attracting external funding but it also involves delivering services in ways that move away from traditional service delivery methods. There is now a pressing financial imperative for Solihull to increase the degree to which it explores and takes advantage of different approaches to service delivery in order to optimise the volume and quality of service that can be delivered.

Over the medium term the Council will be looking to increase its participation in shared services and commercial strategic partnering arrangements, whilst encouraging greater involvement of community and voluntary sector partners within the borough.

There is a strong emphasis already in place on working sub-regionally, with Coventry and Warwickshire Councils, for example on waste management and procurement, whilst more recently we have formed a Local Enterprise Partnership with Birmingham City, Tamworth, Bromsgrove, Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire and Lichfield Councils.

A public sector summit has established a collective agreement to work sub-regionally where appropriate and this was followed by the agreement of a statement of principles for collaboration between public sector bodies, which include the following:

- We do what is best done at the right level, i.e. local, sub-regional or regional;
- We commit ourselves to do those things at a sub-regional level which make sense at that level; and
- We want to look at savings against the overall “public purse”, i.e. costs for the sub-regions as a whole.

We will need to sustain and build upon the success that it has already achieved to deliver priorities through shared services and partnership working. A significant proportion of our activities are now partly or wholly delivered through partner organisations, including leisure centre provision, waste, environment services, highway maintenance and social housing. Future funding pressures and the need to continue to improve value for money will require the transformation of further areas of service delivery.

We provide financial support to a number of organisations in the form of direct funding, either via a grant or on a more contractual basis. In these circumstances it is likely that even where we maintain a constant policy commitment to supporting these organisations, the amount of support provided may need to be reviewed, for instance, by passing on an expectation of efficiency savings or when re-commissioning provision.

For other organisations, the impact of policy changes that the Council may make may impact upon other major bodies within the borough. In both sets of circumstances, such decisions need to be open and transparent and communicated clearly with the bodies affected.

Identifying and optimising income opportunities

Under the corporate fees and charges framework, the Council’s fees and charges are reviewed each year as part of the budget process as one of the ways of reducing overall costs. Some of the factors that will need to be taken into account when making charging decisions are:

- whether the service is statutory; any legal restrictions on charging and the service’s contributions to the Council’s outcomes;
- the objectives of the service (especially where they incorporate competing priorities such as cost recovery versus a primary service objective or competing public service benefit);
- existing levels of competition and demand;
- benchmarking;

- stakeholder and user information, and
- any financial analysis of the impact of charging decisions.

The Council initially worked with PricewaterhouseCoopers on the Revenue Income Optimisation (RIO) project to review the Council's fees and charges and identify opportunities for income growth. This project identified £229,000 of additional income in 2010/11. For 2011/12 the Council continued with this approach and the proposals arising from the review are included in the budget forecasts for 2011/12.

Over the medium term, the financial strategy will require that, as a general rule, fees and charges increase at least in line with inflation, but the financial pressures or other service requirements we face may mean that consideration is given to increasing the real financial contribution made from some fees and charges by raising them beyond the rate of inflation after taking into account all relevant circumstances.

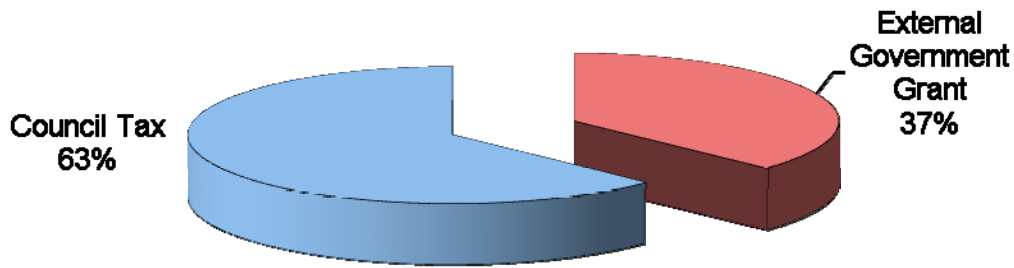
Solihull receives the second lowest government grant per head whilst our Council Tax levels are amongst the lowest for metropolitan authorities and our benchmarking data shows that we have one of the lowest staffing levels in the country. We contend that the government grant formulae inadequately reflect the social and economic disparity between the north and south of the Borough, with the affluence of the south masking the deprivation in the north.

Our financial plans means we intend to spend in the region of £585m on service for our customer over the next four years (see Council Medium Term Financial Strategy for further information <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/democracy/financialdocuments.htm>).

The figures below for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/12 are indicative figures and are dependent upon the Autumn Comprehensive Spending Review.

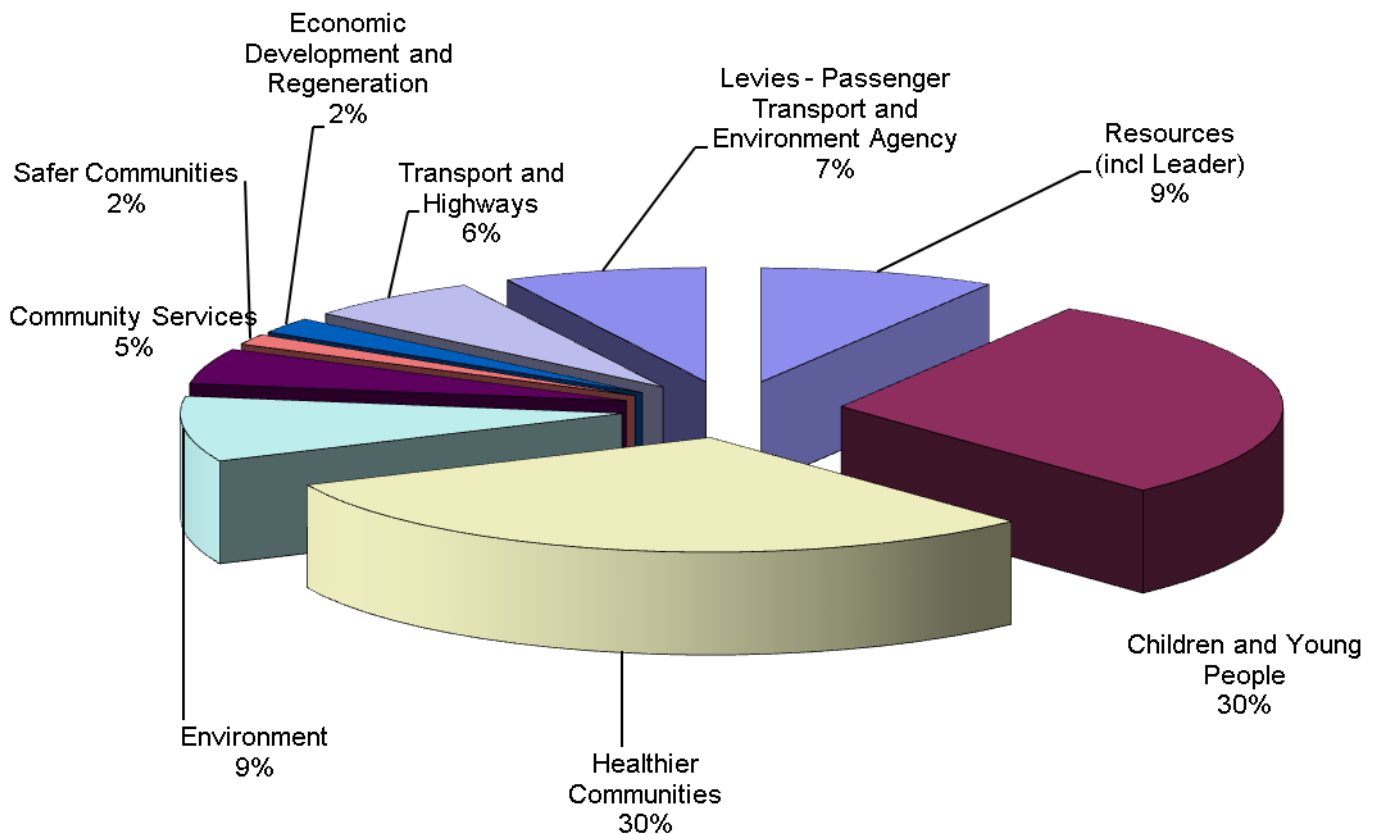
| Budget for the financial Year | £ Millions |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| 2011/12 | 148.1 |
| 2012/13 | 144.4 |
| 2013/14 | 146.4 |
| 2014/15 | 146.0 |

Where the money comes from



As part of the budget setting process for 2011/12, local people were given the opportunity to identify those budgets which they would focus on to achieve savings and, conversely, which areas they would want to see protected. The results of this survey are shown on page 12 of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Budget 2011/12 - How the money is spent



Further Information

Further key information about Solihull can be found listed on the website:

- [About Solihull](#)
- [Our Governance Arrangements](#)
- [Performance and Planning Cycle](#)

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