Why do we produce a performance plan?
The council is legally obliged to produce a performance plan every year. It is one of the
council's key documents because it illustrates what we have achieved in the last 12
months, what we aim to achieve over the forthcoming year, and how we manage our
performance.
The best value performance plan is one of the ways in which local people and central
government can hold the council to account and assess whether we are providing services
that meet their needs whilst still providing the best value for money.
The information included in this plan can be used to check how well the council uses the
money it receives by investing in Islington's infrastructure and providing services for local
people.

Who should read the performance plan?
The information in the best value performance plan is used by central government and
Islington's district auditor to assess our performance. The plan also contains information
about the council's achievements in the financial year just ended (2003 – 2004).
The plan contains information that can be used as a management tool as well as providing
information for members and staff about the council's priorities, strategies and plans for
the years ahead.
Islington council wants to be transparent in telling all our internal and external
stakeholders, including staff, partners, local people, community groups and businesses,
about our performance and proposals for the future.

What information does the plan contain?
This best value performance plan contains a wealth of useful information, including:
• information regarding the council's key objectives, together with our main plans and
strategies
• information about the action departments will be taking to achieve these objectives
• information concerning the council's finances
• a summary of the comprehensive assessment process (CPA) and what we are doing in
response to it (Improvement Plan 2)
• a summary of performance against relevant performance indicators and other
important targets including best value performance indicators (BVPI), out-turn data,
comparisons with earlier financial years and details of how we perform against other
local authorities
• a summary of how we propose to achieve our standards and targets
• a summary of our action plans following any reviews, such as best value reviews
You can find a full table of contents on page ??.

ISLINGTON IS IMPROVING
Islington is a diverse community with a wide range of needs. The council is committed to
providing high quality services and the best value for everyone who lives, works and
studies in this diverse London borough.
In this performance plan we will demonstrate ways in which exciting new projects – as well
as our improving performance – are transforming Islington into a better place to live, work
and study.

Improving performance
Section 2 of this document, “The Corporate Plan”, sets out the council’s vision of ‘One
Islington’ which builds on our key priorities of performance improvement, regeneration, sustainability and customer focus to improve the quality of services and how they are delivered. The corporate plan outlines exactly how the council will do this, profiling action in the first year plus targets to be developed over the next three years, with each key priority examined in detail. The main achievements against the plan’s priorities for previous years are also highlighted.

**Improving customer satisfaction**
As part of best value, local authorities are required to carry out a general statutory survey every three years to measure residents and customer satisfaction. Islington commissioned a survey by Mori to find out what our customers really think of our services – and the results were impressive. This year’s results show a general increase from those of 2000/01 with ‘overall satisfaction with the council’ rising by 9% from 37% in 2000/01 to 46% this year. You can read more about the Mori survey on page ??.

**Improving housing**
2004 has already been a momentous year for the council. On 5 April, all of our housing stock was transferred to Homes for Islington. Homes for Islington is an arms’ length management organisation (Almo) which has been established to look after all of our housing stock. Homes for Islington will have more than £47m to spend on the housing stock this year. If the project is judged to be delivering a good enough service in a best value inspection at the end of the year, the not-for-profit organisation will receive an additional £156 million in government funds to bring the council’s housing up to the ‘Decent Homes Standard’ by 2010.

On page ?? of this BVPP you can find out more about Homes for Islington and on page ?? you can read an interview with Eamon McGoldrick, the Homes for Islington Chief Executive, who has responsibility for delivering the project.

**Improving the environment**
Islington council is committed to improving the quality of life in the borough for all of its residents. This performance plan details just a few of the major projects, initiatives and policy changes that illustrate our genuine commitment to improving the environment.

On page ?? you can read about how the A1 project will help reinvigorate the A1 road which runs through the heart of the borough, and how improving the landscape, architecture and ‘feel’ of the Holloway Road will have a knock-on effect for everyone who lives, works and studies in the borough.

On page ?? there’s an interview with Sustainability Manager Jane Wildblood, who explains the idea behind the Green Procurement Code and other environmental initiatives.

**Improving education**
Working alongside our partners, CEA @ Islington, exam results continue to improve. In exams completed in 2002, 32.9% of our secondary school pupils gained five or more A* - C grades. By 2003, this figure had risen to 38.5%. This improvement rate of 5.6% over the previous year is a better rate than the national average.

There is still plenty to do, which is why we are investing heavily in our educational infrastructure. On page ?? you can read about New North School, the expansion at Prior Weston, Bridge Special School, and New Church Academy – a brand new secondary school in the centre of the borough that will be ready for use by September 2007.
**Improving safety**
Crime is an issue which affects us all and is one of the issues our residents feel most concerned about. Working alongside the Metropolitan Police and other partners, we are having real success in targeting crime across the borough. The council’s ‘Pub Watch’ scheme has seen reductions in alcohol-related crimes and anti-social behaviour. Our street wardens are targeting crime hot spots to help make people feel safer. We are clamping down on unlicensed saunas and sex shops, and ‘Operation Guinevere’ has seen dozens of addresses targeted in the battle against gun crime.

**Improving our workforce**
Islington is one of the most diverse communities in Britain, and we make it a priority to employ staff who reflect that diversity. In our staff spotlights we introduce a few of Islington’s employees, who come from a broad range of backgrounds and carry out a wide range of jobs, many of whom won or were commended at our staff awards last year. This year’s spotlights include employees who are responsible for the asbestos database, Healthy Islington, asylum seeker support groups, sustainability, children’s centres, housing and community partnerships.

**Improving access to services**
It is our priority to ensure our customers can access our services in ways and at times that suit them. On page ?? you can find out more about Contact Islington, the brand new centre through which all communications with the council are now made. By investing in new technology we can respond more quickly to your needs, and deliver services that are efficient and effective. We want you to be able to get in touch when it suits you. That’s why more of our services are going online every month. Our website has been designed to be as user-friendly as possible. Users can access an ever-increasing range of information and services at the click of a mouse. Our efforts to make the website free of jargon were recognised when we won an Internet Crystal Mark Plain English Award in 2003.

**Improving opportunities**
Islington’s varied communities have their own needs and priorities. In order to serve these communities to the best of our abilities, it is vital that we make sure our services, jobs and opportunities are accessible to everyone. In order to make the council into a truly representative authority, we are committed to employing the best person for the job, and providing services for all, regardless of age, sex, race, religion, sexuality or disability. We closely monitor our services and workforce to ensure ‘equal opportunity’ is not simply a tired old slogan – it’s a true priority.

**Improving Islington**
The council’s ‘One Islington’ vision sets out an ambitious programme of change for the borough, building on our key priorities of regeneration, sustainability, performance improvement and customer focus. We want our community to be socially cohesive and prosperous. We want people to live safely in decent homes in stable communities with access to good quality public services. We want a vibrant local economy and we want people to have access to a full range of leisure, cultural and retail services. Above all we want all residents to have greater control over their lives. As a council we want to enable and empower people in Islington to achieve this.
The future is increasingly about partnership. In order to make our aspirations a reality, we need to plan ahead to deliver the programme. This best value performance plan illustrates what these plans are, why they have been made and how we will turn them into reality.
How did we decide what information to put in the performance plan?
The required contents of the best value performance plan are set out in the Local Government Act 1999. In summary, the legislation says that a performance plan must include information about the following:

- a summary of the authority’s objectives and priorities for improvement in respect of all its functions
- arrangements for addressing the council’s improvement priorities
- a summary of current performance
- a comparison with performance in previous financial years
- performance targets for the current year and subsequent two years
- a statement about contracts awarded in the last year.

Additional information
The Local Government Act 1999 allows authorities to include additional information that may be useful in describing current levels of performance and capacity to improve in the future.

Last year we introduced several new features that proved popular and useful. These included summaries of each section and the ‘staff spotlights’, both of which have again been included this year.

Our performance since 2000
This is the fifth best value performance plan that we have produced. Taken together with the previous four plans, it provides a clear picture of the council’s performance in recent years. If you would like a copy of any of the previous performance plans, please contact Debra Nicholls at the office below.

Contact us
You can let us know what you think of this performance plan by sending an e-mail to Debra Nicholls, Head of Performance & Best Value: debra.nicholls@islington.gov.uk