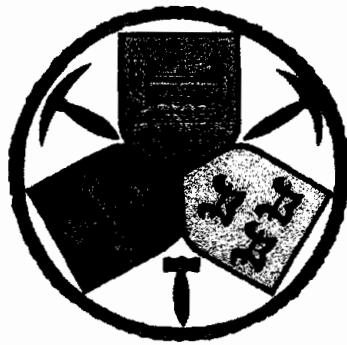


# **SHILDON TOWN COUNCIL**



# **PERFORMANCE PLAN 2004**

## Index

	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	1
Statement of responsibility	1
Response to previous audit and inspection report	2
Corporate aims and objectives	3
Review programme	4
Direct works	5/6
Civic hall	7
Central services	8/9
Hackworth park	10
Financial information	11
Conclusion	12
Appendix 1	Democratic structure
Appendix 2	Organisational structure
Appendix 3	Elected representatives for Shildon

## Introduction

The Local Government Act 1999 placed, with effect from April 2000, a duty of best value on local authorities.

Parish and Town Councils with a budget in excess of £500,000 are subject to best value and therefore, since April 2000, Shildon Town Council has been required to satisfy the duty of best value.

Meeting this duty requires a best value authority to consult local people, review all of its functions periodically, measure its performance and produce a performance plan which will be audited by an independent auditor. They are required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way they exercise their functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The central purpose of best value is to make a real and positive difference to the services which local people receive from their authority and consequently the engagement all elected members is pivotal. Elected members need to be involved not only in the processes associated with best value but in owning the outcomes which the processes are designed to deliver.

This is the fourth Performance Plan published by the Town Council but it is important however to recognise that the Plan is not an end in its own right. It is simply a means to an end and is less important than either the planning process which underlies it or the planned improvements that result.

## Statement of Responsibility

Shildon Town Council is responsible for the preparation of this Performance Plan and for the information and assessments set out in it and the assumptions and estimates on which they are based. The Council is also responsible for setting in place appropriate performance management and internal control systems from which the information and assessments included in the Performance Plan have been derived. The Council is satisfied that the information and assessments included in the Plan are in all material respects accurate and complete and that the Plan is realistic and achievable.

## Response to previous audit and inspection report

Whilst the Audit Commission determined that the 2003 Performance Plan met all of the statutory requirements a number of recommendations were made in order to improve the Plan in certain areas.

The recommendations and the response of the Town Council are detailed below.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
The Council should consider changing the format of the BVPP so that each Best Value Review area has a separate section, detailing outcomes, targets and relevant performance indicators	To be provided for in the 2004 Performance Plan
The Council should continue to seek ways to compare its performance with similar Town Councils	Ongoing
The BVPP should state the reasoning behind the Council's choice of Best Value Reviews	To be provided for in the 2004 Performance Plan
The Council should include a brief description of the Best Value process within the BVPP	To be provided for in the 2004 Performance Plan
The Council should introduce a system of post-implementation review to assess the impact of completed reviews and give brief details of it within the BVPP	Whilst the Council has no formal process of post-implementation review such a review is seen as being part of the normal day-to-day management function
The Council would benefit from producing a standard methodology document for conducting the Best Value Review process	Draft Best Value Reviews will be presented to the Best Value Standing Committee with an explanation to allow Members to take a value judgement on the document and its policies
The Council should ensure that it produces action plans with clear measures for its Best Value Reviews and reviews them formally on at least a six month basis	The Town Clerk will document the way in which the phase 3 Best value Review will be written and its progress assessed

## Corporate aims and objectives

As part of the Performance Plan compliance checklist the Audit Commission is required to determine whether or not the summary of the Council's strategic objectives and priorities for improvement are drawn from its overall vision and corporate planning process.

The view of the Commission was that the overall vision is unclear as at present each service has a separate strategy and structure and it is intended to draw these together to create an overall vision as part of the review of Central Services.

Notwithstanding the above it is clear that the Town Council has a primary aim, together with others, to improve the quality of life for the people of and visitors to the town.

The Council also has a commitment to strive for continuous improvement in the level of services provided and believes in a basic principle that outcome is more important than process.

Whilst these sit comfortably with the principles of Best Value it is acknowledged above that greater clarity needs to be introduced and this will be progressed during this year.

## Review programme

Best Value authorities are required to periodically review all of the services they provide. The purpose of the reviews are to consider new approaches to service delivery and to set performance targets that will deliver continuous improvement. In reviewing its functions an authority is required to

- Challenge why, how and by whom a service is being provided
- Secure comparison with the performance of others across a range of relevant indicators, taking into account the views of both service users and potential suppliers
- Consult local people and key partners in the setting of priorities and performance targets
- Use fair and open competition wherever practicable as a means of securing efficient and effective services

For the purpose of determining its review programme the Town Council split it's services into the three logical areas:

- Direct works
- Civic hall
- Central services

The Direct works and the Civic hall reviews were undertaken in 2001/02 with the Central services review being scheduled for 2003/04. This review has not yet been undertaken as a consequence of a new Council being elected, the imminent retirement of the Town Clerk and a determination that the attainment of Quality Town Council status was to be a priority. Consequently this review will be rescheduled to be undertaken following the attainment of the Quality status.

## Direct Works

As has been referred to above the Best Value review of Direct Works was undertaken in 2001/02.

A number of recommendations flowed from the review following which their implementation has been monitored and details of the achievements to date are provided below.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Achievement</b>
Improvements in working practice at Hackworth Park following completion	This is an ongoing process as the redevelopment of the Park continues. However a member of staff is now based permanently on site.
Inspection of trees on land in ownership of Town Council in October each year	This has been introduced.
Improved standards of litter collection	Litter is collected every day on Town Council land and dog litter bins have been introduced in Hackworth Park.
Edging of grassed verges in parks and open spaces in Feb/Mar each year	This has been introduced.
Annual programme of weed killer on paths, pavements and roadways	This has been introduced for paths and pavements for which the Town Council is responsible.
Consider introduction of Crab style grave digging equipment	Ongoing - this will require further consideration when the extended cemetery area needs to be utilised.
Review range of public seats provided	A regular replacement policy has been introduced and all seats in Hackworth Park will be replaced in the next phase of the redevelopment.
Identify demand for new bus shelters and locations	A partial replacement programme has been introduced.

Recommendation	Achievement
Introduce pre-planned maintenance inspections for all public buildings owned by the Town Council	An annual inspection programme has been introduced.
Christmas decorations extended to the top of Redworth Road	This has been introduced.

The performance targets for 2004 are:

- To continue to review working practice at Hackworth Park as the redevelopment continues
- To continue to maintain and improve the appearance of roundabouts on approaches to the town with floral displays
- To provide all employees with a mobile phone to aid both responsiveness and personal security
- To continue to preserve a multi-skilled workforce and working practice

Limited performance indicators are currently available but it is intended to develop suitable indicators for each area of direct works activity during this year. However note must also be taken of the continuing difficulty in providing appropriate comparative data.

## Civic Hall

As has been referred to above the Best Value review of the Civic Hall was undertaken in 2001/02.

A number of recommendations flowed from the review following which their implementation has been monitored and details of the achievements to date are provided below.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Achievement</b>
Ensure all steps are taken to improve the trading position	Supplies have been subjected to competitive tender and a reduction in the cost of supplies has been achieved  Negotiations with the brewery have resulted in a reduced cost to the Town Council for the purchase of beer stocks and a system of free flow has been introduced to reduce line cleaning  Redecoration and the replacement of restaurant lighting has been undertaken to increase the attractiveness of the facility
Implement a continuous programme of repair and maintenance to the building	Implemented

The performance targets for 2004 are:

- To continue to improve the trading position of the Civic Hall
- To conduct a survey of customer satisfaction for users of the Civic Hall

Limited performance indicators are currently available but it is intended to develop suitable indicators for each area of direct works activity during this year. However note must also be taken of the continuing difficulty in providing appropriate comparative data.

## Central Services

As has been referred to above the review of Central Services has not been undertaken to date for a variety of reasons and will be rescheduled following the attainment of Quality Status.

Notwithstanding the above a number of notable improvements have been introduced to enable the administration of the Town Council to be undertaken more efficiently, effectively and economically as follows:

- A new computerised accounting system has been introduced to improve the standard of financial information produced and to aid the earlier closure of the final accounts
- The annual statement of accounts for 2003/04 will be completed, and approved by the Finance Committee, by the end of June 2004
- An external verifier has been appointed to undertake the duties of an internal auditor following recommendations from the Audit Commission

A number of performance targets have been developed for 2004:

- The attainment of Quality Status
- The reintroduction of a full-time Town Clerk
- The final accounts for 2003/04 will be approved before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2004
- The introduction of e-mail facilities throughout the Council Offices
- The review and revision of the Town Council web-site
- To continue to promote outdoor events at a reasonable cost including Fun Day and Christmas Procession and Craft Fair
- To continue in multi-agency initiatives to combat anti-social behaviour and crime in the town
- To continue to offer grant aid to local organisations
- To continue to part fund the Citizens Advice Bureau, Community Safety Officer and Shildon Centre

Limited performance indicators are currently available but it is intended to develop suitable indicators for each area of direct works activity during this year. However note must also be taken of the continuing difficulty in providing appropriate comparative data.

There are however a number of corporate performance indicators which have been maintained and monitored for a number of years and latest performance is detailed below:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Actual 2002/03</b>	<b>Actual 2003/04</b>	<b>Target 2004/05</b>
Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	98	98	98
Percentage of senior management posts held by women	40	40	
Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness	3.11	3.57	3.00
Early retirements excluding ill-health as a percentage of the total workforce	Nil	Nil	-
Ill health retirements as a percentage of the total workforce	Nil	Nil	-
Number of staff declaring that they meet the DDA disability definition as a percentage of the total workforce	2.5	2.5	-

## Hackworth Park

Three years ago the Town Council was successful in obtaining grant aid of £352,800 and £247,541 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Single Regeneration Budget respectively to support the redevelopment of Hackworth Park. The Town Council committed a further £290,000 to ensure the full redevelopment could be successfully completed.

The enclosure of the Park with walls, railings and gates, the restoration of the bandstand and the water fountain, and the renewal of the statue of Timothy Hackworth on a refurbished original base have all been completed.

The Rest House is being restored and it is expected that this will be completed by the early summer of 2004 following which only works on the internal infrastructure of the Park will need to be completed. This will involve the renewal of the footpaths, provision of seats, lighting, litter bins and ballstop fencing and certain landscaping works. It is anticipated that the redevelopment will be fully completed by the Autumn of 2004.

The Rest House is being restored to the original design criteria and will be used for its original purpose which was to provide education and community support to the local people. It is hoped that the 'Friends of Hackworth Park' which is a collective of local organisations will provide a management role for the facility and of the Park itself.

In addition the Town Council has invested in the provision of a public convenience within the Rest House and consequently has avoided the need to refurbish the toilet block at Central Parade which has now been demolished. A new bus shelter has also been provided.

Resources have also been provided for the furnishing of the Rest House.

The performance targets for the completion of the Hackworth Park redevelopment for 2004 are:

- Complete the redevelopment of Hackworth Park
- Access funding and, if successful, introduce CCTV into the redeveloped Park
- Develop, with Surestart, a play area for children aged 5 and under
- Introduce a Parkwatch scheme to help to protect the redeveloped Park
- To develop the 'Friends of Hackworth Park' group to help to manage the Rest House and to provide feedback on the usage of and improvements to the Park

## Financial Information

The Town Council has approved a budget of £593,882 for 2004/05 which represents an increase of £38,092 or 6.9% over 2003/04. This represents a Band D council tax of £213.78 which is an increase of £12.26 or 6.1%.

Details of the budget are as follows:

	£
Administration	191,924
Parks and Open Spaces	147,260
Cemetery	41,549
Highways	5,366
Footway Lighting	1,225
Public Conveniences	6,692
Coarse Fishing	85
Allotments	(381)
Civic Hall	47,553
Gardens Guild	(876)
Skill Centre	(1,372)
Section 137	13,395
Recreation	12,660
Town Centre Redevelopment	9,150
Building Repair and Maintenance	15,950
Loans and Leases	100,892
Miscellaneous	2,810
	-----
Precept 2004/05	593,882
	-----

The budget can be analysed on a subjective basis as follows:

	£
Employees	421,072
Premises	92,604
Transport	9,280
Supplies and Services	243,982
Capital Charges	100,892
Contingency	150
	-----
	867,980
Less Income	274,098
	-----
Precept 2004/05	593.882
	-----

## Conclusion

This year promises to be one of some considerable challenge but also considerable opportunity for the Town Council.

The commitment to seek the attainment of Quality Status will, if successful, enable the Council to consider with the Borough Council which services could be appropriate for delivery by the local Council so that they become more responsive to the needs of the local community.

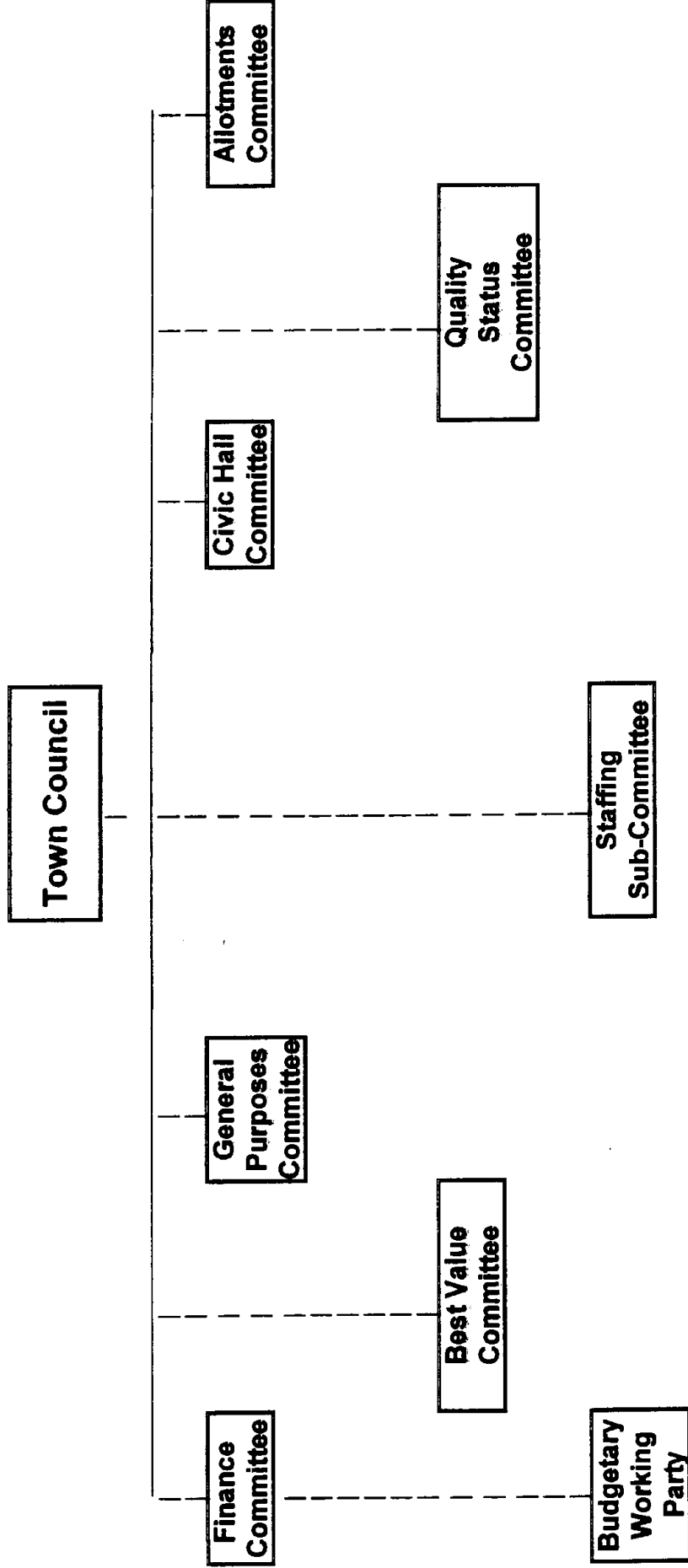
The spectre of local government reorganisation again looms large subject to the outcome of the ballot on the Regional Assembly and if larger unitary authorities are subsequently created then in the future the Town Council should have an even more important role to play in ensuring the services delivered locally are relevant to the needs of the community. The attainment of Quality Status will serve to demonstrate that the Council is more than up to that specific challenge.

Finally the opening of Locomotion in September represents a real challenge to the Council and the community in order to ensure that real economic benefit accrues as a consequence of this development.

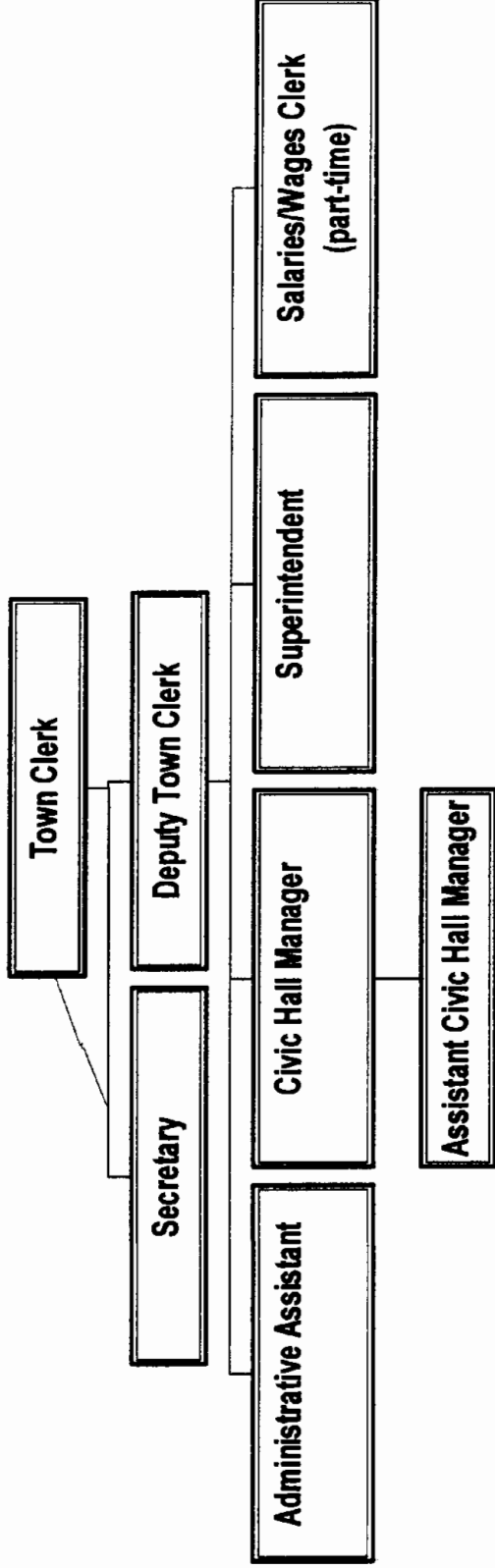
The Town Council would welcome comments on this Plan and if you wish to do so please contact us by either:

Telephone	01388 - 772563
E-mail	<a href="mailto:council@shildon.gov.uk">council@shildon.gov.uk</a>
In writing	Shildon Town Council Council Offices Civic Hall Square Shildon Co. Durham DL4 1AH

# Democratic Structure



# Organisational Structure



APPENDIX 3

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES FOR SHILDON

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>COUNTY COUNCIL</u>	<u>BOROUGH COUNCIL</u>	<u>TOWN COUNCIL</u>	<u>TELEPHONE NUMBER</u>	<u>E-MAIL</u>
Councillor J Bennett	48 Close House, Bishop Auckland. DL14 8RS			/	Work 773232 Home 777577	
Councillor Mrs J Bird	2 Thickley Terrace, Shildon. DL4 2LJ			/	774859	
Councillor S C Bird	32 Cedar Grove, Shildon. DL4 2EH			/	Home 775659 Mobile 07966-518516	<u>s.bird6@ntl</u> world.com
Councillor S J Brown	3 Walter Street, Shildon. DL4 2JZ			/	Mobile 07970-051919	
Councillor R J Cutting	9 Oaklea, Shildon. DL4 2BP			/	775105	johncutting121. @aol.com
Councillor Mrs L Goldie	3 Glaisdale Gardens, Shildon. DL2 1AL			/	Home 777939 Work 774130	<u>lindagoldie@</u> aol.com
Councillor D M Hancock	34 St John's Road, Shildon. DL4 1LU		/	/	772797	
Councillor M S Hardy	8 Fulton Court, Shildon. DL4 1LN			/	Mobile 07831-378887	

Councillor GMR Howe	Dean House, 32/34 Dean Street, Shildon DL4 1HA	/	/	Home 772473	gareth.howe3@ btopenworld .com
Councillor J G Huntington	5 Central Parade, Shildon DL4 1DL	/	/	Home 773225	
Councillor Mrs I Jackson- Smith	6 Mafeking Place, Shildon DL4 1AL	/	/	Home 775433	
Councillor Mrs L Smith	1 New Row, Eldon, Bishop Auckland DL14 8UU	/	/	Home 774734	
Councillor J M Smith	'Fleet House', Rear 27 Main Street, Shildon	/	/	Home 775896	record@talk21. com
Councillor B H Stoker	29 Main Street, Shildon DL4 1AL	/	/	Home 772968	
Councillor M Stott	43 Burnie Gardens, Shildon DL4 1NB	/	/	Home 778752	mike@shildon. info
Councillor G Swinbank	66 Dale Road, Shildon DL4 2LA	/	/	Home 773262	
Councillor J Thompson	26 Highland Gardens, Shildon.	/	/	Home 774117	
Councillor J Quigley	37 Teesdale Walk, Shildon.	/	/	Home 774729	
Councillor K Henderson	15 Lowther Drive, Woodham Village, Newton Aycliffe	/	/	Home 01325-319542	