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## OVERVIEW

Nottingham City Council is responsible for a geographic area which accommodates a population of 270,000 residents. However, some of our activity and influence is directed at the wider, Greater Nottingham conurbation, which accommodates a total of 620,000 people.

Nottingham is a tale of contrasts - strong economic growth alongside wards which feature amongst the most deprived in the country. Nottingham's significant contribution to the national economy is highlighted by the high level of Gross Value Added (GVA) of £20,800 per person that is generated locally, compared to the national average of £14,800.

This success, however, does mask the recent ranking of Nottingham as the 7<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in the country. In 2000, on the basis of a different methodology, Nottingham was ranked the 12<sup>th</sup> most deprived area. The change in methodology limits a direct comparison between the two rankings. However, it is clear that Nottingham still faces some significant socio-economic challenges.

The city's economy is now dominated by the service sector, which employs three-quarters of the resident workforce. The manufacturing and construction sectors are the next most significant employers. However, Nottingham is home to a resident workforce which has a relatively low skill base and there are higher than average levels of people who either have never worked or are long-term unemployed. The relatively high levels of benefits claimants also provide a clear indication of the economic plight of some of our residents.

The City Council has played a pivotal role in the successful regeneration of the city centre - a key economic engine for the conurbation and region. Increased priority is now being given to the long-term development of the conurbation. The City Council, and our key partners, recognise that Nottingham must "punch its weight" as one of England's core cities. Nottingham is the regional capital and, as such, we must strengthen our capacity to attract investment and tourism on a European and international stage.

Against this backdrop, Nottingham City Council delivers key services, undertakes its community leadership responsibilities and is the single biggest employer in the city.

The City Council has faced up to these challenges successfully and since December 2003 has been categorised as a "fair" authority through the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). This contrasts rating in December 2002. This improvement did not happen by accident, it happened by design.

In the last year, the City Council set out a clearly focused vision, which was encapsulated in our Strategic Plan (2004-07). An assessment of our external and internal environment led to the prioritisation of 3 areas of "strategic shift", which respectively related to our approach to:

- **Developing the city** - enabling Nottingham to "punch its weight" as one of the country's core cities and as a regional capital.
  - **Developing our neighbourhood focus** - building services around the particular needs of our diverse communities.
-

- **Improving performance** - prioritising key services that have either habitually under-performed or that are of particular importance to local people.

The focus on these areas of strategic shift has led to significant progress in each area. There is now a clearly articulated draft City Development Strategy, which has responded to the view of key partners. A successful round of area action planning has been a feature of our drive towards a stronger neighbourhood focus.

Our drive to improve the performance of key services has been three-fold. One aspect has been a continuation in the high standards already reached by a number of key services, such as Social Services – a 2 star department in the top 25% of Social Services departments in the country for both Adult and Children’s services. Other strong services include planning and transportation – ranked by central government as the best performing transport authority in the country.

The second aspect has been the development of stronger performance management arrangements. Details are highlighted further on in this section.

The third aspect has been to focus corporate attention on the following under-performing services – educational attainment, housing benefits, housing repairs & maintenance, and debt collection. The strength of the corporate focus has yielded some important improvements in these areas. An Audit Commission inspection verified the progress being made in Housing, through an improved performance rating, with “promising prospects” for improvement. The improvements made to our housing repairs service will be enhanced in the forthcoming year, as will our drive towards decent houses in decent neighbourhoods.

The housing benefits service has been the source of dramatic service improvements – demonstrated by the improved CPA rating from 1 out of 4 in December 2002, to 3 out of 4 in December 2003.

We have made some in-roads into debt collection. Our developing plans target further improvements and a broader approach. Our overall approach to the use of our resources is strong. This is demonstrated by an improved CPA rating and 3 out of 4 to 4 out of 4 in December 2003.

In terms of service delivery, educational attainment remains the top priority for improvement. The last 12 months have seen significant progress both in terms of results – we are one of the most improved local education authorities at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 – and in terms of the corporate contribution to education. Ofsted’s assessment of the Local Education Authority (LEA) has highlighted the many strengths in our drive for educational excellence.

The “Respect for Nottingham” initiative was launched and addresses crime, anti-social behaviour, the cleanliness and appearance of the living environment, begging, street prostitution and drug dealing. There have already been significant successes, notably with tackling begging and street prostitution. There have been improvements across the board, with performance against significantly more than half of the Best Value Performance indicators (BVPIs) improving against performance in 2002/03. We have increased the percentage of BVPIs that equates to the best performing unitary authorities.

In 2003/04 we achieved a 26% improvement in our positioning against the 2002/03 unitary quartiles - the most currently available quartile information. 31% of our BVPIs reflect 2002/03 top quartile performance. Another 12%

reflect second quartile performance, giving a total of 43% of our BVPIs in these top 2 quartiles. However, there remain a significant proportion of BVPIs in the bottom quartile.

The greatest quartile improvement has been for the BVPIs relating to the annual percentage change in the proportion of Local Authority homes which are non-decent (BV184b), and the percentage of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits (BV72 – CPA only), and the percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services which were paid by the authority within 30 days of receipt (BV8).

We aim to continue to improve the profile of our performance relative to other authorities by setting demanding targets to deliver further “quartile shifts” for a number of BVPIs for key services.

For example, our performance has improved to such an extent in certain key areas that we are now in the top 25% of authorities in the country for a number of key indicators.

It is recognised that many of our key services and jointly provided services still offer scope for improvement. Recorded performance has fallen in some key areas, such as education in relation to non-educational attainment; the maintenance of non-principal roads, crime and bringing private sector homes back into use.

More than 50% of respondents stated in the 2004 Customer Satisfaction Survey that they were fairly or very satisfied with the council services they were receiving. However, in general terms the satisfaction levels have fallen in comparison to the 2001 survey. Possible explanations for this decrease in satisfaction are a change in methodology and a possible national trend. However, consideration is being

given to our response to these disappointing levels of satisfaction.

There were improvements in customer satisfaction for leisure and recreation services (excluding museums and galleries). The largest decrease in satisfaction levels are for local waste disposal (local tip) sites (BV90c), how the authority runs things (BV3) and bus services (BV104). City residents clearly identified street crime as an improvement priority.

The improvements that have been made in 2003/04 and the plans for improvement for the forthcoming 3 years rest on solid foundations. ‘Gearing Up’, the authority’s comprehensive organisational improvement and culture change programme, provides the basis of the approach. It embraces the 3 areas of strategic shift set out in the Strategic Plan and details 8 other issue-specific improvement priorities, which include performance management.

2003/04 has seen the introduction of quarterly performance reporting to both the Executive and to Scrutiny members. This has been underpinned by monthly monitoring and review activity undertaken by Strategic Management Team and departmental management teams. This has enabled in-year corrective action to be taken where under-performance existed. For example, the amount of household waste collected (BV84), the proportion of household waste recycled (BV82a), the average time for processing new housing and council tax benefits claims (BV78a), the percentage of responsive repairs for which the authority both made and kept an appointment (BV185) and the percentage of major planning applications processed within 13 weeks (BV109a).

An improved approach to planning was also a feature of the last year, with

strengthened, more consistent departmental plans. A review of our approach to service planning will be undertaken this year.

Concurrent financial and performance monitoring has also been an important development. This is resulting in a more mature approach to the alignment of resources to priorities.

There have been important steps taken to strengthen the authority's leadership and management capacity. This has included leadership development activity and selective re-organisation.

A culture change programme is being implemented as part of Gearing Up, and focuses on challenging behaviour to ensure that staff:

- Are ambitious for Nottingham;
- Act as one council for our community;
- Learn and share experiences from each other and from other organisations;
- Act on decisions made, and
- Respect those we work with and for.

We are also taking steps to strengthen our approach to partnership working. We have worked with partners to develop the Community Strategy that is currently in place and will strengthen our approach in developing the successor plan.

***BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN: PART 1***

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## PART 1: OUR PERFORMANCE IN 2003/04

### The Council's Improved Rating

The City Council received an updated rating from the Audit Commission when it carried out its second Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of Unitary and Metropolitan authorities in December 2003. The assessment of our overall performance improved to 'fair' as a result of the improvements in two key areas.

The rating of our Benefits service improved from 1 to 3 and our rating for Use of Resources improved from 3 to 4.

*Our ratings in 2003 are shown below. 1 is the lowest rating, 4 is the highest. The darker shaded area shows where we made the improvements.*

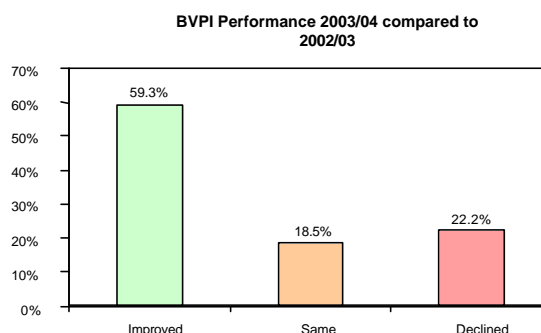
	1	2	3	4
Education				
Social Care – Children's Services				
Social Care – Adults' Services				
Environment				
Housing				
Libraries & Leisure				
Benefits				
Use of Resources				
Corporate Management				

### Overview of our performance

#### Where we have improved

Our performance improved in 2003/04 against the majority of Best Value

Performance indicators (BVPIs) <sup>1</sup> (59%) which measure the performance of our services:



Significant improvements were delivered in the areas which we identified as priorities, such as educational attainment, housing repairs, benefits and debt collection. Improvements were also delivered in adult services (Social Services), planning, homelessness, the library service, road safety, recycling and waste disposal.

However, performance also fell against 22% of BVPIs. The key areas in which performance fell were –

- education, relating to non-educational attainment BVPIs (e.g. unfilled school places);
- environment – the maintenance of non-principal roads, and activity in relation to private sector housing;
- crime.

Though we have an influence over crime, factors outside our control are of greater importance. However, we are aiming to improve on the education PIs and have set a stretch target in relation to private sector housing as part of our Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) see Part 2 for further details.

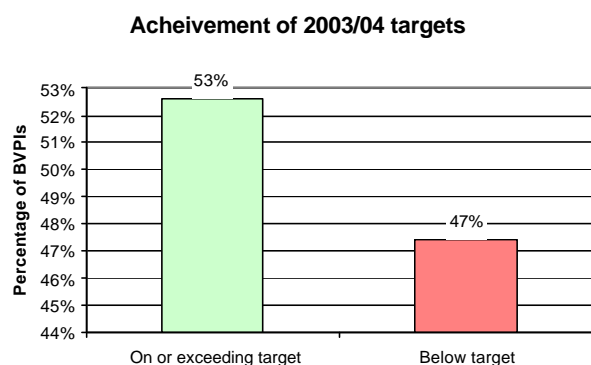
Our *Respect for Nottingham* initiative aims to tackle some of the issues around crime and the local environment

<sup>1</sup> i.e. excluding customer satisfaction and financial BVPIs

generally. Part 2 indicates our improvement priorities and the details of targets are set out in the performance tables in Part 3.

### Meeting Targets

We met or exceeded more than half of the targets that were set for BVPIs in 2003/04. Target setting was driven by a number of factors. Some targets are prescribed by central government such as those for educational attainment.



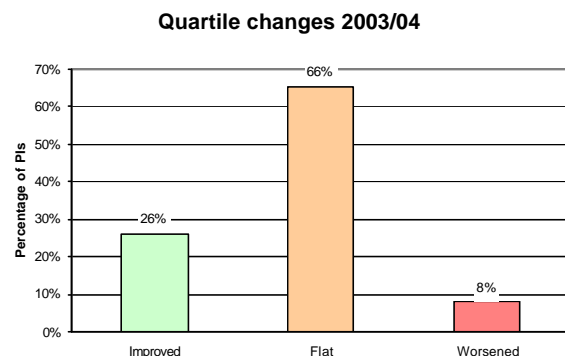
These prescribed targets are considered to be largely unrealistic in relation to Nottingham’s socio-economic context. Some of the targets which are set by the City Council can be ambitious, aspirational targets which indicate a desire for “step change” improvements in performance. Other targets are set to reflect incremental improvements.

Key services which have not hit BVPI targets include:

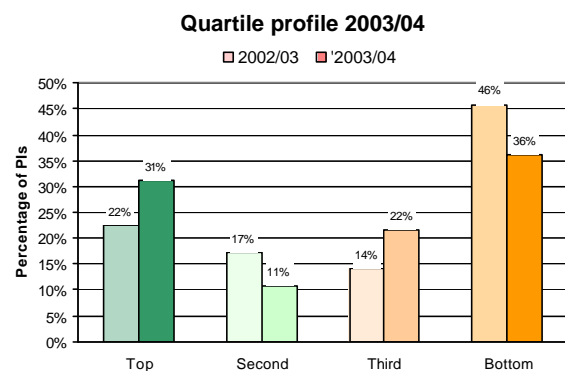
- educational attainment (generally statutory targets);
- social services – particularly in relation to children’s care (where there are some statutory targets);
- some housing services – rent collection and homes meeting the “decent homes” standard;
- activity in relation to private sector housing;
- a range of corporate services.

### How we compare to other Councils

Based on 2002/03 national performance information (the most recent available), our performance compares very much more favourably with that of other Unitary Councils in 2003/04 than it did in 2002/03.



Over a quarter (26%) of BVPIs measuring performance indicate a likely quartile position improvement in 2003/04, with only 8% showing a fall in position. Two thirds are likely to remain in the same quartile.



There are now 31% of BVPIs where performance is equivalent to the 2002/03 Unitary Council top quartile, compared with 22% in 2002/03. Considerably fewer BVPIs now show performance in the bottom quartile. The 2002/03 quartile information is the most up-to-date quartile information available. Further analysis will be undertaken when the 2003/04 information becomes available.

However, although the comparison with other Unitary Councils has improved

substantially, we are not complacent about our performance. We still have more BVPIs in the bottom quartile than those Unitary and Metropolitan Councils rated as 'good' or 'excellent' in the CPA. We also have BVPIs in our priority areas which are below the median.

We are therefore targeting a shift in our 'quartile profile' which will reduce the proportion of BVPIs in the bottom quartile. This is reflected in our target setting for forthcoming years. (See Parts 2 and 3 for details).

However, the challenges faced by some of our services mean it is more difficult to move a BVPI from the lower quartiles. Some of these relate to our priorities and we are developing a range of robust plans to improve our performance. For example, although our performance against BVPIs for educational attainment is improving, it is unlikely to improve enough to change our quartile position.

Part 2 of this Plan sets out our plans for improvement.

## Education

*One of our key aims for 2003/04 was to continue raising standards in primary and secondary schools.*

### Overview

We are recognised as being one of the most improved Local Education Authorities (LEAs) at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4. Performance has improved significantly against the large majority of education attainment BVPIs, however, all of them remain in the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile. We met our targets in only a few instances as they are almost all 'statutory' and were not considered to be realistically achievable, given the authority's base position and the socio-economic context.

The picture regarding non-attainment BVPIs was more mixed, with performance against PIs related to 'inputs' (e.g. access to training) being generally better. Performance against 'output' BVPIs was less strong, with exclusions, absence, unfilled school places, the number of schools in Special Measures and the provision of alternative education for excluded pupils being areas of particular weakness.

OfSTED have commented favourably on our approach to school improvement, saying

*"The strategy [for school improvement] has developed well since the previous inspection and is now good. It provides a secure and clearly articulated basis for work with schools and partners."*

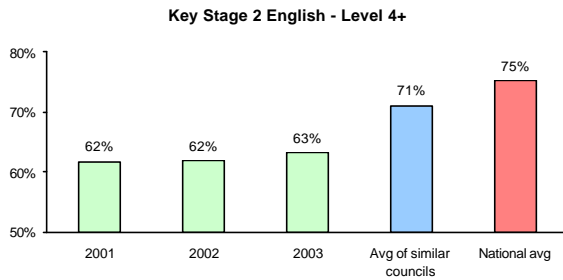
*(OfSTED Inspection Report 2004, para 20).*

### Key Stage 2

We continue to be amongst the most improved LEAs in the country since 1998.

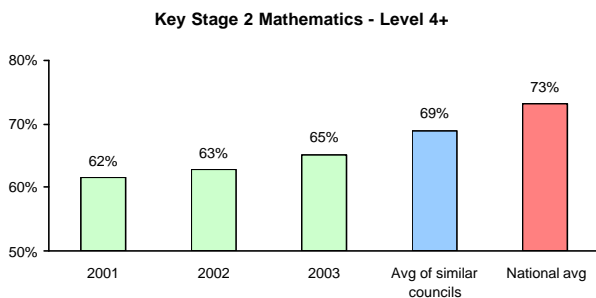
Nottingham is top of the national league table for pushing up standards in its primary schools. Based on the improvement in the results of schools' Key Stage 2 tests for 11-year-olds, the Department for Education and Science found that no other LEA could better Nottingham's record of four straight years of progress. Nottingham managed to achieve a 'value-added' measure of 100.1. Only 55 authorities of the 149 LEAs in the country achieved a value-added measure of 100 or above.

Staff at 40 of the 130 city schools have won School Achievement Awards, awarded by the Government to schools where pupils were helped to achieve high or improved test results.



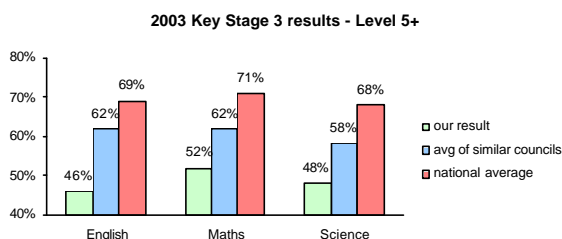
Our 2003 results showed a small improvement in literacy, while mathematics results improved by 2%. However, our performance still falls well short of our targets and we are working closely with schools to address this, for example by implementing the national primary strategy for numeracy and literacy.

We have negotiated more realistic Key Stage 2 targets with the Central Government for 2004 onwards.



### Key Stage 3

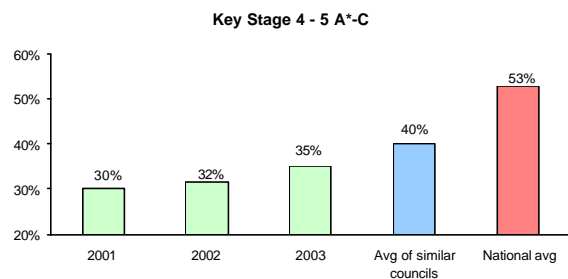
Results showed good progress in 2003. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 and above improved in English, Mathematics and Science, whilst results nationally have not significantly improved. We have, therefore, begun to close the gap on national attainment, but still face a considerable challenge to meet our LEA targets.



Fairham Community College, Clifton, is celebrating one of the country's top improvements in Key Stage 3 results. It achieved a 38% rise in the proportion of pupils gaining the required level 5 in English, a 20.5% rise in science, and a rise of 13.5% in maths.

### Key Stage 4 (GCSE)

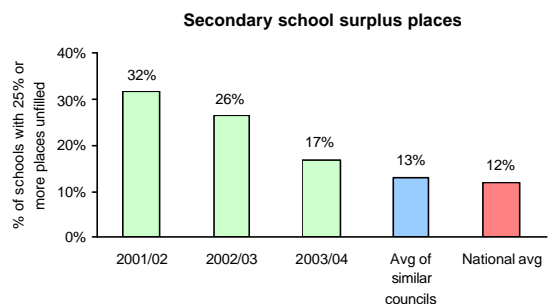
Attainment at Key Stage 4 showed an impressive rise in the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more A\*-C grades – two and a half times the national rate of progress. This puts us well on the way to reaching the government's floor target of 38% by 2004.



### Surplus school places

We have reduced the percentage of surplus places year on year so that it now stands at 16.67% compared with 31.7% in 2001/02. This represents a measure of success and reflects the efforts in all sectors to reorganise secondary places, which have taken place since the City Council took responsibility for Education.

Further improvement is expected in 2005.



The percentage of primary schools with 25% or more of their places unfilled has increased significantly reflecting the fact that the birth rate has been falling throughout the UK for many years.

Inevitably, fewer children mean that fewer places will be needed in our schools. We were unable to meet our target of 26.53% of primary schools with 25% or more of their places unfilled, and the out-turn increased. However, with the further intake at infant and primary schools in April this year, it is expected that this figure is likely to fall to around 25% next year.

Reducing surplus places is a priority for the LEA. Consultation has been undertaken throughout 2003 and is continuing into 2004 on a vision for primary education in Nottingham in order to agree changes that will create a sustainable pattern of provision. Two areas of the city have been subject to formal consultation during 2003/04 with a third area to be consulted in the summer of 2004.

Our OfSTED inspection report commented favourably on our progress in reducing schools with surplus places, saying

*“Having inherited one of the worst surplus place positions in the country, the LEA has made very significant progress and its school place planning is now good.”*

*(OfSTED Inspection Report 2004, para 27)*

### Action on truancy

We also aim to continue the work of the dedicated truancy sweep team. This year's results were the best ever and Nottingham City is the most improved LEA in the country in reducing truancy. We are the second most improved LEA in the country in improving secondary school attendance, and exceeded our 2003 target. We also came very close

to meeting our target for primary school attendance.

## Social Services

*Promoting independence, dignity and diversity, and enabling vulnerable people to participate in the economic, social and civic life of the City.*

### Overview

We have an overall rating of 2 Stars for our Social Services department. This places us amongst the top 25% of Social Services departments nationally for both adult and children's services who were found to be serving most people well, with promising prospects for improvement.

Performance in relation to adult services was very positive. For those BVPIs for which a quartile position can be determined, performance is 1<sup>st</sup> quartile. Performance is also generally improved on the previous year and on target.

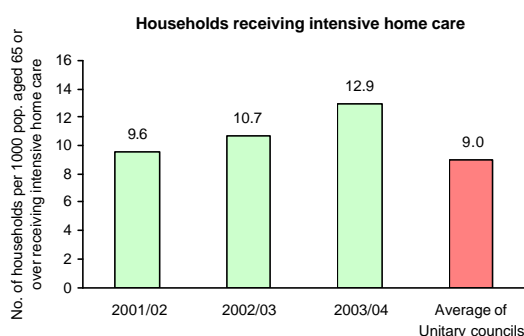
In relation to children's services we continue to be in the top performance band for two of the six BVPIs. There are specific measures already being taken which are expected to result in significant performance improvements for all of the remaining indicators where our performance has been broadly static for 2003/4.

### Home care

We have enabled more vulnerable and elderly people to remain living in their own homes by providing more intensive home care. 'Intensive' home care means providing 6 or more visits and more than 10 hours per week of home care.

The number of households helped in this way increased this year by 78 from 412 at the beginning of the year to 490

at the year-end. The Council has entered a local Public Service Agreement to further raise performance against this PI over the next 2 years.



The total number of people in permanent residential or nursing care has reduced from 1876 on 31 March 2003 to 1828 on 31 March 2004. This figure covers all service areas over the age of 18. This includes adults with mental illness, learning disability and physical disability. It also includes all older people age 65 or over. Improved performance in this area is reflected in a number of factors:

- Increased number of households receiving intensive home care;
- Use of intermediate care to help people return to live at home;
- Use of supported living & extra care housing;
- Use of nursing care allowance so that people become self-funders.

The JackDawe Scheme, which helps older people with dementia to live at home for longer, earned the Department another top national award in July 2003.

This scheme is a partnership between Social Services and the NHS to provide specialist support to people with dementia living in the community and their carers. Under the scheme, care assistants work with clients to help maintain their abilities and prolong their independence rather than just carrying out traditional home care tasks such as cooking and cleaning.

The Council gained the prestigious Queen Mother Award, a prize which celebrates work to help older people to remain independent, three months after the service was highly commended in the Local Government Chronicle Awards.

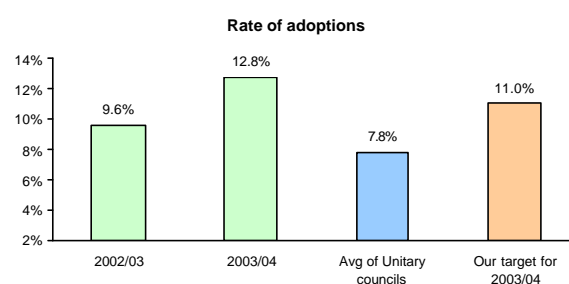
### Direct Payments

We have recently introduced a new service initiative - 'Direct Payments'. The Department makes payments directly to people who need home care so they can manage their own affairs, with or without assistance. This enables them to have more control over their own lives by increasing the opportunities for independence and enhanced self-esteem.

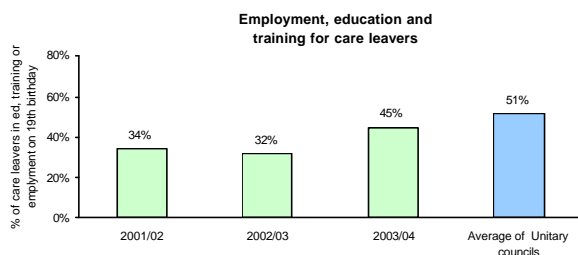
During this year, the number of people aged 18 or more who benefit from this service has increased from 25 to 35 per 100,000 of the population.

### Children's care

We are working to ensure that children are securely attached to carers who are capable of providing safe and effective care for the duration of childhood.



The Council has had considerable success in some areas. For example, the rate of adoptions for children who cannot live with their natural parents is higher in Nottingham than in similar councils. This year we have improved on last year's rate and have achieved over 12.8%.



However, there are a number of areas in which we recognise we need to make significant improvements. In particular, we want to improve on the proportion of children leaving care with educational qualifications and who enter education, employment or training.

## Housing

*We are committed to providing Decent Homes in Decent Neighbourhoods.*

### Overview

We can now see the results of our efforts over the last two years to improve our Housing Services.

In January 2004, we received a Best Value Inspection rating for our Landlord Services of 'fair' (or 1 star) service with 'promising prospects for improvement'. Performance against the BVPIs for landlord services has generally been positive and improving.

Our performance against *benefits* BVPIs has been very positive. The Housing Benefits Service was judged by the Benefits Fraud Inspectorate to have improved from a rating of 1 out of 4 in 2002 to 3 out of 4 in December 2003.

### Housing Benefits

Our performance and quartile position has improved on all key BVPIs for benefits, and performance is on or above target.

We have reduced the average time taken to process new benefits claims

from 120 days last year to 62.57 days this year. The average time taken to process notifications of changes of customer circumstances has also been reduced, from 35 days to 15.97 days. Our current rate of processing is just over 8.7 days.

The percentage of renewal claims processed on time has increased from 50.8% to 72%.

However, the accuracy of assessment is weak and the rate of collection of overpayments fell last year in performance. These are both areas in which we are targeting improvement this year.

### Repairs & Maintenance

We have increased the percentage of responsive repairs (excluding emergency repairs) for which we make and keep an appointment from 49% to 84%, following the introduction of a new appointments system on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2003.

The percentage of non-urgent repairs completed within our 35-day target time has increased from 17% to 65%. The percentage of customers indicating that they are satisfied with the responsive repairs we have carried out has increased from 71% to 86%.

However, compared to other authorities, performance in relation to non-urgent repairs (a non-BV CPA PI) remains a weakness and we are currently examining how we can make appropriate improvements in this area.

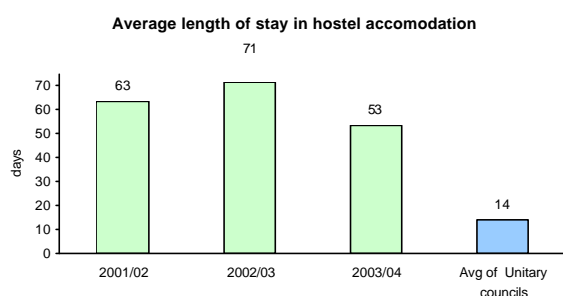
### Dealing with homelessness

The number of homeless applicants has been reduced by 1,376 from 4,961 to 3,585 through the application of a more robust preventative approach. This includes debt counselling and comprehensive advice and assistance to prevent homelessness. We are making decisions in homelessness

cases more quickly, with the percentage made within 33 days up from 58% to 99%.

### Housing support for homeless families

We are committed to ending the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation as temporary housing for homeless families and have not used it since January last year. This was 15 months ahead of the Government's target for all councils to stop using it. The average number of clients in other temporary accommodation at any one time has reduced from 380 to 198.



The average length of stay in hostel accommodation for homeless households that include dependant children has been reduced from just over 10 weeks to just over 7.5 weeks.

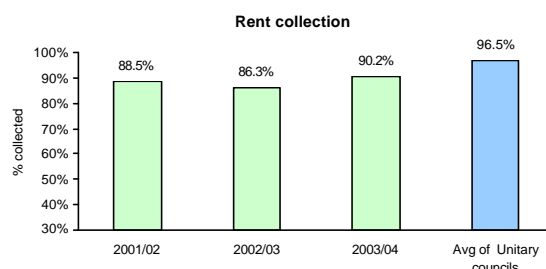
### Collection of housing rents

The Council decided last year that the level of arrears was unacceptable and that urgent steps should be taken to quickly improve the situation. A range of additional measures were therefore introduced from September last year including:-

- the use of private debt collectors to chase both current and former tenants' arrears;
- the formation of a team of officers to fast track serious current arrears cases through the recovery process;
- doubling the amount of court time available for eviction proceedings, shortening the recovery process so

that it takes less time to get people to court.

We are making good progress in improving the proportion of rent we collect, collecting 90% last year, up from just over 86% in the previous year.



Since the measures were introduced rent arrears have reduced by £0.5 million and are continuing to reduce on a weekly basis. Over 1,200 additional arrangements to pay have been made by tenants to stop further recovery proceedings being taken.

The additional measures will remain in place until the rent arrears situation has improved to such an extent that Nottingham is amongst the top performing Councils in the country for collection of rent.

## City Development

*City Development leads the Council's work to energise, protect and promote Nottingham as a successful, sustainable international city.*

### Overview

We have been ranked as the best performing transport authority in the country. All our *planning* related BVPIs are within the 1<sup>st</sup> quartile (many showing quartile improvement) and have improved performance, meeting or exceeding targets.

The BVPIs relating to activity regarding private sector housing are in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile, though performance has fallen and is below target. We are

targeting to improve performance in this area through our LPSA to bring more vacant and derelict private properties back into use.

## Transport

We were ranked by the Government as the best performing transport authority in the country, with a top score of 87% and 'well above average' rating for the way we have met the challenge of setting (and achieving) a range of ambitious targets.

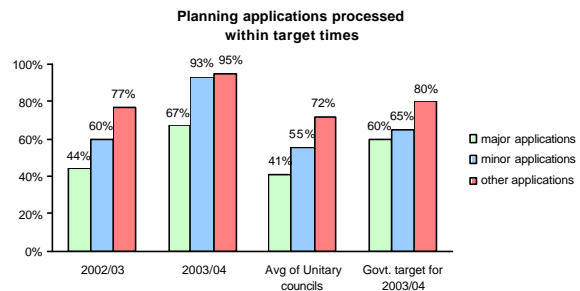
A major step forward was the completion of the construction and opening to the public of our tram service, NET Line One. We have also undertaken extensive public consultation for the proposed NET Phase 2, and finalised plans and submitted the development funding case to the Department of Transport.

We also introduced the Kangaroo travelcard for use on all buses, trams and trains in Nottingham, and transferred the concessionary fares scheme to a smartcard system.

We also commenced work on a number of Public Realm projects, such as, Milton Street / Upper Parliament Street, Friar Lane and Chapel Bar, and completed a number of major highways schemes, such as, Phase 2 of City Centre and the removal of the Maid Marian Way subways.

## Planning applications

We process around 2,000 planning applications in a single year. Some of these are high profile schemes or are controversial, often linked to complex, brownfield sites, and many require extensive negotiation and legal agreement. Despite this, our projected performance for 2003/04 against the Government's measures meets or exceeds targets.



During 2003/04, we have implemented a number of improvement measures. Procedures have been streamlined and improved and we have developed a new planning website. The quality of advice and guidance given to developers has improved and more schemes are now negotiated to a finalised stage with our customers before the submission of a formal application. Delegated powers allowing officers to make determinations without reference to committee have also been changed to help further speed up the processing of planning applications.

As a result of these changes, our overall performance has increased significantly and placed us in the upper quartile of Unitary authorities based on 2002/03 out-turns.

## Bringing private sector homes back into use

We aim to reduce the unsatisfactory environmental impact that empty or derelict houses have on a neighbourhood and community, and in doing so provide much needed and usually affordable homes.

It is estimated that at any one time there are in the region of 2,000 private sector properties across the City which are empty long-term. The work we do to encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use is often time consuming.

Our performance dipped during 2003/04 as staff resources were diverted to meet other, higher priority statutory

responsibilities. However, this will be addressed through a Local Public Service Agreement which includes a demanding target of 317 dwellings for 2005/06. This is almost a three-fold increase on our 2002/03 performance. The Council can now impose full council tax on vacant properties and we will implement this next year.

## Neighbourhood Services

*We are committed to providing good quality services which contribute to sustainable neighbourhoods that people feel safe to live in and of which they feel proud to be a part.*

### Overview

Performance in relation to waste and recycling has generally remained in the same quartile despite improving performance which met or exceeded targets. We remain within the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile on recycling but within the 1<sup>st</sup> quartile for using waste to generate power and for landfilling.

Performance against BVPIs for the transport infrastructure presents a very mixed picture, with the condition of footways and non-principal roads being better.

Performance against BVPIs for road safety is promising, with performance up and above target on almost all BVPIs, though we remain in the lower quartiles on all but one.

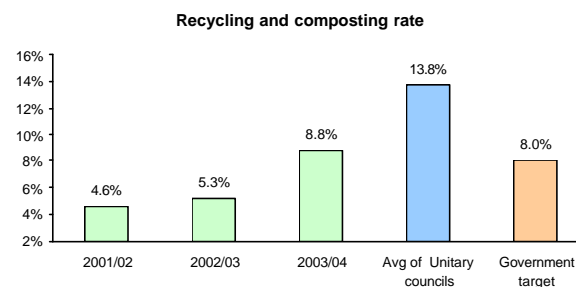
Crime statistics have generally increased and our quartile positions remain unchanged. The Council makes a proactive contribution to community safety, and in particular our new initiative, Respect for Nottingham, is aimed at tackling some aspects of crime. However, the level of crime is largely influenced by factors outside our control.

## Recycling of household waste

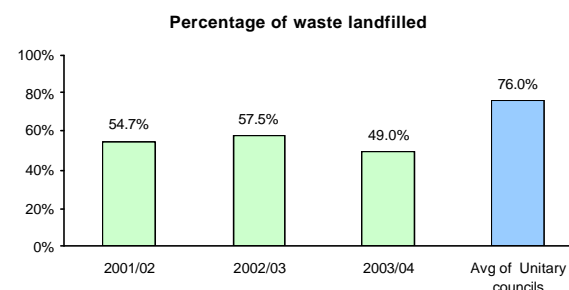
We aim to ensure that all households have a kerbside collection of recyclable waste. So far, we have:

- increased the percentage of households served by a kerbside collection from 12.4% to 46%, and
- increased the percentage of household waste being recycled from just over 5% to just over 8.5%.

However, we did not meet our target for kerbside recycling because the pilot garden waste collection scheme was initially extended to 6,000 as opposed to 15,000 properties to make the introduction of the scheme more manageable.



Though this still leaves our performance amongst that of the lowest quarter of Unitary councils, in 2004/05 we plan to extend kerbside collection to all households within the City. The new Household Waste and Recycling Centre at Calverton and other improvements will also help us to increase the recycling and composting rate.



NB: the methodology for the calculation of this PI changed in 2003/04. This graph shows the 2003/04 out-turn on the same basis as the earlier data.

We also landfill less waste than other similar Councils, using waste to recover heat and power in preference to landfill. Our landfill rate improved in 2003/04 as a result of our incinerating more waste to recover heat and power.

## Respect for Nottingham

Our £2.25 million *Respect for Nottingham* campaign has been in the headlines recently as the City Council, Nottinghamshire Police and the One City Partnership wage war on crime and grime across the city. The main thrust of the campaign is the fight against drug crime, anti-social behaviour, street prostitution, begging, graffiti and flyposting, and seeking an improvement in street cleansing.

Many sections of the City Council are involved in the project, but in particular the Council's street wardens. As the eyes and ears of the Council, the street wardens' role is central to the whole campaign as they deal with many of these aspects in their day-to-day work.

There are six street wardens within the city centre, neighbourhood wardens operating in neighbourhoods across the city, each dealing with the specific requirements of their areas. Under *Respect for Nottingham*, 40 more neighbourhood wardens have been deployed across the city.

The wardens provide patrols for 11 hours a day on foot or on bicycle. They are playing a major role in deterring crime, looking out for signs of criminal activity and anything that can encourage crime, such as poor street lighting or abandoned cars.

The wardens have joined the 10 Community Support Officers from Nottinghamshire Police whose main role is to support the Police, and address anti-social behaviour.

A particular achievement so far has been the reduction in begging in the

City Centre, which had become a major nuisance. A survey by Nottingham University found that the number of people begging had been cut by 85% from July 2003 to January 2004.

## Cleaning the City's streets

We have invested in improving the cleanliness of the city centre and local neighbourhoods. Local street scene teams have been established that provide a single point of contact for residents.

Through the 'Respect for Nottingham' initiative, we have provided more cleansing staff and an additional graffiti removal team. Our Neighbourhood Wardens also support enforcement action against litter, flyposting and other activity which spoils the environment.

## Roads and footpaths

We are working to improve the quality of the City's network of roads and footpaths. During 2003/04 we completed major road maintenance projects on Ilkeston Road and Carlton Road and delivered a £1million programme of resurfacing residential footways in our local neighbourhoods. Casualties on our roads remain high when compared to other unitary councils. However, we are continuing to tackle design, education and enforcement issues to help reduce these figures. In 2004/05, we will implement £2.5m of road safety and traffic management schemes.

## Crime

Re-offending by young people dealt with by the youth justice system is falling.

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) measures re-offending rates over two years from the point at which young offenders are dealt with. Of those dealt with in 2000, 51.7% re-offended, compared to 48.9% of those dealt with in 2001. In the main group of sentences

managed by the YOT, the re-offending rate fell from 83.6% to 78.6%.

The re-offending rate of those supervised by the YOT in 2003 is one of the City's LPSA targets. After the first three months, early signs are promising, with re-offending reduced from 21% in the comparator group in 2001 to 11% in the LPSA target group.

## Leisure and Community Services

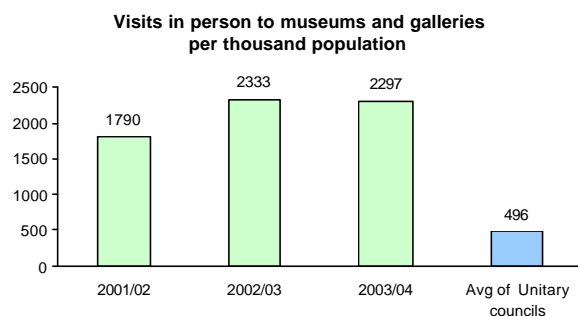
*We are committed to providing better services for the millions of visitors to Nottingham's sporting, cultural and social facilities.*

### Overview

Performance against our BVPIs is generally 1<sup>st</sup> quartile, with an upward or unchanged trend, and meeting or exceeding targets. However, the number of library visits, though 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile, has declined, falling short of the target.

### The City's museums

Nottingham City ranks amongst the councils with the highest number of visits to museums. The number of visits in 2003/04 was nearly 10% more than the target we set, despite the closure of the Costume Museum.



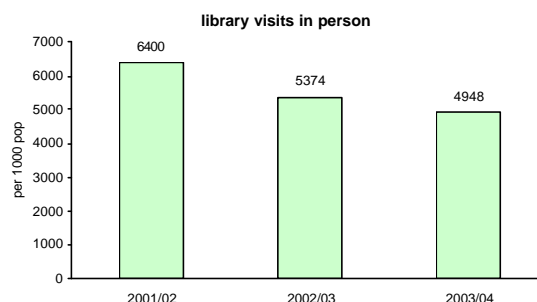
We continually seek to improve the museums' service. In November 2003, the Council was awarded the Sandford Award for Heritage Education for work with schools at Wollaton Hall. During 2003, we also secured £4.5 million of National Heritage Lottery Funding

towards the development of a £6.7 million restoration scheme for Wollaton Hall and Park.

Nottingham's new contemporary arts venue is a step closer after a provisional £5 million grant towards this £13 million scheme for a Centre for Visual and Live Arts at Garners Hill in the Lace Market was secured from the Arts Lottery Fund. The Arts Centre will include galleries, performing and rehearsal space and artists' studios designed to attract international artists and visitors.

### The City's libraries

Although numbers declined last year in line with the national trend, Nottingham's libraries continue to be visited over a million times a year.



we had set ourselves for 2003/04 of 6,000 visits in person to the library per 1,000 population. One of the key factors contributing to the reduction in the number of visits made in person including was the introduction of electronic services which allow library users to undertake renewals, reservations and enquiries without visiting the library. We had around 107,000 visits in 2003/04 at our Nottingham Libraries' website.

We have undertaken a number of initiatives to increase the accessibility and range of library services. These include changes to mobile library schedules and opening hours. We have also increased the number of children's activities by extending learning opportunities and starting library-based reading groups.

We continue to issue around 1.8 million items a year from books to videos. Library visitors in 2003/2004 expressed increased satisfaction with the services provided, including finding the information they wanted with this increase reflecting wider availability of electronic information sources and improved training of staff.

Our libraries also play a key role in supporting our educational aims. Learning Action Centres have now been established in 10 Community Libraries to support lifelong learning and increase access to ICT in the community. All library staff are trained in ICT skills to provide support.

### **Our Leisure Centres**

Nottingham City Council operates an extensive range of leisure facilities, which includes community leisure centres, some regional sports facilities and a number of Victorian built swimming pools. The age range of facilities varies considerably, as does the state of repair, decoration and operating life of many of the buildings main plant and machinery. The high maintenance cost of these facilities is providing an increasing liability for the authority and the high provision of swimming pools does not align to current customer usage needs. In 2003, we undertook an extensive review of facilities and management practices in the light of the CPA findings. This ongoing review has so far resulted in the closure of Bestwood Pool, revision of the pricing policies and other improvements.

The authority is looking to adopt a clear vision to establish a sustainable network of fewer but better quality community leisure centres which match modern customer expectations and better promote sport, active lifestyles, health and wellbeing. To support this vision the Council's Executive Board agreed in June 2004, an £18m

Transformation Programme of leisure centre provision across the city which will be rolled out over the next few years. This programme will see the closure and conversion of some existing centres and refurbishment and investment of others.

In 2003/04, Harvey Hadden became the third City Council leisure centre to receive the coveted Quest quality award. The award, which is endorsed by Sport England, recognises continuous improvement, excellence and quality in customer service within the field of sport and leisure.

Our leisure centres also support corporate aims. The new Southglade Leisure Centre built by the Council at a cost of £4.7 million is at the heart of outer Council estates and acts as a focus for tackling health inequalities in these areas.

The 'Best Top' Healthy Links Project - a partnership between the Council, health agencies and local residents and community groups - has a co-ordinator based at the Centre. The project is tackling some of the underlying causes of cancer and heart disease, drugs use and unintended pregnancies among young people, and fostering greater community activity and involvement.

### **Youth Service**

The Youth Service target age range is young people aged 13 – 19 years old. As evidenced during the recent OFSTED Inspection, in Nottingham the service works with around 30% of the 28,000 City residents that belong to this age group, exceeding the Government's target for all youth services of 25%. Over a third of the young people we work with in the City are members of Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. Innovative targeted work by the service has achieved national recognition, including Millennium Volunteers and the Brakeaway Motor Project.

## Corporate Services

*We are committed to providing cost effective and improving services, and effectively supporting the operation of the Council.*

### Overview

Performance rose in 2003/04 against most workforce related BVPIs, and in particular we have made a further significant reduction in the level of sickness absence. We also paid more invoices promptly and have continued to make good progress towards enabling electronic access to our services.

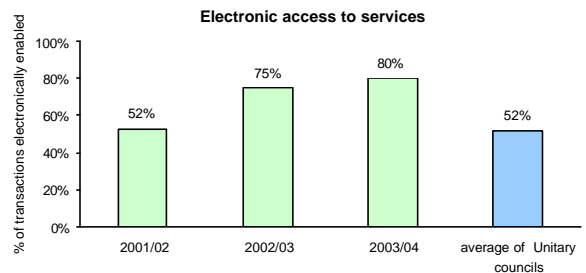
However, our performance in collecting Council Tax and Business Rates – NNDR - remains static. Debt collection continues to be a priority for improvement in 2004/05.

### Accessibility of council services

We aim to make all services electronically accessible by the end of 2005 in keeping with the Government's modernising agenda for local government.

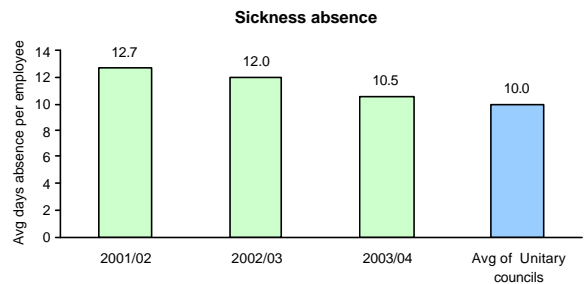
We have taken a pragmatic view and concentrated first on areas that improve the running of the Council or have generated significant efficiency savings, for example the Benefits Call Centre. Nearly 80% of our services are now accessible electronically, meeting our target. We are careful to ensure that spending on systems to make services accessible does not take priority over actual service delivery.

Our current performance is amongst the best in the country and we anticipate that we will maintain this position through further improvements.



### Sickness absence levels

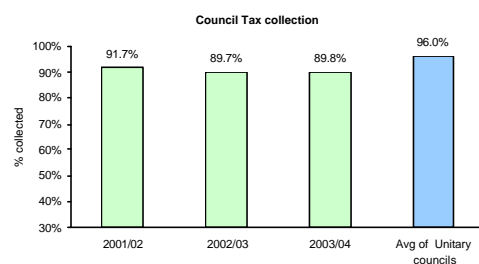
The level of sickness absence by our staff impacts directly on the cost and quality of our services. We have therefore focused on reducing this in the past year, which has resulted in a reduction of almost one day per person. We performed better than target in 2003/04, achieving a proportionate reduction in absence of around 12%.



Mental ill-health causes between 20% and 25% of sickness absence in the council. A corporate mental health and well-being adviser has been appointed to help us to reduce the amount of mental health related sickness absence.

### Council Tax collected

We were not able to meet our target to collect 92% of the Council Tax this year and our performance overall during the year was similar to last year's, though we collected more of the money earlier.



Last year we introduced new payment methods to allow customers to pay Council Tax and other monies by telephone and the internet. However, we recognise that making a significant improvement in our collection rate will require a wider range of action. Improving on debt collection is one of our current priorities and a Task Group is working on plans to :

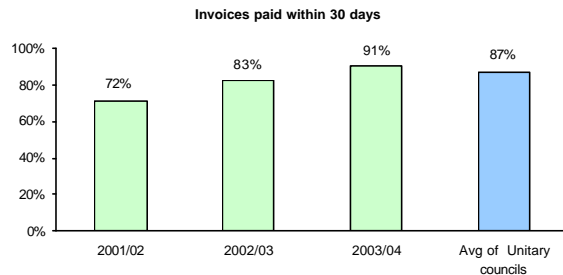
- improve processes to achieve a more proactive and vigorous approach to pursuing debt.
- ensure corporate efficiency in the way that debt collection is managed (*building on the work commissioned by the Lord Chancellor from the Department of Constitutional Affairs*).
- invest in customer relations management through the amalgamation of multiple debts owed to the Council.
- Improve collection of NNDR ('Business Rates') (BV9)

### Payment of invoices

The government has set a target for councils to pay 100% of undisputed invoices for commercial goods and services received from external contractors and suppliers within 30 days (BV8). Prompt payment is particularly important for local small businesses.

In 2003/04 the Sundry Income Team was responsible for collecting 18k invoices with a value of £53m for the City Council. Following the introduction of pro-active collection techniques and changes to procedures in 2002/03 the number of days taken to collect a debt has been reduced from 57 days to a monthly average of 29 days. In addition the percentage collected 90 days following each annual period of collection has improved from 97% to 98.6%. Targets for 2004/05 have been set at 28.5 days and 98.8% respectively.

The Council has consistently improved its performance the last 5 years, and last year we paid almost 91% of invoices on time. This places the authority amongst the best performing unitary councils.



### Corporate complaints monitoring

The Council monitors information concerning complaints and appeals lodged under the Official Complaints Procedure as well as Local Government Ombudsman cases or enquiries.

This monitoring is completed on a quarterly basis and provides data on the type of complaint received, the service area and department concerned, the length of time taken to investigate the complaint and the complaint outcome. Table summarising the numbers received across the Council;

	2002/03	2003/04	% Change
<b>Official complaints</b>	848	951	+12.1%
<b>Appeals</b>	46	110	+139%
<b>Ombudsman</b>	130	135	+3.8%

### Official complaints

Overall there has been an increase of 12% in the number of official complaints received in 2003/04 compared to 2002/03.

These increases are mainly to be found within the City Development, Leisure & Community Services and Housing/Building Works departments.

The increases are mainly due to the more effective monitoring systems in place within these departments, which have resulted in improved monitoring rather than a decline in service.

78% of official complaints were received by the Housing Department (which now includes Nottingham City Building Works). Of these, 46% were about repair issues.

During 2003/04 the number of official complaints found to be substantiated decreased from 48% in 2002/03, to 34%. Consequently, despite an increase in the number of complaints received, fewer complaint investigations found the Council to be at fault.

Performance in responding to complaints has slightly improved with 72% of official complaints responded to within the 14 calendar day target. This is an increase from 71% in 2002/03.

## Appeals

12% of complainants appealed against the outcome of their official complaint. This is a large increase from 5% in 2002/03, with numbers rising from 46 to 110 in 2003/04.

The increases are found within the City Development and Housing (including Nottingham City Building Works) departments. The increases are mainly due to an increased use of the official complaints procedure by these departments, but recent changes to parking services within the city have also led to an increase within the City Development Department.

50% of appeals related to the Housing Department, which is to be expected as this department received the majority of official complaints.

The number of appeals found to be substantiated has decreased from 13% 2002/03 to 12% in 2003/04. Thus

despite a large increase in the number of appeals received, the proportion found to be justified has declined.

Performance on responding to appeals has improved with the number of appeals dealt with within the 5 weeks target time rising from 74% in 2002/03 to 91% in 2003/04.

## Local government ombudsman

Overall the number of cases or enquiries received from the Local Government Ombudsman has increased slightly from 130 to 135 in 2003/04.

55% of cases investigated by the Ombudsman related to the Housing Department which again coincides with the number of complaints and appeals received by the department.

The number of cases subject to a Local Settlement during 2003/04 decreased to 27 from 39 in 2002/03. This is significant as although a slight increase has occurred in the number of complaints investigated by the Ombudsman, a large decrease has occurred in the number of cases when the Ombudsman found the Council responsible of malpractice. This would coincide with the findings of the official complaints and appeals, where numbers have increased, but fewer cases were substantiated.

## Corporate letter response times

Overall the response to letters from Councillors' has decreased by 4% during 2003/04. However, an improvement has occurred in the response rate to letters from the public answered on target, with letters answered in full increasing by 14% and letters at least acknowledged or answered in full increasing by 1%.

The table below also demonstrates how the Council as a whole has responded to letters within 5 working days from Councillors and within 12 working days from the public during 2003/04.

	2002/03	2003/04		Change
		Target	Actual	
<b>Councillor's</b>	90%	100%	86%	-4%
<b>Public (in full)</b>	73%	90%	87%	+14%
<b>Public (acknowledge or in full)</b>	88%	95%	89%	+1%

This year we have been unable to meet all the corporate targets, despite a recorded improvement in responding to letters from the public.

These average figures do mask departmental differences. For example, the Leisure & Community Services Department met all three corporate targets in the final quarter and Neighbourhood Services also saw large improvements in performance.

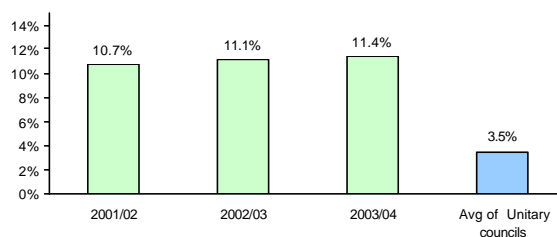
In order to achieve an improved performance, Corporate Directors have produced action plans to ensure departmental progress and to raise staff awareness. A range of reality checks are also planned to review response to letters, identifying gaps in performance and developing action plans to address this issue.

### Our approach to Equality and Diversity

#### Our workforce

The Council has continued to increase the representativeness of its workforce over the last year. The proportion of our staff who are from minority ethnic communities compares very favourably with that of other, similar councils, and we rated as amongst the best performing quarter of unitary councils in our latest CPA. We also have a high proportion of staff who have disabilities.

Staff from racial minorities



In addition, more of our higher-paid staff are now women or from ethnic minorities than at the end of last year.

### Our services

We have adopted a new programme 'Action on Diversity' to progress our work on equality and diversity.

A new team has been set up to lead this activity. We aim to achieve all 5 levels of the Equality Standard over the next 4-5 years and have made good progress towards achieving our first target of Level 2 by June 2004.

We are also continuing to implement the actions in our current Race Equality Scheme by May 2005, and will involve local Black and Ethnic m Minority communities in developing a second Scheme.

Over the last year, we have consulted widely with organisations representing members of different communities and disadvantaged groups on the development of our policies. We will continue to consult them and involve them in the scrutiny and monitoring of our progress.

### Equalities and service delivery in action

Our pioneering efforts to encourage ethnic minority involvement in sport were recognised by the Commission for Racial Equality last year.

The City is one of only six local authorities across the country to have been accredited with the Preliminary

level of a new award - Promoting Racial Equality through Sport – developed by Sporting Equals and the Local Government Association.

The award recognises work above and beyond the statutory requirements for racial equality.

.....

### Customer Satisfaction

For the majority of performance indicators addressed in this survey the satisfaction levels of respondents are positive i.e. more than 50% stated they were fairly or very satisfied with the council service in question. Although in general terms the satisfaction levels have noticeably fallen in comparison to the 2001 survey.

Possible explanations for this decrease in satisfaction are as follows:

Firstly, the survey was conducted using a different methodology, prescribed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), which may have impacted adversely on responses.

Early indications are that significant falls in satisfaction levels may well be a national trend. Once the ODPM release the national data we will be able to benchmark against other authorities and either confirm or dismiss this theory.

The demographic profile of respondents does not accurately reflect the 2001 Census profile of Nottingham City. The findings therefore are from a non-representative profile of city residents and may not be reflective of Nottingham City as a whole.

### Comparing 2001 and 2004 figures

It is important to note that the authority compared favourably to other similar authorities in 2000/01.

The findings highlight that the largest decrease in overall satisfaction levels are with the following services:

- A 19% fall in satisfaction with waste disposal sites (the local tip) down to 50%
- A 17% fall in satisfaction with how the authority runs things down to 48%
- A 14% fall in satisfaction with bus service overall down to 61%.

There was a significant level of dissatisfaction with the complaints handling - two caveats must accompany this finding; firstly, that whilst one in five of all respondents have complained to the Council in the last year, not all of these people will have been complaining *about* the Council. Some of this contact will have concerned other organisations or individuals, such as contractors or nuisance neighbours.

Secondly, whilst asked about the *handling* of the complaint, some who are not happy with the *outcome* of the complaint will recall the whole complaints process with dissatisfaction. Thus, dissatisfaction may be expressed where a complaint was *handled* effectively, professionally and in a timely manner by the Council, yet resulted in an *outcome* perceived as unsatisfactory by the respondent.

30% were either fairly or very dissatisfied with the collection of bulky household waste. 29% were either fairly or very dissatisfied with the provision of recycling facilities

### Quality of Life Issues

Out of a list of 20 items, Nottingham City residents felt the following are most important:

- |                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| 1. Low level of crime  | (74%) |
| 2. Clean streets       | (46%) |
| 3. Health services     | (42%) |
| 4. Public transport    | (34%) |
| 5. Shopping facilities | (33%) |

Improvement priorities cited were:

1. Level of crime (72%)
2. Clean streets (46%)
3. Road and pavement repairs (38%)
4. Activities for teenagers (34%)
5. Level of traffic congestion (26%)

Influencing decisions - Males, young people, those in work, those without a limiting illness or disability and respondents from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) communities, were more likely to believe that they could influence decisions.

Race relations – More than half of all respondents at least agree that their local area is somewhere that residents respect ethnic difference between people. Those living in Area 4 (Forest Fields, Radford, Lenton, Hyson Green) and those from BME communities were most likely to disagree.

### Statement on Contracts

The Government recognises the connection between the quality of services and the way workforce issues are handled. It has issued a Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts (Annex D, Circular ODPM 03/2003, issued 13 March 2003) which sets out an approach to workforce matters in local authority contracts involving a transfer of staff from the local authority, or from an external service provider to whom staff have previously been transferred to a new supplier under a re-tender process. This Code forms part of the statutory guidance.

This approach is intended to prevent the emergence of a two-tier workforce in which new staff joining the supplier are working alongside transferred staff but on significantly different terms and conditions. The Code requires new joiners to be offered fair and reasonable terms and conditions of employment

which are, overall, no less favourable than those applying to staff transferred under TUPE. It also requires employers to offer reasonable pension arrangements.

Circular ODPM 03/2003 requires local authorities to make a statement concerning the application of the Code, and this is shown below. Though the Code has not been formally adopted by the Council yet, it is intended that it will be a constituent element of the new Procurement Strategy, and in the meantime the Council will meet the requirements of the statutory guidance in accordance with normal practice.

#### Statement on contracts involving a transfer of staff

Nottingham City Council let no contracts during 2003/04 to which the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts applied. Accordingly, it is certified that the requirements of the Code have been complied with.

## ***Further information***

Further information about the Council's performance can be obtained from;

The Performance Improvement Team  
Nottingham City Council  
The Guildhall  
Burton Street  
Nottingham NG1 4BT

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[jed.francique@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:jed.francique@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

Patricia Davis - 0115 9154692 or  
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[simon.burton@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:simon.burton@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)