

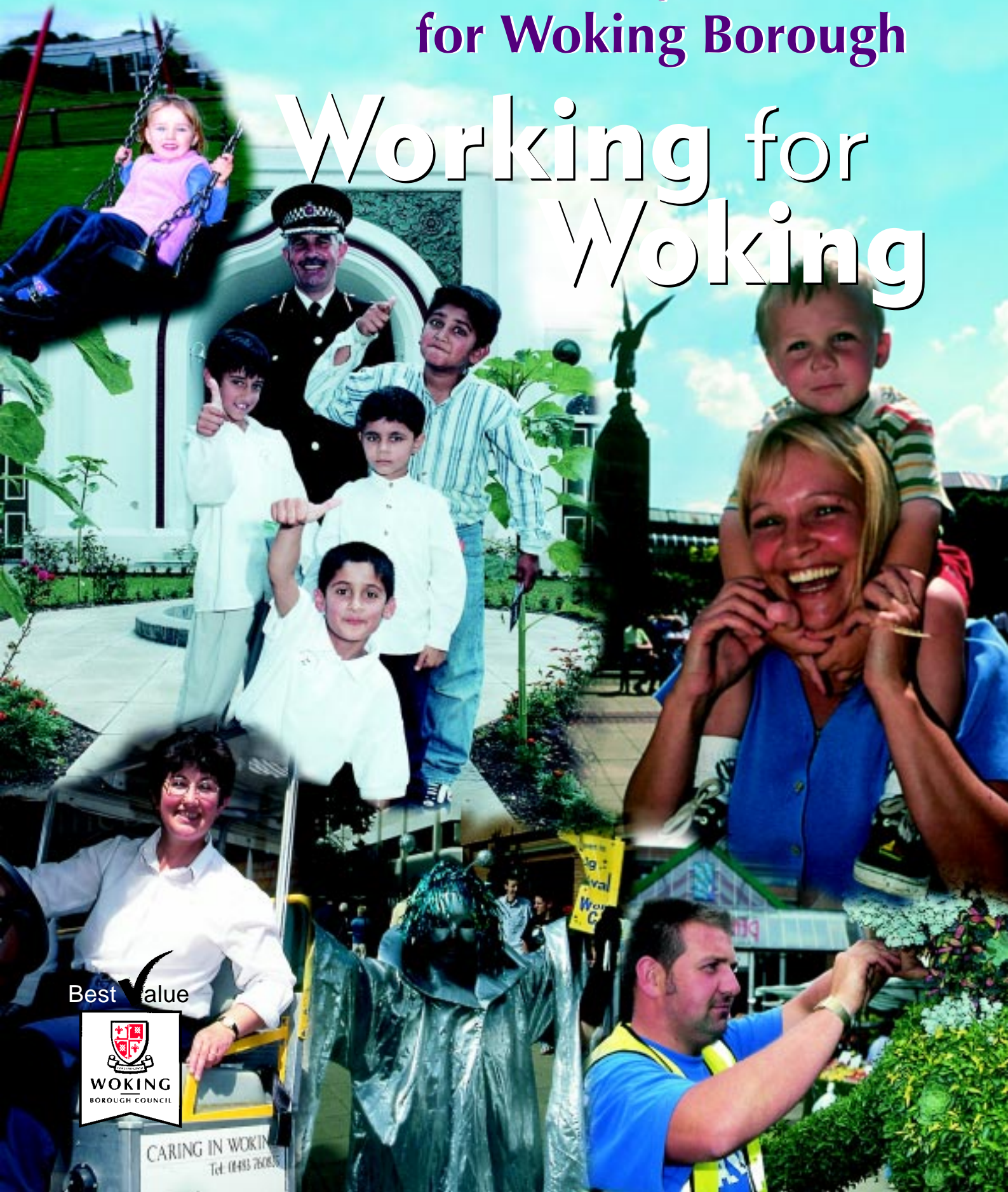
# Service and Performance Plan

including Council Tax and Business Rates

# 2001/2002

## for Woking Borough

# Working for Woking



Best Value



CARING IN WOKING  
Tel: 0443 760000

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*If you have any comments or questions please see the back cover for contact names and numbers.*

# Welcome...



...to Woking's second annual summary Service and Performance (Best Value) Plan, which is being sent to all residents and businesses in the Borough.

## What is the Plan for?

### The aim of the Plan is to:

- keep you informed of how the Council is managing the Borough's operations
- let you know about our plans for continuous improvement in the quality and value of services
- explain how you can have your say in those plans.



The Plan looks at the overall aims, objectives and performance of the Council, how improvements are identified, and how we are going to put those improvements in place.

The middle section of this Plan provides information about the Council's budgets for 2001/2002 and how your Council Tax has been calculated.

Each year we will be publishing this Plan which will show what performance has been achieved compared with the previous year's targets, what consultations have taken place and what new improvement targets have been set.

*This is a summary of the full Plan which can be viewed at the Civic Offices, Leisure Centre, Sheerwater Neighbourhood Office and local Libraries from 1 April 2001.*

# The Key Issues

We continually look at the ways we can deliver and improve services, and how we can be closer and more accountable to our residents through:



- Improving local democracy
- Improving local financial accountability
- Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct throughout the authority
- Improving services using the best, most cost effective method
- Promoting the well-being of communities
- Increasing the electronic delivery of services

We have a duty to ensure services are delivered in the best, most cost effective way by:

- Ensuring continuous improvement year on year
- Consulting residents, businesses, users of services and anyone else with an interest in our services
- Meeting set standards of performance
- Conducting reviews of all services
- Preparing an annual Best Value Performance Plan

## What is Best Value?

Best Value means achieving continuous improvement in quality and cost across all council services. This will be done by carrying out fundamental reviews, which will:

- **Challenge** why and how a service is being provided
- **Compare** our performance with that of other councils and providers
- **Consult** local taxpayers, service users and the business community about our performance and improvement targets
- **Consider** competition as a means of securing efficient and effective services

The reviews will look at:

- **Economy** - getting the best possible service at the lowest price
- **Efficiency** - making the best use of resources
- **Effectiveness** - ensuring that services actually do what they set out to do
- **Environment** - ensuring that sustainable development is reflected
- **Equity** - ensuring that targets cover any differences in providing services to those that are socially, economically or geographically disadvantaged.

## Approach to Improving Efficiency

The Council's corporate approach to improving efficiency has developed over many years and savings of more than £6m have been achieved in the past ten years, through reviewing processes, structures, systems and, for example, efficient use of energy. Budget reductions of over £400,000 have been identified for this year and a target set to save an additional £100,000 during the year, the Best Value programme will contribute to and build on this. No specific

efficiency targets have been set for each review but overall we aim to achieve cost and quality performance comparable with the best performing district councils over time.

The Plan shows the performance we are achieving in a number of areas and the targets for improvement which are now monitored monthly and will be reviewed each year reflecting, for example, local consultation or national targets or initiatives.

We will review all services over a five year period, which started in April 2000. Our current programme is:-

2000/2001 (Last Year)	2001/2002 (This Year)	2002/2003
<p><b>Completed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Waste Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rubbish collection</li> <li>Recycling</li> <li>Road sweeping</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Completed October 2000, see below</i></p> <p><b>Ongoing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Arts</b></li> <li>● <b>Leisure</b></li> <li>● <b>Recreation</b> <i>Reviews due to complete March 2001</i></li> <li>● <b>Market</b> <i>Review due to complete May 2001</i></li> <li>● <b>Housing advice and strategy</b> <i>Review due to complete June 2001</i></li> <li>● <b>Parking</b> <i>Review due to complete June 2001</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Housing management</b> <i>August 2001 - January 2002</i></li> <li>● <b>Civic functions and initiatives</b> <i>June - September 2001</i></li> <li>● <b>Grounds Maintenance</b> <b>Grass cutting, trees, planting, etc. on public land, parks and open spaces including allotments, war memorials, churchyards and nursery</b> <i>April - October 2001</i></li> <li>● <b>Planning and development control</b> <i>August 2001 - February 2002</i></li> <li>● <b>Building Control</b> <i>November 2001 - February 2002</i></li> <li>● <b>Local land charges</b> <i>May - August 2001</i></li> <li>● <b>Legal</b> <i>February - June 2002</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Corporate management</b></li> <li>● <b>Economic development</b></li> <li>● <b>Marketing, communications and customer services</b></li> <li>● <b>Roads and footpaths</b></li> <li>● <b>Public transport</b></li> <li>● <b>Environmental health, pest control and food safety</b></li> <li>● <b>Dog nuisance</b></li> <li>● <b>Grants</b></li> <li>● <b>Repairs to council houses</b></li> <li>● <b>Private sector housing renovations and improvements</b></li> <li>● <b>Personal Social Services including day centres and meals service</b></li> </ul>
2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Land and property management</b></li> <li>● <b>Council tax and housing benefits</b></li> <li>● <b>Business rate relief</b></li> <li>● <b>Industrial estates</b></li> <li>● <b>Local tax collection</b></li> <li>● <b>Mortgages</b></li> <li>● <b>Services to councillors</b></li> <li>● <b>Support services (e.g. IT, accountancy, audit)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Community safety (security)</b></li> <li>● <b>Emergency planning</b></li> <li>● <b>Energy services</b></li> <li>● <b>Electoral reviews</b></li> <li>● <b>Electoral registration</b></li> <li>● <b>Elections</b></li> <li>● <b>Civic Offices accommodation and services</b></li> </ul>	<p>The programme of reviews is being considered and will seek to be cross-cutting and inter-agency, influenced by the emerging community strategy.</p>

*The review programme is constantly evaluated against operational issues, such as contracts coming up for re-tendering, performance monitoring and availability of resources to carry them out. A number of minor changes have been made to the programme published in last year's Plan.*

# Audit and Inspection



Council services already come under the scrutiny of external auditors. The new "Best Value Inspectorate" came into being from April 2000 and they will:-

- **Test the preciseness of the reviews**
- **Test whether the review has resulted in an honest assessment of performance and actions required to improve it**
- **Assess the service provided from the user's point of view, and assess whether the improvement targets identified are reasonable and achievable**

The first inspection, of Waste Management, has taken place and the Inspectors' report is awaited. The full version of the Plan will set out the findings and recommendations which the Council will proceed to consider in due course.

# Working with the Community

An essential element of best value and improving democratic accountability is to involve all those who have a stake in the performance of the Council. The Council has “consulted” on a range of subjects and in a number of ways over the years and building on this the Council will:

- Listen to views without prejudgement and take all views into account
- Be ready to be influenced
- Make a decision and explain reasons for the decision
- Explain why comments have not been acted upon, if that is the case
- State limits on the Council’s freedom of action such as money and legal powers

The Council aims to provide services fairly and equally to all sections of the community including people with disabilities and those from ethnic minorities who have particular problems accessing



services. The Council is currently reviewing a number of existing policies and will bring these together in an Equalities Policy covering all services this year.

The Council conforms to Level 2 of the Commission for Racial Equality’s Standard and aims to achieve Level 4 within five years.

## New survey panel

We have established a **Citizens’ Panel**, statistically representative of the community, who have been consulted in the last year on refuse collection and street cleaning, fear of crime and satisfaction with services generally. This last survey also included 1,500 residents selected at random and 730 young people and some of the results are reported in this Plan.

Consultation will also be carried out with “focus” groups or with the community at large as appropriate. This Service and Performance Plan is part of the consultation process.

*The Council will only consult when there is a genuine intention to listen and act on the results.*

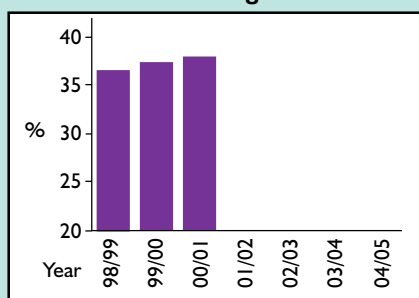
- From the survey carried out 72% of residents said they were satisfied with the way the Council runs things generally.

- 22% of those surveyed had complained to the Council and of these 36% were satisfied with the way the complaint was handled. We are considering actions to improve on this. The Ombudsman did not uphold any complaints made against the Council.

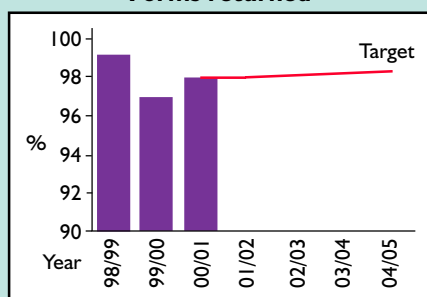
The Council has 25 buildings which are open to the public and all of these are generally accessible to disabled people and a number are equipped with special facilities. However, only three fully conform to the Audit Commission’s specific criteria.

## Your vote counts...

Turnout in Borough Elections



Electoral Registration Forms returned



Following consultation in 1999, the Council introduced a more open and accountable structure in May 2000, which separated executive decision making from the scrutiny role. Some further consultation is required under recent legislation, to refine the system.

Following the review of electoral wards, all council seats were contested in May 2000. The Council remained with no overall control.

County Council elections will take place this year and elections by thirds for Borough Councillors will start again in 2002.

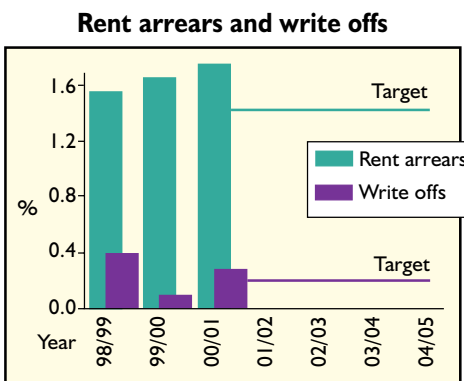


Decent housing is a basic human need. But resources and availability are a problem in Surrey where costs are high. Nevertheless we aim for Borough residents to have access to good quality housing suitable for their needs at a price they can afford.

# Housing and

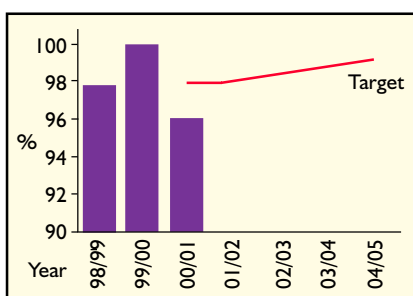
We aim to secure and maintain good quality affordable homes and ensure the effective use of resources to meet the broad range of housing related needs in the Borough. The Housing Strategy 2000/2004 sets out the Council's detailed aims and targets.

## How we're doing and our targets



- 0.8% of unfit private dwellings were made fit as a result of grants given by the Council. The target is to increase this to 1% over five years.

### Rent collected as a % of rent due

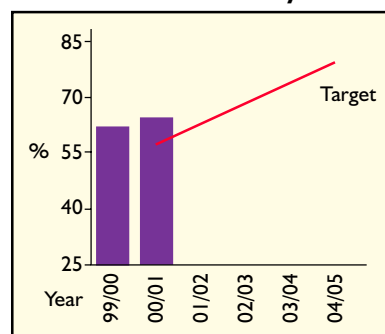


## What we do

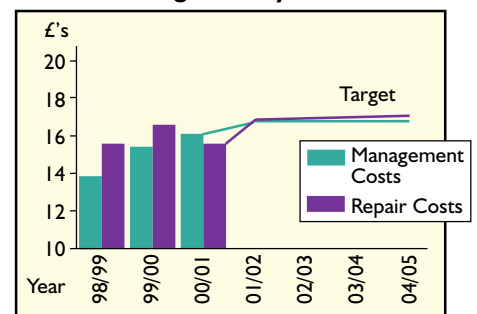


- Work in partnership to provide affordable housing
- Low cost home ownership initiatives
- Advise on housing and homelessness
- Maintain the Borough's Housing Register and allocate homes
- Work to improve access to the private rented sector
- Take action to meet special housing needs
- Provide Warden Services to sheltered and supported housing
- Grants to enable occupiers/landlords to improve the quality of accommodation
- Grants to enable disabled people to make suitable adaptations to their homes
- Give advice and information to landlords
- Take enforcement action to improve the quality of accommodation
- Repair and improve the Council's housing
- Manage estates and involving residents
- Collect the rent
- Promote of community safety

### Homelessness applications decided in 33 days



### Average weekly costs



- An average of 10 households were in Bed and Breakfast accommodation during the year for a period of 8 weeks on average. Our target is to reduce the period of stay to 7 weeks over five years.



# Related Services

## What we aim to achieve



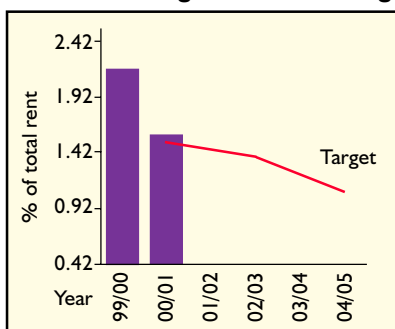
- Collect as near 100% rent as possible every year
- Carry out more repairs to Council housing
- Offer more tenants an appointment for their repair work
- Divert resources from minor neighbour

complaints to deal with serious criminal or anti-social behaviour

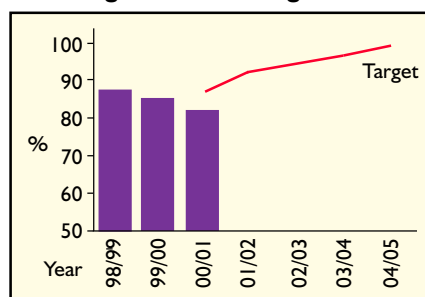
- Increase tenant/leaseholder involvement in the management of their homes
- Produce at least 262 affordable homes by 2002 including 74 homes for low cost home ownership
- Provide 40 homes through the Council's Rented Scheme
- Reduce the time taken to complete investigations into homeless applications
- Extend the Home Improvement Agency to the whole Borough
- Target grants towards those properties and individuals in greatest need

Local people have helped to identify the priorities for action on housing through a major survey sent to 10,000 households. The high response indicates the significance of this issue locally and we plan to continue consulting regularly.

**Rent lost through vacant dwellings**

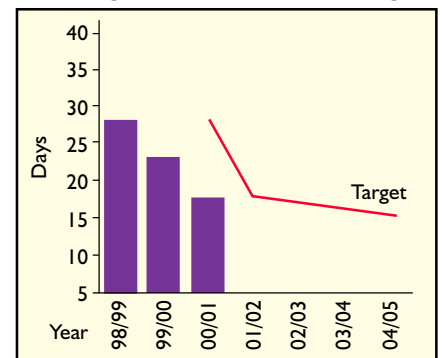


**Urgent repairs done in government targets**



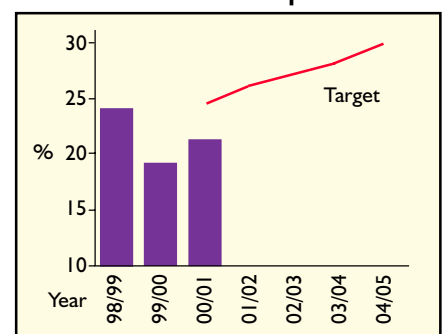
## How we're doing and our targets

**Average time to re-let dwellings**



- A tenant satisfaction survey is being carried out to establish satisfaction with the overall service provided by their landlord and the opportunities for participation in management and decision making. The results will be published in next year's plan.

**Appointment for repairs made and kept**



- The Council follows the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in rented housing.



The Council wants to encourage participation in leisure and cultural activities for the benefit of all those visiting, living and working in the Borough. We aim to ensure that these are what the community wants.

# Leisure and

## How we're doing and our targets

A fundamental review of sport, recreation, arts and visitor services is being carried out, with a review of outdoor amenities (parks, recreation grounds, grounds maintenance, etc.) planned for this year (2001/2002). The outcomes of the reviews will be published in the next year's Plan.

The Council provides 2.3 playgrounds per 1000 children under 12 (last year the figure was 2.1) and of these:



- 6% conform to national standards for local unequipped play areas
- 72% conform to national standards for local equipped play areas and
- 3% conform to national standards for larger, neighbourhood equipped play areas

The standards do not apply to a number of playgrounds

At present the Council does not operate or support any museums however, the Galleries initiative is being worked on with a target for completion in 2002/03.

## What we do

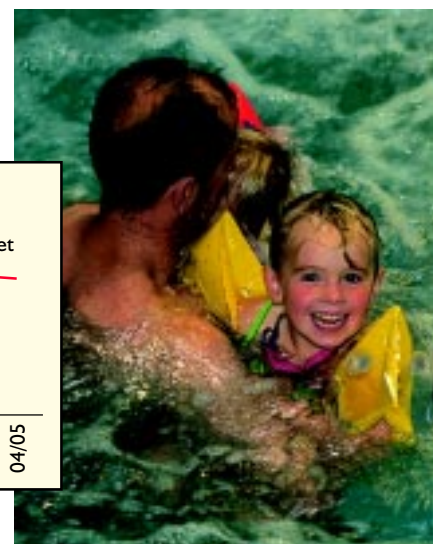
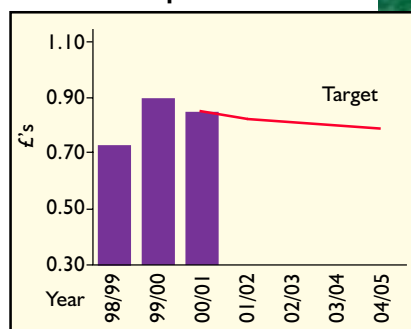


■ Promote the cultural and physical well-being of the community by providing or enabling the provision of recreation, leisure and public entertainment facilities and opportunities

- Operate pools, leisure centres, parks, recreation and sports grounds, controlled commons, open spaces and allotments
- Assist in developing and promoting community sports opportunities
- With other organisations assist in providing youth opportunities
- With other organisations enable and promote visitor initiatives
- Promote cultural activities, events and arts development initiatives
- Support community centres



Cost per swim/visit





# Cultural Services

## What we aim to achieve

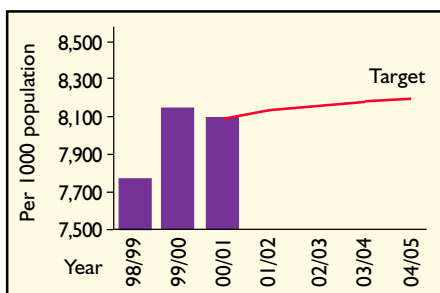


- Continue to invest directly and seek other sources of funding to provide, maintain and modernise existing leisure facilities
- Address identified need for play areas, sports pitches and associated changing rooms and, in particular, provide a further play area and

multi-use games area on the Brookwood hospital development.

- Complete two football pitches and pavilion at the Brookwood hospital site.
- Complete Sheerwater athletics track and pavilion upgrades
- Continue the restoration of Woking Park
- Promote more participation in arts and leisure opportunities by young people and traditionally under-represented groups such as, the elderly, the disabled and ethnic minorities
- Continue to review concessionary charging schemes and other arrangements to make sure facilities and opportunities are accessible to all
- We will be progressing the Woking Gym Club relocation study this year, and in the longer term, facilitating the opening of Woking's museum, arts and craft centre - the Galleries, and carrying out further modernisation work to the Leisure Centre and the Pool in the Park

### Number of swims/visits



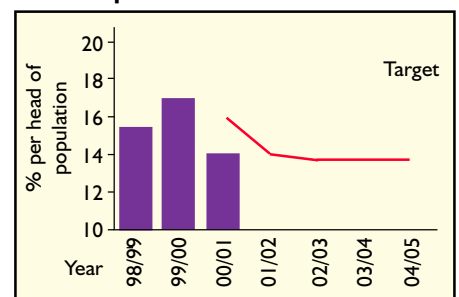
Given the constraints on Council spending and the need to continually seek value for money, the timing of achieving many of our objectives will depend on successfully attracting external funding through, for example, the lottery and regeneration funds.

## How we're doing and our targets



We launched our Local Cultural (Leisure) Strategy in October 1997 and we plan to complete the work on reviewing it this year.

### Total spend on culture and leisure



## Survey feedback

From the satisfaction survey carried out 78% of residents said they were satisfied with the overall service, compared with 74% nationally. 63% were satisfied with recreational services and facilities, compared with 67% nationally. 69% were satisfied with parks and open spaces, compared with 74% nationally. Only 5% actually said they were dissatisfied with both the above services.



The Council directly provides and gives grants to the voluntary sector to provide support services which enable people to live independently in the community, to promote healthy lifestyles, to prevent social isolation and to achieve good community relations.

# Personal Social Services

## What we do



- There are four centres in the Borough where retired and disabled people can enjoy a midday meal or snack, can participate

in a wide range of social and recreation activities, receive advice, information or day care

- There are four drop-in centres providing comfortable meeting places for people with special needs, where advice and information is available
- Hot meals on wheels are served to people in their own homes 365 days a year and a frozen meals service, for those able to cook for themselves, is also available.
- The Careline service links individuals living independently in the community to a centre in Guildford via alarm units
- Woking Community Relations Forum promotes racial harmony throughout the Borough and works closely with the Maybury Centre Trust to ensure that the special needs of the ethnic minority communities are met

## What we aim to achieve



- Working in partnership with Health, Social Services, the voluntary and independent sectors we aim, through

initiatives such as the Healthy Woking Project, to continuously improve the delivery of services

- We will continue to provide appropriate services and plan to keep people healthy, both mentally and physically by providing good preventative help, support information and advice.

## How we're doing and our targets

- The Meals Service responds to requests for service within 24 hours.
- The Careline Service will visit to assess requirements within 48 hours of a request.



Further performance indicators and targets are being developed and will be published in future Plans.

The protection of people living, working, playing in or visiting the Borough is a key objective for the Council. In particular we recognise that crime and disorder and the fear of crime is an important issue for our citizens.



# Public Safety and Protection

We are working with others to reduce the level of criminal activity and public disorder and nuisance.

The protection of the public health and safety is also of great importance and we are working closely with various partners to tackle the root causes of ill health, premature death and health inequalities and to reduce or eliminate risks to personal and public safety in the Borough.

## What we do

- Working with other agencies, under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to reduce crime and disorder in the Borough.
- Work with Surrey Police to manage and maintain the council owned, police operated Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system
- Inspect commercial premises in the Borough to make sure they comply with food safety, health and safety at work and other public health rules
- Investigate complaints of public nuisances including noise, drainage, smoke, smells, dog fouling and straying, pest control, rubbish, unauthorised gypsy encampments and offer advice and take enforcement action as appropriate
- Run licensing and registration schemes to ensure health, safety and well being of members of the public in licensed establishments, or when receiving services from licensed individuals or organisations
- Controlling building regulations to make sure new buildings meet requirements relating to construction, health, safety, energy conservation, access and facilities for the disabled
- Work with the County Council, emergency services and other agencies on emergency planning.

## What we aim to achieve

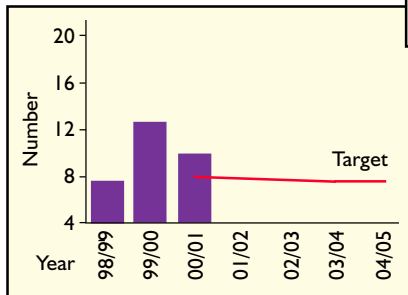


- Monitor and evaluate progress on the Community Safety Strategy 1999 - 2002.
- Carry out a full Crime and Disorder Audit for Woking Borough and, in consultation publish a new Community Safety Strategy for April 2002.
- Publish a report on the performance of the CCTV system and establish arrangements for the independent inspection of the system and audit compliance with the Code of Practice and Operating Procedures.
- Inspect commercial premises on a risk rated basis
- Respond to complaints and service requests made on environmental health matters within 2 or 5 days depending on the urgency of the matter
- Ensure that licences and registrations are only issued to suitable people, that licensed premises and vehicles are safe, and licences are issued efficiently, within reasonable timescales
- Provide a high quality, cost effective Building Control Service

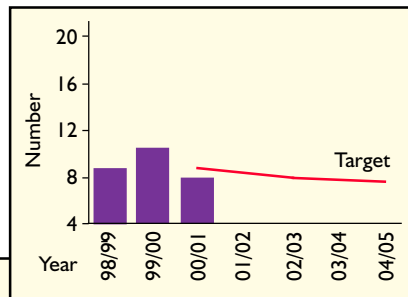
## How we're doing and our targets

- Last year there were 98 arrests which were directly attributable to CCTV and 209 assisted arrests.

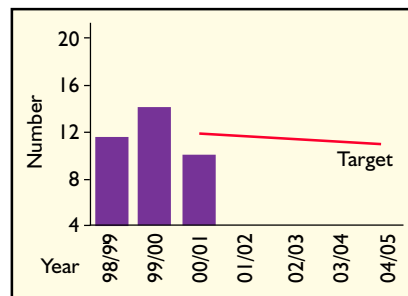
### Violent crime per 1000 population



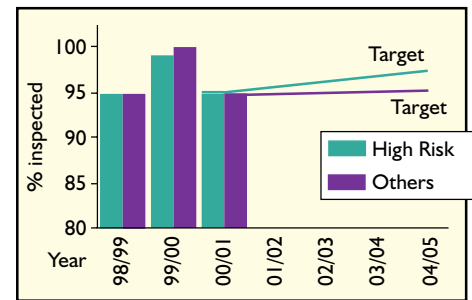
### Vehicle crime per 1000 population



### Domestic burglaries per 1000 households



### Inspecting food premises



- A Fear of Crime survey was carried out using a representative panel of over 1200 residents which will provide us with valuable information on the perception of fear of crime in the Borough.



The Council has an Environmental Charter and Environmental Strategy which with an Environmental Audit provides the basis for our work in preserving and enhancing the environment.

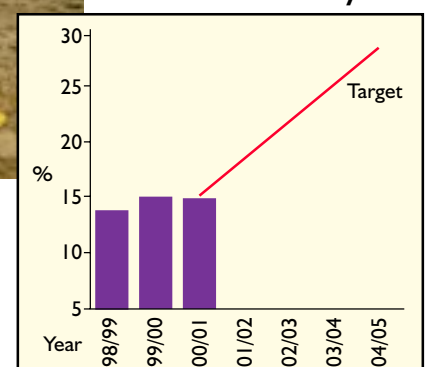
# The Environment

The Countryside Strategy, the Recycling Plan (which sets the Borough's recycling targets), Transport Strategy and Environmental Strategy develop this further. We continue to support the Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) initiative, which seeks to protect and improve the environment to safeguard it for future generations.

The Environmental Audit, Environmental Charter and Environmental Strategy are already in place and we are developing the Countryside Strategy, Transport Strategy and Environmental Strategy. Within the Council's business planning and decision making processes we try to ensure that the environmental implications of all that we do are taken into account.



### Household waste re-cycled



## What we do



- Keep the streets and other public areas clean
- Deal with abandoned vehicles and fly tipping
- Manage the Council's countryside
- Maintain grass, trees, shrubs, etc.

in areas like highways, parks, town and village centres and other public places

- Keep public conveniences well maintained and clean
- Promote and improve sustainability
- Empty cesspools
- Promote waste minimisation and recycling
- Collect paper waste via kerbside collections
- Operate recycling centres capable of taking a wide range of recyclable items



## What we aim to achieve

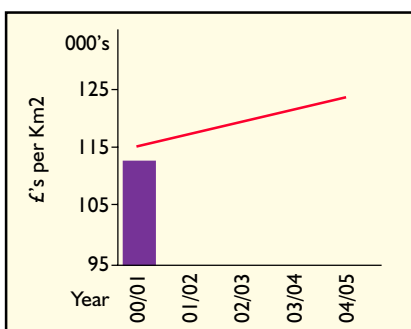
- Remove all dangerous abandoned vehicles within 24 hours and all others within 11 days on public highways and Woking Council owned property
- Continue to promote reduction in energy and water consumption and pollution in all its forms
- Continue with Woking in Bloom initiatives and seek further funding through sponsorship
- Continue to provide resources to promote and expand recycling and waste minimisation
- Build on our green energy initiatives such as Thamesway and the Combined Heat and Power energy station

## How we're doing and our targets

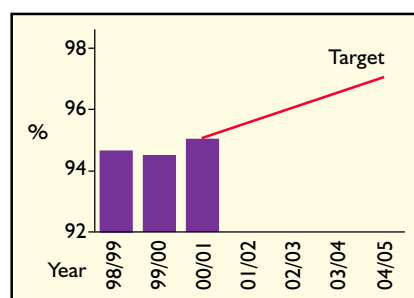
- The Council has adopted a Local Agenda 21 Action Plan and has completed an assessment of air quality; further review will be carried out in 2003.
- We remove fly tips within one day which compares extremely well with the results of other councils.

- We operate 19 public conveniences which are open at least 330 days per year.

**Cost of keeping land clear of litter and refuse**



**Acceptable or high standard of street cleanliness**



- The street cleaning services have been reviewed to improve efficiency and respond to the views of the community and a new contract is in place which together with a more comprehensive approach to managing and monitoring streetcare should improve standards and satisfaction levels over time.

## Survey feedback

From the satisfaction survey carried out 65% of residents said they were satisfied with the way the Council kept land clear of litter, this compares with a satisfaction level of 75% in the previous waste survey and 56% nationally.

70% of residents said they were satisfied with recycling facilities, compared with 85% in the previous waste survey and 60% nationally.

Figures have improved by some 10% on a similar survey in 1994.



We aim to provide an efficient, clean and cost effective weekly refuse collection service to every household in the Borough.

# Collection

The County Council is responsible for disposing of the waste created throughout Surrey and collected by the district or borough councils.

## What we do

- Collect household refuse - some 24,000 tonnes of household waste per annum from 37,000 properties.
- Collect trade, garden, bulky or special refuse
- Collect clinical / medical waste

## What we aim to achieve

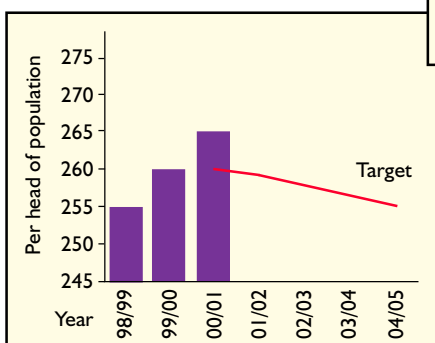
- Collect domestic refuse on time each week
- Reduce the number of missed collections
- Collect 95% of bulky waste on appointed time

## How we're doing and our targets

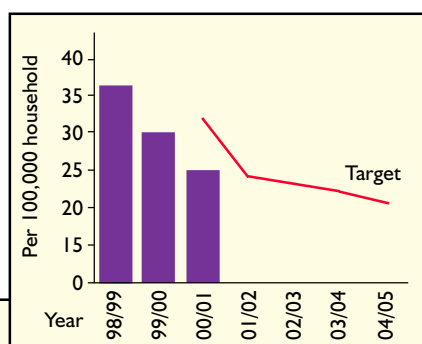
- The refuse collection service has been reviewed to improve effectiveness and respond to the views of the community and a new contract is in place which focuses on increasing re-cycling, quality of sacks, environmentally friendly vehicles and should improve standards and satisfaction levels over time.

- We are planning to work with the County Council on looking into a facility for central composting of green waste.

**Kilograms of household waste collected**

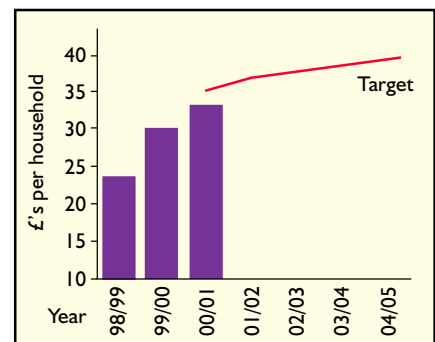


**Missed collections**



- 100% of the Borough's population is either served by the kerbside collection service and/or live within 1 kilometre of a recycling centre.

**Cost of refuse collection**



## Survey feedback

From the satisfaction survey carried out 83% of residents said they were satisfied with the refuse collection service, this compares with a satisfaction level of 87% in the previous waste survey and 83% nationally.

Figures have improved by some 10% on a similar survey in 1994.

The management of parking across the Borough is important in ensuring economic viability and in providing a service for the community.



# Transport and Parking

The on street parking is managed under the Council's agency agreement with the County Council. The off street car parks are our responsibility. We provide a number of highways maintenance services as an agent for the County Council.

## What we do



- Provide car parks in the town centre and the majority of village centres

- Provide residents parking on street in Woking, Brookwood and West Byfleet
- The provision and enforcement of on street parking spaces for short term visitors and shoppers in the Woking Town Centre and West Byfleet.
- Woking Community Transport provides a service for people who are permanently or temporarily unable to use public transport. The Town Centre Buggy and Shopmobility enable disabled people to access the pedestrianised area of Woking Town Centre
- Taxi and private hire licensing
- Concessionary fares schemes

## What we aim to achieve



- More effective use of the existing car parks
- More residents parking schemes
- The Introduction of pay on foot systems in Town Centre Car Parks
- Develop "Airtrack" - Woking as the hub of a rail link to London's airports

## How we're doing and our targets



- The Woking car parks service has been awarded the prestigious Charter Mark.
- The service is monitored by regular user surveys and an annual User Group meeting. The comments from these are used to make continuous improvements to the service.
- The County Council reports performance indicators for a number of highways functions and others are being developed by us and will be published in future plans.
- We have a Car Park Charter, which sets standards and performance indicators. These are regularly publicised and discussed at the Car Park User Group.
- The Council will continue to develop a Local Parking Management Plan which will set new targets and objectives.



The Planning Service prepares the Development Plan, regulates the use of land and buildings and controls new development

# Planning Services

Property owners expect to be able to use or develop their land as they desire unless the consequences for the environment or community are unacceptable in the public interest. Development must also comply with Building Regulations, and decisions relating to the use of land are made in two stages:-

1. By developing a policy framework within our Local Plan
2. On individual proposals for planning permission (through the development control process).

## What we do



- Development Control (the processing of planning applications, appeals and enforcement against unauthorised development);
- Forward Planning (preparation and review of development plan policy including design, and landscaping policy, the protection of important buildings and conservation areas, tree preservation and countryside management.

- We aim to provide a full advice and information service accessible to everyone
- Planning decisions affecting land and property in the Borough will only be made following the public consultation and decisions will be open to scrutiny
- Applicants will be offered a speedy and efficient service
- We aim to ensure that development does not cause unacceptable harm to neighbours or the environment and take full account of the views of interested parties.
- We will regularly review outcomes and the quality of our services in conjunction with our customers
- We will ensure that new buildings are safely constructed and are well designed;
- We will seek to ensure that irreplaceable resources such as wildlife sites, open space, trees and listed buildings are fully protected.

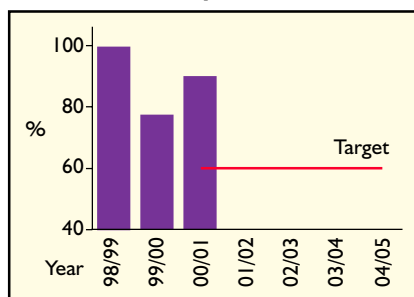
## Did you know...?

The Council determines nearly 1,200 planning applications each year, of which approximately 90% are approved.

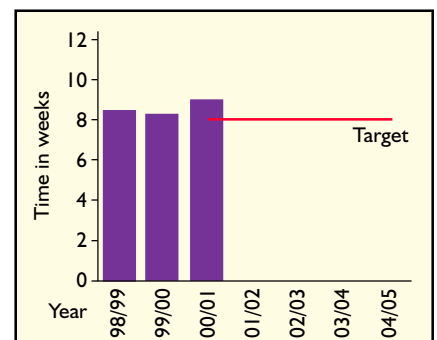


In the region of 18,000 neighbour consultation letters are generated each year.

Homes built on previously developed land



Time to decide all applications





## What we aim to achieve

The service will be the subject of a fundamental review this year in order to challenge its purpose, efficiency and effectiveness. It is likely that the review will examine:-

- The scope and range of services provided by Forward Planning
- The speed of processing planning, building control and tree applications
- The cost of the services generally
- The effectiveness of our enforcement services in development and building control
- The provision and communication of relevant information
- Improving the quality of outcomes
- Consultation on planning applications and the formulation of planning policy

## Economic Development



One of the Council's roles is as a catalyst to co-ordinate activities within the Borough to ensure a varied local economy

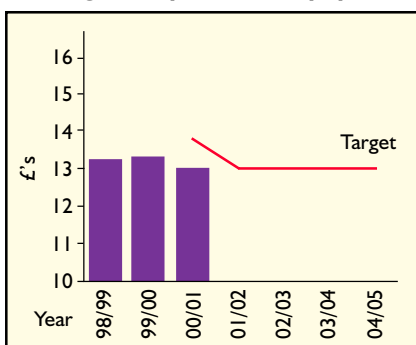
that offers a range of employment opportunities and safeguards industry.

The Sheerwater and Maybury Partnership, which is sponsored by the Council, facilitates a range of initiatives and projects aimed at improving skills and assisting the local business community.

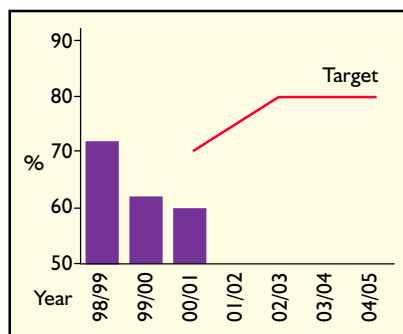
## How we're doing and our targets

- We currently carry out 100% of local land searches within 3 days which is well within the Government target of 10 days.

### Planning costs per head of population



### Planning applications decided in 8 weeks



- This year the Council has adopted four new Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, following public consultation. These aim to ensure a high standard of new development and cover:
  - outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight in housing developments
  - boundary treatment
  - Urban Areas of Special Residential Character
  - Telecommunications Masts
- The Council advertised three departures from the approved Local Plan. Satisfaction levels with the services provided are currently being established and will be reported in next year's Plan.



We have a duty to our residents to keep tight control on public expenditure.

# Finance and Benefits

This means that all services have to be supplied to meet set standards within financial constraints. Further information relating to the budget, council tax and business rates can be found in the centre pages of this document.

Our aim is to provide services which are reliable, efficient, correct and on time.

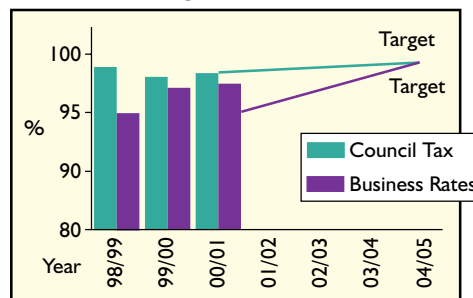
## What we aim to achieve

- To reduce the time taken for applicants to be advised of the outcome of their application.
- To continue to look out for possible fraud by increasing visits to new claimants and asking for evidence in support of claims.
- To improve the collection rates council tax and business rates.

## What we do

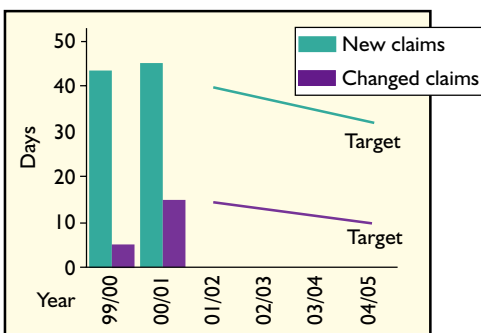
- Pay housing and council tax benefits to 4,500 claimants.
- Collect council tax from over 37,000 households.
- Collect rates from some 2,500 business premises.
- Process over 40,000 items for payment each year.

Percentage of tax collected

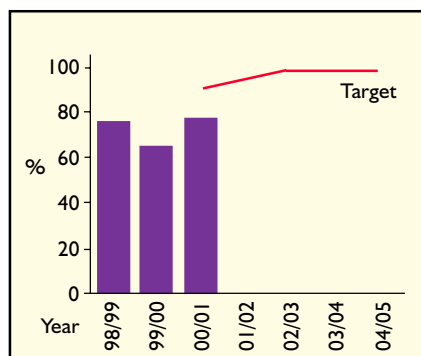


■ The Council has a proactive strategy for combating fraud and error.

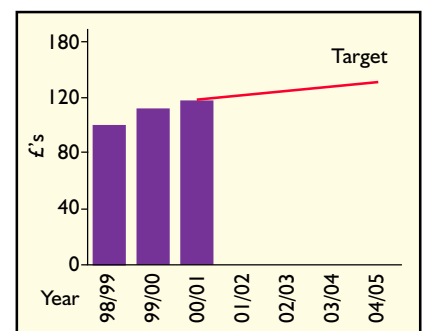
Time to process benefit claims



Invoices paid in 30 days



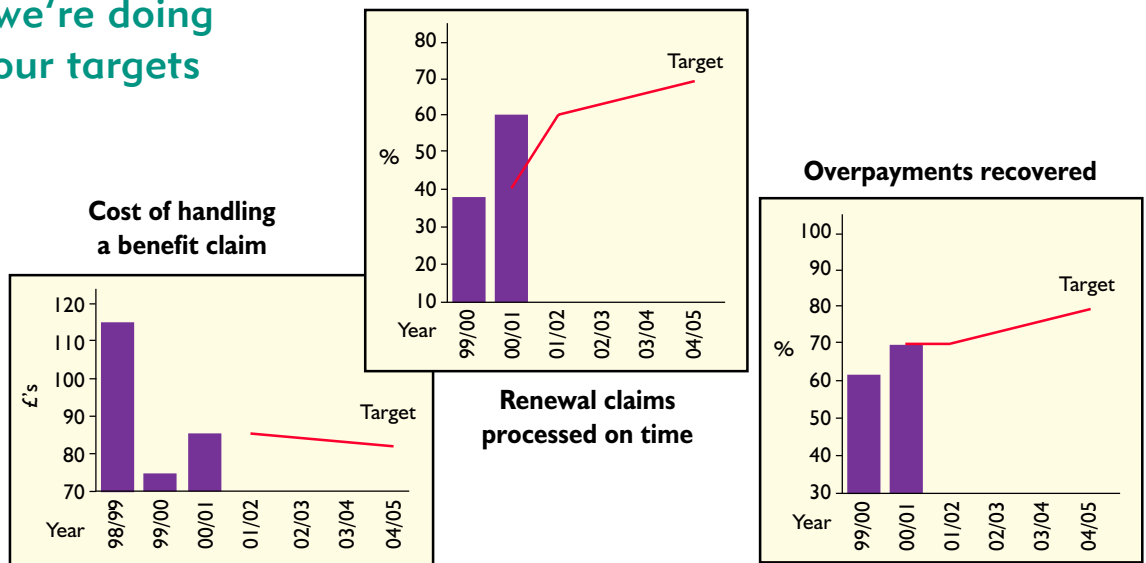
Spending per head of population





## How we're doing and our targets

- A survey carried out into customer satisfaction levels with the Benefits Service and the results will be reported in next year's plan.



# Human Resources

The Council is one of the Borough's biggest employers with over 480 staff. The staff are our most valuable resource since it is only through them that services are delivered and the Council achieves its policies and objectives.

We are committed to equal treatment and equality of opportunity and monitor how well we are doing in the recruitment of staff by sex, ethnic origin and disability. The Council has an excellent record of achievement in training and development of its staff and councillors.

	98/99	99/00	00/01	Government 5 YR Target
% of women in senior posts	18.5	18.5	27.5	
Average days sickness	6.9	7.6	7.5	6.8
% of staff leaving - normal turnover	12.8	8.6	16	
% of staff retiring early	3.8	1.4	1.6	0.45
% retiring due to ill health	0.9	0.8	0.2	0.35
% of staff from ethnic community	*	4.8	5.3	* calculation changed
% of staff with a disability	1.6	1.6	1.6	

# Working for Woking

If you have any general comments on this Plan please contact David Johnson 01483 743060 or email: davidj@woking.gov.uk

*If you want more information about specific service areas please contact:*

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The information contained in this plan is what the Government requires us to publish. We will be developing these statistics and other (local) indicators in future plans.

