

North East Derbyshire District Council

Council

13 July 2015

Annual Report 2015

**Report No GBXR/09/15-16/JF of Councillor G Baxter MBE Leader & Portfolio Holder
with Responsibility for Building a Better Council**

This report is public.

Purpose of the Report

- To present to Members performance against the Corporate Plan 2011/2015-16, as well as a summary of other achievements for 2014/15 and the councils spending against the 2014/15 proposed financial budget.

1 Report Details

- 1.1 Attached (see **Appendix 1**) is the proposed content of the Annual Report 2015. The document is currently being designed for electronic publication which will be available to the public later in July 2015.
- 1.2 The document sets out the final years achievements against the Council's Corporate Plan 2011/2015-16 'Shaping the Future'. Since the publication of 'Shaping the Future' a number of major changes within local government have had an impact on the extent that the priorities and ambitions identified could be achieved. In some cases this has substantially inhibited the ability to fully achieve key objectives, mainly through the loss of grants and funding streams, reduced budgets and changes to central government policies. It has therefore been determined that the current Corporate Plan is no longer relevant through to 2016 and has been subjected to a comprehensive review. The new Corporate Plan has been developed in conjunction with the recently adopted Growth Strategy, which will focus on attracting business and residential development to the district. In addition a Transformation Programme has been developed to introduce new methods of working to provide efficiencies and improved service delivery.
- 1.3 The document also provides a summary of other notable achievements during 2014/15, which do not necessarily link directly to the original Corporate Plan but have contributed to the overall direction of the Council.
- 1.4 Included within the document is a summary of the Council's finances which are managed through its Medium Term Financial Plan which is updated annually and regularly monitored during the financial year. The Medium Term Financial Plan provides a clear overview of the Council's overall financial position and is closely linked to the Council's Corporate Plan, as well as Service Plans. This helps to

ensure that the Council's budgets are targeted at delivering agreed objectives and service priorities. The information within the Annual Report shows the Councils spending for 2014/15 against the approved budget and projected for 2015/16.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The production of the Annual Report is in line with the Budget and Policy Framework.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 Consultation on the original Corporate Plan was extensive. No consultation on the outcomes of the performance targets is required.
- 3.2 Equality and diversity were considered as part of the original Corporate Plan. No Equality Impact Assessment is required on the outcomes of the performance targets.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The Council has a duty to publish its performance against targets and financial information each year. The production of a report offers the best option to achieve this duty.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 Finance is detailed within the report. There are no risk implications involved as this is a review of the previous years performance.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 The Council has a duty to publish its performance and financial information each year. There are no data protection issues.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 There are no Human Resources Implications associated with the Annual Report.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Council receives and approves the Annual Report 2015 prior to design and publication by the end of July.

7 Decision Information

Is the decision a Key Decision? (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No
District Wards Affected	
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	Budget and Policy Framework

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Annual Report 2015
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Detail of performance within the PERFORM management system. Medium Term Financial Plan.	
Report Author	Contact Number
Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement	Ext 7029

NEDDC ANNUAL REPORT 2015

(Pre-design version)

Foreword

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2014/15.

The main part of the report is split into the three areas of the Corporate Plan – People, Place and Organisation – and as you read through it you will see what we have achieved over the last financial year and the type of schemes we have invested money into for the benefit of you, our local communities.

Times continue to be tough financially for everyone and we have worked hard to balance our budget and deliver the necessary savings. Despite these challenges we have remained committed to delivering front line services and have maintained good levels of performance over the past year. However, we know we have areas where we need to improve and these will be addressed within our new Corporate Plan.

We have made progress to regenerate the District and continue to strive to improve our towns and villages for the benefit of local residents and businesses. We continue to invest in our leisure facilities which provide a wide range of activities and help promote healthy lifestyles. We also continue to actively encourage visitors to our area to boost the local economy.

We remain committed to eliminating environmental problems such as fly-tipping, dog fouling and litter and have continued to promote and educate people on the benefits of recycling. We have, and continue to, invest in housing as we see this as an area that will help shape the future of the District and its long term prosperity.

As an organisation we are always striving to provide value for money excellent services and as part of this we are continually looking at how we can improve our services through transformation, streamlining or through our procurement arrangements.

We continue to work with Bolsover District Council as part of our Strategic Alliance. The partnership was formed largely in response to the reduction in the Government funding available to local councils over the years ahead. But by working more closely together we aim to share costs, saving enough money to help maintain quality services for local people and keep Council Tax bills as low as possible.

We hope this annual report helps you understand how and why we carry out the work that we do with our focus on improving the District to make it an even better place to live, work play and visit. We always welcome feedback, so if you have any comments please do not hesitate to contact us.

Councillor Graham Baxter MBE,
Leader, North East Derbyshire District Council

Wes Lumley
Chief Executive

Section 1 - Making a Difference

Our vision for North East Derbyshire is that it will be a place that is clean and attractive, a place where people are proud to live, where they prosper and are safe, happy and healthy.

To deliver our vision we aimed to make a difference by building thriving communities through partnership, community leadership and excellent service delivery.

We have worked to the following values that underpin every area of our work:

- We are honest, open and accountable
- We value peoples' differences and we will treat everyone fairly and with respect
- We listen, involve and respond to all our communities.

Our vision is delivered through the Corporate Plan which identifies the priorities that will make a difference to our local communities. The Council's Corporate Plan 2011/16 was developed following a major piece of community based research entitled 'Shaping the Future'. These priorities were originally developed following extensive research carried out under the 'Shaping the Future' initiative during 2009/10. The research and subsequent findings were based on a comprehensive range of local, regional and national demographic projects and statistical research.

Since the publication of 'Shaping the Future' a number of major changes within local government have had an impact on the extent that the priorities and ambitions identified could be achieved. In some cases this has substantially inhibited the ability to fully achieve key objectives, mainly through the loss of grants and funding streams, reduced budgets and changes to central government policies. It has therefore been determined that the current Corporate Plan is no longer relevant through to 2016 and has been subjected to a comprehensive review. The new Corporate Plan has been developed in conjunction with the recently adopted Growth Strategy, which will focus on attracting business and residential development to the district. In addition a Transformation Programme has been developed to introduce new methods of working to provide efficiencies and improved service delivery.

Formal approval of the revised Corporate Plan is to take place in July 2015 following the elections.

Section 2 - Corporate Plan 2011 - 2015/16 Progress

This will be the final review of progress against the current Corporate Plan 2011-2015/16, which is reported against the three priority headings of People, Place and Organisation and corresponding five Strategic Objectives. These are listed below together with an assessment of progress and examples of achievements made during 2014/15.

People

Create jobs, build skills, and attract investment

The Council has a good record helping unemployed residents into work through the Working Communities Project. The project provides a wide range of free help and advice on an individual basis that includes:

- One-to-one support to find suitable employment
- Confidential support to develop a realistic personal plan that help people get a job
- Help with the job search, using computers, writing a CV, completing an application form and attending interviews
- Advice on how a job will affect benefits, plus help with tax credits, training needs for a job and travel costs
- Financial support to cover travel costs, childcare costs and other expenses associated with gaining employment.

During the course of the year our team of advisors provided assistance to 67 residents through a range of pre-employment activities. These activities aim to provide skills and competencies that will help individuals to confidently enter the job market, particularly for those who have endured long periods of unemployment. The Working Communities Project continues to be successful, having found employment for 82 previously unemployed residents.

In addition to this during 2014/15 we engaged with over 300 businesses either on a one-to-one basis or through a series of events such as Meet the Buyer Days that encourage investment and growth within the business and commercial sector.

The Council has been involved in the Ambition Sheffield City Region (SCR) project. This is a two year pilot employment support programme for 18 – 24 year old Job Seekers Allowance claimants who are 3 month plus unemployed. Individuals who can be identified as having been persistently or long term NEET (not in education, employment or training) and who can be predicted to become long term unemployed can also be referred onto the programme. All referrals are via the Department of Work and Pensions. This pilot programme is being funded via monies obtained through the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership from the Youth Contract underspend and started to be delivered in January 2015. The programme is being delivered by North East Derbyshire District Council on behalf of Bassetlaw District Council, Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council. As a result of this project young people have their own holistic Individual Development Plan which will have been developed with them to identify their long term career aspiration and short term milestones. The young person receives 1-1 support and is supported by their own Key Worker for their length of time with Ambition to include an 8 week work placement and 6 month in work support and encouragement to progress in employment. In addition to the

Key Workers, there is additional specialist advice to include financial and debt advice, health and housing.

Following the 2007-2013 Bolsover North East Derbyshire (BNED) LEADER Approach programme which was recognised as one of the most successful in the country, the Council led on the development of the a new Local Development Strategy (LDS) to cover 2015-2020. Informed through extensive consultation with local stakeholders including businesses, farmers, community groups and local authorities, the revised LDS was submitted on 5th September 2014. Defra confirmed initial approval of the 2014-2020 programme on 27th November 2014, announcing on 27th February 2015 Defra that €1.713m (equating to around £1.370m) had been allocated to the area. The programme is expected to start in the Autumn 2015 once the national operating guidance is launched.

To supplement the BNED LEADER Approach, the Council approved in early 2015 the establishment in March 2015 the establishment of the Pilot North East Derbyshire Business Growth Fund, which will grant £40,000 over 24 months to areas not eligible for BNED LEADER Approach funding (due to a falling outside of the DEFRA designated rural areas). The fund will commence in tandem with the BNED LEADER Approach.

Improve People's Health

Our Leisure Service helps raise the level of participation in sport, leisure, active recreation and cultural activity offering quality leisure and cultural facilities and services that are equally accessible to all, encouraging the achievement of personal goals and positively drives forward the health and social fabric of our communities. The service is instrumental in the delivery of a number of Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan targets. Against a backdrop of pronounced health inequalities, with particular challenges in relation to obesity and cardiac problems, our Leisure provision is key to engaging residents of all ages to get fitter, more active, live healthier lifestyles and reduce health inequalities.

Our Leisure Services represents a large front-line of Council delivery, a front-line associated with positive experiences of active participation, learning, discovering, relaxing and having fun. Leisure Services help us create a positive perception of the place we live in, helping us attract and retain talented individuals and business investment.

In delivering the service, the Council works hand in hand with other local organisations to help get residents fit and healthy. In particular, we focus on helping vulnerable people, tackling obesity and providing opportunities for disabled people to get involved in sport and recreation. Our service is delivered through our sports centres at Dronfield, Eckington and Clay Cross as well as through a range of outreach sessions and programmes throughout the district and in the local communities. The Leisure service has increased attendance in physical activity by over 70,000 visits per year over the last 3 years raising the overall attendance in NEDDC leisure and cultural activity to almost ¾ million visits per year. Also the latest published statistics from Sport England show that 23.3% of the adult population in North East Derbyshire participate in sport and active recreation for at least 30 minutes on at least 12 days over a 4 week period. This compares to 25.7% nationally, 25.3% within the East midlands and 24.7% in Derbyshire.

The current economic climate has seen Financial Inclusion remain a major focus of the Council, which has dedicated a range of support for both direct interventions as well as

contributing to the development and embedding of the Anti-Poverty Strategy for Derbyshire.

In addition to ongoing support at the Board of Chesterfield & North East Derbyshire Credit Union, the Council committed to provide financial support of £3,000 per year for three years to facilitate their move to high street premises in Chesterfield Town Centre. This has helped to raise both the profile and accessibility of the Credit Union to members from North East Derbyshire District and Chesterfield Borough. This raised profile and other proactive signposting has helped to increase membership of the successful Family Loans Scheme significantly throughout the year, which is an instant loan of up to £500 for families and individuals in receipt of Child Benefit, commencing following an initial grant of £25,000 from both NEDDC and Chesterfield Borough Council in late 2012. The popularity of the scheme and excellent repayment levels means that it is expected that by mid 2015 CNEDCU will have made loans totalling £1,000,000 to local families.

The Council maintained its annual voluntary-community sector grant contribution to local advice and infrastructure development bodies, allocating £131,312 to groups who primarily provide debt, housing, legal and consumer advice. In turn this helps to maintain financial independence and support to over 13,000 vulnerable and disadvantaged households within the district. A further £3,286 was allocated to 21 older people's and luncheon clubs, helping to maintain social inclusion for many people who live across the district.

Focus was provided to support the Armed Forces community within the district. As well as participating in the Community Covenant Grant Panel for Derbyshire, a joint project with Bolsover District Council and partners to and raising the awareness of the local support services available to veterans and their families, which includes employment, volunteering and housing support as well as financial assistance. The Council also participated in the Armed Forces Community Hub operating from the Proact Stadium in Chesterfield and developed by the Department for Work and Pensions, where veterans could meet with a range of service providers under one roof to receive a range of support and information.

Place

Look after the Environment

Over the past year we have undertaken over 30 cracking crime events all over the district, during these events we have provided reassurance to the public on the area and how safe this is, we have provided practical hardware for people who have a fear of crime, such as window alarms, Burglar alarms, and personal attack alarms. We have undertaken, in partnership with the Police and Rykneld Homes, door knocks to areas where we deem people are vulnerable, again we have provided practical support and advice for people with a genuine fear of crime.

We have introduced two Community Safety Information Pillars, one in the north (Killamarsh) and one in the south (Clay Cross). These Pillars are designed to be informative and give people information about their area and what is topical currently as well as practical information on how to keep people, their belongings and home safe.

In order to target 'hot spots' we have marked over 20 allotments within the district due to a spike in shed breaks at allotments and provided other shed security where appropriate, This was overt marking and was well received by all allotment holders. We have undertake door knocks for car crime, this has been to highlight the issues our District has had as well

as alert people to locking their cars and removing all valuables from sight. We have also done this with vans on our District that have been targeted for theft of tools.

Community Safety has continue to work with the Extreme Wheels Road show, this has, over the past year worked successfully in Killamarsh and Pilsley and is just about to head to North Wingfield where we have had a spike in ASB from young people. Football sessions in Dronfield and Tupton have been funded and funding for grass roots youth clubs in small villages such as Holmegate.

Our Streetscene services cleanse roads, footpaths, car parks and other public areas to keep our district clean and healthy. We are proud of the area that we serve and we work hard at keeping the district clean, tidy and attractive. Whilst we have adopted a rigorous cleansing schedule, there have been times when some aspects of cleanliness have fallen short of the high standards that we set ourselves. Influencing factors around this have been issues attributed to prevailing weather conditions; for example warmer temperatures in the early part of winter resulting in continued weed growth on highways and footways. Also, excessive rainfall in early summer prevented weed control applications and contributed to higher levels of silt and detritus accumulation on the roadside; likewise, heavy snow and ice in late winter contributed also. Despite not achieving all of our targets this year, our street cleansing teams continue to remove litter, detritus, weeds and dog fouling on Council land and the public highway.

The Council is committed to making sure that development preserves the nature of the district and is for the benefit of the local economy and community alike. During the year we have prepared a revised Local Plan, with public consultation taking place during the early part of 2015. It is anticipated that the plan will be published during October 2015 and adopted within the following 12 months.

During 2014/15 our success rate for removal of abandoned vehicles by the end of the next working day (from the point at which the authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle) was 100%. This we believe demonstrates our commitment to looking after our environment.

The Council promotes ways to be more 'green' and environmentally friendly and has encouraged residents and businesses to recycle waste and other materials. From the end of May 2014 new recycling arrangements were introduced to enable the cooked food waste to be disposed of within an organic waste receptacle. This allows households to dispose of their cooked and raw waste in an eco-friendly way, rather than it being sent to landfill via black bins.

Our combined target for waste diverted for recycling and composting this year was 47%. To facilitate resident recycling and composting, the Council has established a '3 bin system (Black, Burgundy and Green) enabling the recycling of a wide range of items and composting of organic materials. During this year, our residents have recycled and composted 45% of their household waste which ranks the Council at around the median when compared to other waste collection authorities. We have achieved our EU target to recycle 45% of household by 2015 and anticipate achieving our target to recycle at least 50% of all household waste before the deadline date of 2020.

During the year Environmental Health have continued to work closely with Street Scene to ensure that enforcement, education and cleansing of fly tipping, litter and dog fouling is coordinated so as to be as effective as possible. A number of educational initiatives have

been organised across the District to raise public awareness of the impact that fly tipping, dog fouling and littering has on others and the environment. All incidents are investigated where evidence of the offenders may be identified and CCTV is deployed in fly tipping hotspots across the District. This proactive action by the Council has resulted in the public reporting more incidents to the Council. Other actions that the Council takes to deal with Dog Fouling include proactive patrolling of area on foot and in vehicles; wearing of high visibility tabards stating 'Dog Fouling Patrol'; PR events promoting responsible dog ownership and offering free microchipping; issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices; following up of intelligence received re alleged offences; giving out of free poop scoop bags; spray signs on pavements 'Pick up or Pay up'; putting up signage on street furniture, i.e. lamp posts; talks to schools / groups on responsible dog ownership and leaflet drops in problem areas warning of dog fouling patrols.

Environmental Health has responded to approximately 9000 service requests across the joint service for Bolsover and North East with a wide range of service requests from support and advice to local food businesses to complaints about barking dogs. Of these 9000 there have been 456 responses to planning applications, 744 complaints about noise, and we have responded to 590 stray dogs.

The Planning Service has introduced new document management software to improve the labelling of documents accompanying the planning applications. This has enabled the public, the applicant and consultees to more readily identify relevant plans and documents. This makes it easier to make a comment on, or monitor the actual development. We will be continuing to support updates in the software to further improve the customer experience. The team continue to work to exceed Government targets on applications, particularly on major housing and employment developments, to meet the need for new houses and new jobs. Some large and significant new housing development has been approved across the District including the application for the redevelopment of The Avenue for 469 new homes, in addition to a primary school and community facilities. This has been allied with a push to improve the design quality of new housing schemes following the adoption of a new housing layout and design guide produced in conjunction with three neighbouring authorities. The guide sets out the appropriate approach to design so that schemes have a better fit in their locality and can achieve compliance with the Building for Life criteria.

The Local Plan (Part 1) is being prepared in line with the Council's adopted timetable. Public consultation on the Draft Plan and a schedule of potential sites took place during February/March 2015. The consultation attracted around 400 visitors to the 9 public drop-in sessions that took place across the District, with in excess of 1000 comments being formally submitted. Further consultation is planned during 2015 working towards final adoption of the Plan by the end of 2016.

In February 2015 Cabinet approved a Neighbourhood Planning Protocol outlining the level of support Parish and Town Councils can expect from the District Council with respect to the various aspects of neighbourhood planning introduced by the Localism Act. Parishes in the district are also starting to consider preparing Neighbourhood Plans for their local areas. The first part of this process is to seek formal designation of a neighbourhood area. At 31st March 2015 the Parishes of Ashover, Holymoorside & Walton and Wingerworth had received approval of their requests for formal designation of a Neighbourhood Area, indicating their intentions to start to develop neighbourhood plans for their areas.

Increase Housing Choice

During the year the Council approved its first Housing and Economic Development Strategy for 2015 - 2020. The Strategy is driven by both the Council's Growth agenda and also the growth agendas of D2N2 and Sheffield City Region LEPs and the Combined Authorities for Derbyshire and Sheffield City Region. The key housing objectives within the Strategy have been identified to drive housing growth including more affordable and appropriate housing to meet current and future needs and demands.

The housing stock owned by the Council is managed by Rykneld Homes who allocate council housing using the Choice Based Lettings scheme, Choice Move. Rykneld Homes has now achieved registered provider status which has enabled them to build 20 new council houses in 2014/15.

The Council's Housing Strategy and Enabling Team is responsible for a range of strategic housing functions including working with key partners to enable new affordable housing development in the district to meet identified needs and demands. Working with Rykneld Homes on Council owned sites and local housing associations on private sites we enabled the development of 161 new affordable homes including 3 mortgage rescues and 3 empty properties brought back into use for affordable housing. We have a healthy pipeline of 192 affordable homes currently under construction including wheelchair standard family homes and extra care provision. We also have ambitious targets moving forward.

The Council has recently appointed an Empty Properties Officer to identify and enable both commercial and residential empty properties to be brought back into use as affordable housing. The Housing Strategy and Enabling Team have worked with neighbouring Authorities across Derbyshire to procure additional funding for homelessness prevention initiatives. Including the recent successful bid for DCLG single homelessness funding to work with 16 – 24 year olds across North Derbyshire to meet the housing needs and link young people into employment and training initiatives.

The Council's Housing Options Team offers advice to prevent homelessness. The team successfully dealt with 100% of homeless cases within the 33 day target during the financial year. The number of households living in temporary accommodation was 65, which was below the original target of 80. With the average length of days stay in temporary accommodation at 46, significantly below the target of 64.

During the year our Environmental Health team have successfully offered assistance to 114 households to address affordable warmth issues against a planned target of 100. Environmental Health is also responsible for delivering Disabled Facilities Grants which provide our disabled residents with adaptations to allow them to live independently within their own home. Environmental Health has delivered 43 grants in North East Derbyshire for disabled adaptations to residents in private sector housing.

Organisation

High Performing Council

Over the last few years the Council has focused on delivering high quality services and improving the way we work whilst at the same time making substantial efficiency savings, largely in response to the government's austerity measures. We have a robust governance framework in place that reports regularly to elected members and senior officers to monitor progress against our aims, ambitions and priorities. This framework also incorporates elements of financial, risk, and complaints information as well as a range of other issues that measure and assess our overall corporate health.

The Customer Service team received 63,960 calls and successfully answered 59,936 calls, 95% of which were dealt with at the first point of contact, 92% of those calls were answered within 20 seconds but with an average wait time of 31 seconds. A total of 6,172 customers visiting the Saltergate office and 3,089 electronic queries were also successfully dealt with by the team providing the highest standard of customer service.

The % of incoming telephone calls for the rest of the Council answered within 25 seconds came in at 95% against a target of 80% which well exceeds the target. Average waiting times though have dipped to around 31 seconds. Abandonment rate on calls have also peaked due to higher service demand. Work will continue to address these issues to ensure customers are provided with the highest standard of service.

During the year the Council worked with Bolsover District Council to review its complaints policy and processes. As a result a new Compliments/Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedure were introduced at the end of the financial year. The purpose was to provide a clear and transparent process for customers wishing to compliment the Council or complain about services they have received. A new customer information system has also been implemented within the Contact Centre service to improve customer service. This system is also being developed as self service on the Councils website to improve access.

The Council has continued to issue the News to residents and businesses in the district and provide a wealth of information on our website and through the Contact Centre service. We have continued to promote our services through social media such as Twitter and Facebook where appropriate. A new Advertising and Sponsorship Policy was also agreed detailing our terms and conditions for accepting funding from external suppliers. The policy sets out our definitions of 'advertising' and 'sponsorship', and the terms upon which these opportunities will be sought and accepted. Development on this has continued throughout the year and will progress into 2015/16 through a 'media pack' promoting our opportunities, such as roundabout sponsorship for example.

In respect to Benefits the Council has met its target for processing new benefit claims within 20 days. The average number of days to process change in circumstances to benefits claim was also well within target at 6.3 days average against a target of 9 days. The % of Council Tax collected for 201/15 is on target this year at 97% as is the % of NNDR collected from businesses at 97%. Average waiting times on the telephone for Revenues were also well within target and calls answered within 25 seconds were just on target.

The Planning Department have successfully dealt with household planning applications this year. Against a 65% target 79% have been dealt with within the target of 8 weeks. The % of major planning applications processed within 13 weeks is below target at 40%. As is the % of minor planning applications processed within 8 weeks which was 50% against a target of 60%.

Value for money and efficiency has continued to be important to the Council. During 2014/15 the Council introduced a Transformation programme to drive efficiency and savings through change. This was to support the requirement for the authority to achieve a financially sustainable position whilst minimising the impact of the comprehensive spending review on front line services. A programme of projects has been delivered during the year which include; investment in a new customer information system within the Contact Centre, a new financial management system, a review of ICT systems to identify savings, various service reviews resulting in savings, increased income through revenue streams and the development of new strategies/policies to progress improvements.

As part of the Transformation programme Leisure Services had aspirations to improve services but also of generating further savings of over £70k to add to the previous recent year's savings of £541k. However unfortunately Dronfield Sports Centre had to close its swimming pools and changing facilities during early December due to necessary refurbishment works, with the facility re-opening in April 2015, having suffered over four months of closure. During this time the Council projected both a direct loss of income due to the loss of business in the pool and associated areas, along with a reduction in business elsewhere in the facility as a knock on effect due to the loss of changing facilities and gym memberships being cancelled. The predicted revenue loss was over £100,000, rather than the £70k improved business. Thankfully, the reality, due to the efforts of the leisure team, the loss was approximately half that figure. Further to this due to the efforts of both the team on site at Dronfield and the improved performance of our other facilities, the actual out turn position was just £17k worse than the previous year.

The Council aims to pay 98% of all invoices within 30 days. Due to a radical overhaul of our procurement and payment systems this year we have experienced a dip in our usual performance with an achievement rate of 95%. The new system will though improve the payment systems substantially in order to attain future targets.

The Council through the Derbyshire Partnership has continued to use the E-recruit system – shared with the majority of Councils within Derbyshire – enabling our job roles to be advertised widely throughout the local region at a reduced cost and helping local people seek local jobs with the Council. We have also continued to offer work experience/job shadowing which helps provide practical experience to support people to find jobs/careers.

Our commitment to the Investors in People principles and accreditation has continued– this helps ensure we effectively develop and consult with our employees to ensure improved service delivery. To help enhance performance we pool expertise across both Councils and are working towards developing shared policies where appropriate to improve efficiency.

The Council is providing ongoing support to the Danesmoor Pilot Area of the Derbyshire Thriving Families Project, an ambitious multi-partner programme to create innovative, integrated services that significantly improve outcomes for families in Derbyshire. The project aims to find out more about the challenges faced by families and communities, and how local services and resources can better meet their needs in the future. The work in

Danesmoor during 2014/15 includes training officers to lead ethnographic studies by undertaking 'day in the life research' with families and collating resources and service mapping. The work will progress during 2015 and inform a report which will identify opportunities for best practice in local service delivery.

Section 3 - Other Achievements during 2014/15

As well as our achievements against the Corporate Plan our staff have been working hard on a range of other initiatives and developments. These include:

- Our Community Safety Team were given a new re-deployable CCTV camera kit to help address continued incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- Youngsters in Killamarsh enjoyed action-packed evenings of entertainment, when our Extreme Wheels Roadshow rolled into town. The free events, organised by the North East Derbyshire Community Safety Partnership, took place throughout April and May 2014 at the skate park at Killamarsh Leisure Centre. Youngsters were able to try their hand at a number of fun-packed activities including BMX and scooter riding.
- The fitness suites at both Dronfield Sports Centre and Eckington Swimming Pool underwent a major refurbishment and now use the latest Pulse Fitness equipment and technology. The fitness suites are split into zoned areas where users can train using a wide range of cardio, resistance and strength machines plus dedicated areas for free weights and general fitness.
- It is almost three years since the gym at Sharley Park Leisure Centre underwent a £250,000 state-of-the-art revamp. Since that time, membership levels have rocketed, from 180 gym members per month before the refurbishment, to nearly 700 new visitors taking advantage of the new facilities every month.
- Overall membership figures at our leisure facilities have increased by 31% since the previous year having now exceeded the landmark figure of 2,300. We have invested £500k into refurbishing our fitness suites over the past 14-months and our philosophy of 'invest to earn' is paying off.
- The swimming pool at Dronfield Sports Centre closed temporarily in December 2014 to allow essential improvements to be undertaken. This investment has seen works such as new pool liners in each pool, improved steps, underwater LED lighting, new windows, upgraded changing room areas with improved drainage, new shower facilities and separate air handling temperature systems. The centre is now fully open.
- Building work started in March 2014 on 25 new homes in Grassmoor replacing nine prefabricated council bungalows. The development, which is being managed through a partnership arrangement between the Council and Rykneld Homes, is made up of 15 two bedroom bungalows and 10 semidetached two storey houses (four two-bedroom and six three-bedroom dwellings) on land off Keats Way, Scott Close and Westhill Lane. The first tenants moved into their new homes in October 2014.

- The Chairman's Annual Charity fund raising events have made a huge contribution to local communities. Last year £11,000 was raised for 'Fairplay' through the Annual Civic Service, Brass Band Concerts, plant sales, raffles, abseiling, Football Tournament and an auction.
- The Trusteel regeneration works on more than 200 properties in Holmgate, Wingerworth and Grassmoor were completed. The works included the structural repairs to the steel framework and the external insulation and render as well as new windows and external doors, guttering, soffits and fascias.
- Tenants at our sheltered flats complex in Clay Cross are benefiting from an innovative new heating system. Rykneld Homes has worked in partnership with the government's Affordable Warmth Solutions scheme to help fund a heating replacement programme to the 30 flats at Marx Court, that could save around 60% on overall heating costs for the building.
- Two new bungalows with a range of innovative features have been built in Calow, thanks to a joint project between ourselves and Groundwork (Creswell, Ashfield and Mansfield). Both have been built to the Lifetime Homes Standard, which means they are accessible, flexible and sustainable - making it easier for occupiers to live independently.
- Council flats in Dronfield have been transformed into modern, energy efficient homes thanks to a £4.5m improvement programme. Internal and external improvement works have now been completed on the 70 flats at Stonelow Green. In partnership with our housing management company, Rykneld Homes, we led the scheme on the five blocks of flats as part of our long-term plan to regenerate housing across the District. Stonelow Green flats were in need of refurbishment and modernisation to secure their long term future.
- The Avenue Area Strategic Framework was shortlisted for the Planning Awards 2014, in the category of 'Award for Strategic Planning'. It was one of six councils in the country to be acknowledged for best practice in the field of strategic planning. The transformation of the Avenue from a derelict and polluted coking plant into a new community that will provide a range of homes, a school and job opportunities for local people has been an ambitious plan for the Council for the last 20 years, which is finally coming to fruition.
- Eckington Town Centre has been given a regeneration boost after approval for a new Aldi store to be built in the town was granted. The Council's Planning Committee gave approval for the former Northgate Information Solutions building on Littlemoor Road to be demolished and a new 1,788m² supermarket be built with associated parking to accommodate 89 vehicles.
- The Council approved plans to move our main administrative headquarters from Saltergate to Mill Lane, Wingerworth. The purchase of the former Coal Products Limited (CPL) office block and land on Mill Lane was completed back in November 2013. Since that time a programme of works to remediate and clear the site has been ongoing which, when completed, will enable the remaining land to be redeveloped along with the wider Avenue regeneration project. As a part of the proposed relocation to Mill Lane, Wingerworth the Council's Saltergate offices were put up for sale in August 2014 and have attracted a number of interested parties.

- In February 2015 the £1m+ Grassland Hasmoor...Big Local initiative was formally approved by the Local Trust, who oversee the national Big Local programme on behalf of the National Lottery. The funding is to be used by local residents over the next 10 years to make the communities of Grassmoor and Hasland even better places to live. Facilitated by the Partnerships Team, a community-led Partnership Board has been established along with a Big Local Plan which outlines priorities and projects. Other successes within the year include the organisation of well attended public meetings such as the June Grassmoor Fun Day on 7th June, the November Launchpad event and several project Working Groups, as well as the recruitment of three workers responsible for the day to day running of the programme, who will be based in Grassmoor.

- A top award went to the Council and Rykneld Homes for work with tenants and residents on a multi-million pound scheme to build new homes after being named Gold Winners in the Community Relations Category of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) PRride Awards. This is for the work of the Regeneration and Communication Teams on the project to build 129 new homes in Eckington and Killamarsh. In making the award, the CIPR said: "This is true community relations covering a sensitive and emotive topic. A first class plan that involved stakeholders across all areas from an early stage."

- Having effective information technology across the Council is extremely important. The internal annual ICT user survey demonstrated high levels of overall satisfaction with the ICT service with figures between 88 and 93 percent across partners. Particularly pleasing was the significant rise in satisfaction at NEDDC. An action plan based on the survey results and comments has been developed and approved by user groups and management. A number of major projects were delivered during the year including the completion of the Windows 7 rollout across over 900 desktops and laptops; this was completed on time and within budget. ICT

Section 4 - Council Finances

The Council's finances are managed through its Medium Term Financial Plan which is updated annually and regularly monitored during the financial year. The plan provides a clear overview of the Council's overall financial position and is closely linked to the Council's Corporate Plan, as well as Service Plans. This helps to ensure that the Council's budgets are targeted at delivering agreed objectives and service priorities. The following table shows the councils spending for 2014/15 against the approved budget and projected for 2015/16;

NEDDC GENERAL FUND SUMMARY	Approved Budget 2014/15 (£,000)	Actual 2014/15 (£,000)	Budget 2015/16 (£,000)
Growth Directorate	3,094	2,765	3,202
Operations Directorate	6,289	5,506	6,136
Transformation Directorate	3,037	2,851	2,476
Bad Debt Provisions	40	56	40
Recharges to Capital and HRA	(528)	(528)	(528)
Provision for Pay Award	118	0	0
Savings Programme	0	0	(500)
Net Cost of Services	12,050	10,650	10,826
Investment Properties	(396)	(429)	(347)
Interest Charges	133	110	134
Debt Repayment - MRP	256	256	256
Sub Total	12,043	10,587	10,869
Appropriations to Reserves	332	1,633	45
Appropriations from Reserves	(1,331)	(1,294)	(13)
Transfer to General Fund Balance	0	259	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	11,044	11,185	10,901
Precepts and Levies	2,780	2,780	2,832
Parish Council Tax Support Grant	348	348	313
TOTAL SPENDING REQUIREMENT	14,172	14,313	14,046

The Council has taken the decision to freeze our part of the Council Tax as part of the Council's plans to help local people. The freeze, which was agreed at a Council meeting in March 2014, means that there was no increase in NEDDC's share of the bill for 2014/15 and so helps hard-pressed families already struggling with the rising cost of living.

Section 5 - Consultation and Public Feedback

We regularly consult with residents and business on a range of issues to ensure that their views and opinions are taken into account by the elected members and officers who make decisions on behalf of the council. Topics that have been subjected to consultation during 2014/15 include Leisure Centre opening hours, Council payment methods, and the Economic Development and Housing Strategy.

In November 2014 we carried out a consultation exercise with our Citizens Panel that sought views on the proposed Corporate Plan for 2015/19. This exercise also included a number of questions related to the district and how well the Council performs and the level of service provided. The results of the latter part of the consultation brief are provided below with comparative results from previous similar exercises.

Resident satisfaction regarding services provided by the council and the local area	NEDDC			General Trend
	2014	2012	2011	
Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the Council runs things?	80	81	70	↔
To what extent do you agree that the Council provides value for money?	61	63	57	↔
Overall, how well informed do you think the Council keeps residents about the services it provides?	80	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall, how well informed do you feel about our delivery standards	71	58	49	↑
Overall, how well informed do you feel about our performance	70	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall, how well informed do you feel about how to make a complaint	67	55	47	↑
Overall, how well informed do you feel about how to give your views	71	51	42	↑
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with parks and open spaces within the district?	75	71	68	↑
Overall, how satisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?	89	93	89	↔

The comparative trend shows an improvement over time for the large the majority of issues. It is pleasing to note that the current level of satisfaction with 'the way the Council runs things' has shown an increase of around 15% since 2011. Other significant increases are based around how well residents feel informed about a number of key issues.

Section 6 - Further Information

For further information on this Annual Report please contact:

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