



Local Government Association

local government matters

facts and figures about local councils 2005 - 2006

produced as part of the local government

reputation
campaign



introduction

Local government matters to local people. Over 19000 elected councillors serve on some 410 local authorities in England and Wales. Over two million people work in local councils, delivering a range of some 700 different services.

The Local Government Association (LGA) wants to improve the public's understanding of how councils work and enhance the reputation of local government itself. This 'snapshot' of just some of their activities has been prepared with this in mind.

We have set out a series of interesting facts and figures to try and reflect the size and scale of local government across the country and to demonstrate how local councils represent their communities. For further information on any of the statistics, you will find a comprehensive list of sources at the end of the publication.

You can find out more about your local council from its website and more about the work of the LGA on www.lga.gov.uk or by phoning LGconnect on 020 7664 3131, email info@lga.gov.uk

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People and voting

Councillors, who are responsible for making decisions about services on behalf of the community, are elected by local people. There are currently over 39.7 million people registered to vote in local elections. Nearly 21,000 elected councillors serve on some 410 local authorities in England and Wales, and they serve for a term of four years.

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- Voter turnout during the June 2005 local elections was an estimated 64 per cent. This was higher than the general election turnout figure of 61.3 per cent.¹
- 55 per cent of people favour future elections by post with no polling stations and 69 per cent consider all-postal voting to be convenient. One in five people state postal voting encouraged them to vote.²
- 78 per cent of people say the minimum voting age should remain at 18 years, only one in five people (22 per cent) suggest the minimum voting age should be lowered to 16 years.³
- People are more likely to know about their local MP than their local councillors: 36 per cent of people know the name of their councillors compared with 42 per cent who can correctly name their MP. However, people know less about Westminster Parliament than their local council.⁴



Photo by Third Avenue, www.third-avenue.co.uk

East Hampshire District Council - school council elections

East Hampshire District Council is offering primary and secondary school students the opportunity to learn about voting. Students get to vote on a hypothetical subject such as 'the age at which you should be able to buy alcohol'. Council officers train pupils and staff in running a ballot and supply boxes and other equipment on the day. Students use the stamping instrument, electoral roll and ballot box.

The voting lessons form part of the district council's broader citizenship programme.

Councillors and local communities

Councillors are responsible for making decisions on behalf of the local community about local services, such as land use, refuse collection and leisure facilities. They also agree the local authority budget and set the policy framework, as well as appointing chief officers and making constitutional decisions. Councillors are elected by local people for a four-year term.

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- There are 20,822 councillors in England and Wales, representing local communities and local interests. This compares to 569 MPs that represent national interests in the House of Commons for England and Wales.⁵
- Residents feel local councillors have most influence over the way public services are provided. 66 per cent of residents say local councillors influence public services compared to senior managers in public services at 36 per cent and national politicians at 10 per cent.⁶
- 83 per cent of councillors say they took up their positions so they could 'serve the community', 50 per cent did so for 'political beliefs', and 46 per cent did so to 'change things'.⁷
- 57 per cent of people agree that councillors play an important role in representing the interests of local people and local communities.⁸
- 52 per cent of councillors are in work, and so carry out council duties alongside their jobs: 25 per cent are in full-time employment, 11 per cent are in part-time employment and 16 per cent are self-employed. The remaining 48 per cent of councillors are either retired or not currently working.⁷
- Many councillors also take on additional unpaid activities, such as school governorships (48 per cent), other voluntary/charity work (50 per cent), and representation on public boards or joint committees (30 per cent).⁷
- The average length of service for a councillor in England and Wales is eight years.⁹



Youth cabinet

West Sussex County Council decided to embark on a project to engage young people in local decision making by setting up a youth parliament.

Joint working has been established and adult cabinet members attend monthly youth cabinet meetings held in the evenings. Adult cabinet members also schedule meetings with their youth cabinet equivalent and invite them to relevant planning meetings, seminars and conferences. During Local Democracy Day adults and young people come together and share ideas on making positive contributions to the community.

The youth cabinet has also established its own website and newsletter which is distributed to schools and youth organisations countrywide.

Standards and improvement

Local councils are heavily scrutinised to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in their service provision. One of the ways this is achieved is through Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). This is carried out by the Audit Commission who measures the performance of local authorities in England by helping them improve services for their local communities. Councils are awarded one of the following ratings: excellent, good, fair, weak or poor, on the basis of their service performance.

- There are currently 69 councils judged to be excellent by CPA, 146 judged to be good, 119 judged to be fair, 44 judged to be weak and 10 judged to be poor. This means that 55 per cent of councils are judged to be excellent or good, with 31 per cent fair, and 14 per cent weak or poor.¹⁰
- Over the last three years, CPA data shows noticeable improvements in scores achieved across all services namely in services for children and young people and vulnerable older people.¹¹
- Councils expect to achieve £1.2 billion in efficiency gains for 2005/06 and achieved £700 million in efficiency gains for 2004/05. These resources are being channelled into frontline services, used to hold down council tax and deliver better services.¹²
- Overall 55 per cent of the public are satisfied with their local authority in 2003, although satisfaction with individual services is often higher.¹³
- 77 per cent of authorities found the CPA process useful in helping them to improve their services.¹⁴
- A range of central government indicators suggest that overall council services have improved by 12.5 per cent since 2000/2001. CPA scores and the perceptions of council officers also suggest that there has been significant improvement.¹⁵



The benefits of improvement

After receiving a poor assessment rating for their benefits service in 2001, Salford City Council took a radical approach to improvement.

The council implemented organisational change and improved partnership working with housing associations and accredited landlords. ICT was improved with an interactive website and an 'ICT in the community' project.

Staff were consulted and involved more with a mentoring, training and development programme focussing on meeting customer need. Emphasis on improved communication has led to mandatory monthly awareness sessions on topics for staff, such as customer awareness and a highly successful home working project has been set up.

The council have consequently received a top rating for their benefits service and been awarded a Charter Mark for excellence in the provision of public services.

Taxing and spending

In order to provide local services, local government spends billions of pounds each year. This money comes from central government, from business rates, and from the council tax.

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- It is estimated that local government will spend £83.8 billion on the day to day running of local services in 2005-2006.¹⁶
- Local government expenditure accounts for 26 per cent of all public expenditure in England.¹⁷
- Local councils spend the largest proportion of their budget on education services (41.7 per cent) and social services (20.3 per cent).¹⁶
- The money local government spends comes from three sources: government grant (52 per cent), non-domestic rates (21 per cent) and council tax (27 per cent).¹⁶
- Research shows that people believe council tax pays for between a quarter and three-quarters of council services. In fact, council tax accounts for only 26 per cent of all costs.¹⁸
- The average council tax in England in 2005-2006 was £1,009 per dwelling, compared to £967 per dwelling in 2004-2005.¹⁹
- It is estimated that, on top of the cost of running local services day-to-day, local councils will also spend £16.7 billion on capital projects. For example, on buildings, vehicles, investing in transport projects or in leisure projects.²⁰



Business centre purchase

Eastleigh Borough Council leased a five-storey building in the town centre. The centre's flexible units provide accommodation to 70-80 businesses which are charged a rent lower than the market price to help them get established. The centre is very successful, with high occupancy levels.

In 2004 the owners of the building decided to sell. This could have led to large rent increases for the businesses, or the council losing the leasehold causing closure of the centre. As a result of new financial powers that councils have for borrowing, Eastleigh bought the building to secure the continuation of the business centre.

Jobs and careers in local government

Local authorities employ a significant number of people across a range of sectors and in a variety of roles. It is one of the largest employers in England and Wales. Education, leisure and social services are just some of the areas to which people are employed within local authorities.

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- Local government employs 2.1 million people in England and 164,000 people in Wales. Almost three-quarters of these jobs are held by women and a quarter by men.²¹
- An estimated 400 occupations and thousands of different job titles exist in local government. For example, officers work in environmental health, planning, surveying, legal work, accountancy, IT, personnel, policy and research.²²
- 58 per cent of employee jobs in local government are in education (teachers and support staff), 20 per cent are in services direct to the public (such as leisure, environmental health and planning), 14 per cent in social services and eight per cent in corporate functions.²¹
- 77 per cent of male employees in local government in England and Wales work full-time, compared to 40 per cent of female workers.²¹
- In January 2004 94 per cent of local authorities reported they were experiencing some recruitment and retention difficulties. Social workers, occupational therapists and environmental health officers were the hardest to recruit. Planning, environmental health and children's social workers were the hardest to retain.²³
- Social services departments in England employ 277,000 staff. Of these, 81 per cent are female and 90 per cent are white.²⁴ It is estimated that local authority social services staff make up about a fifth of the social care workforce as a whole.²⁵



Photo by Third Avenue, www.third-avenue.co.uk

Work experience programme

Chelmsford Borough Council has established an extensive work experience placement programme. Each year between 35 and 40 students join the council and are guided through the work experience process often working in new areas. Placements are supervised by council staff who enjoy their extended roles and students find their time spent with the council rewarding. Some return for vacation work and also take up permanent positions.

Many of the students make valuable contributions to the council's operations as indicated in the 'end of placement' reports completed by council staff, on their progress.

Tackling disadvantage and rebuilding communities

Local authorities have a duty to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of their local community. A number of policies have been put into place at a local level in order to deal with some of the main causes of social exclusion, such as unemployment and the high incidence of children growing up in workless and low-income households.

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- Overall 22 per cent of the population live on low income. But that proportion rises to: 30 per cent of children; 41 per cent of people where the head of the household is from an ethnic minority; and 29 per cent of people in a family with a disabled person.²⁶
- A package of £1.3billion to help local authorities and their partners to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour, education, housing, liveability, health inequalities and worklessness will be spread over two years for deprived local authority districts in England.²⁷
- 63 per cent of local councils have a formal strategy to promote social inclusion and/or combat poverty and deprivation. A further fifth (17 per cent) have such a strategy planned.²⁸
- A total of 91 per cent of authorities have a cross-agency local strategic partnership in their area, which brings together a number of local organisations such as the council, the police and the health service, to improve the quality of life in their locality.²⁹



Photo by Third Avenue, www.third-avenue.co.uk

Full service schools

Greater Hollington is a deprived area where residents encounter problems accessing town centre services.

Greater Hollington Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, with one of their partner agencies, East Sussex County Council, addressed this by developing the 'Full Service School' initiative, which has been mainstreamed across the county. A police liaison officer, children's centre and a Citizens Advice Bureau adviser offer 'early intervention support'. Debt counselling services and smoking cessation projects are available. One school will shortly house a multi-agency hub of police, social services, health and community development workers. This has greatly increased residents' access to key services.

Transport

Councils have a range of transport responsibilities within their local areas from traffic regulation to residential car parking, to road safety and provision of concessionary bus passes. Local authorities are also involved in developing cycle ways and improving public footpaths and rights of way and work alongside bus and rail companies to improve their local public transport networks.

- Local government expenditure on transport rose from £3.3 billion in 1997/1998 to £6.2 billion in 2003/04.³⁰
- It is estimated that 342,212 kilometres of road (excluding motorways) are maintained by local councils in England and Wales.³⁰
- Road pricing schemes in London and Durham have been in effect since 2003 and 2002 respectively. Data shows that the London congestion charge has reduced local congestion by 30 per cent and increased bus journeys by 38 per cent. In Durham the scheme has affected an 85 per cent reduction in traffic levels when compared to 1992 levels.³¹
- There are an estimated 4.0 billion passenger journeys a year in England and Wales on buses and coaches, a slight increase of last year's figure of 3.9 billion.³⁰
- 81 per cent of passengers were satisfied with their overall bus service in England; 70 per cent were satisfied with the value for money of their bus service, and 67 per cent were satisfied with the reliability of their bus service.³²
- Nine out of 10 local authorities with a responsibility for transport have developed or are in the process of developing 'safe routes to school' for pupils in their area, allowing them to walk or cycle to school safely.³³
- 87 per cent of the population live within six minutes walk of a bus stop, however in rural areas the figure is only 75 per cent.³⁴



Link bus service

Nottingham City Council recognised that 28 per cent of employment is located within the city centre while 72 per cent is located outside. In response to this the traditional one-way shuttle park and ride service was altered to a bi-directional travel-to-work-service to the city's two main employment corridors.

The Link 1 and Link 2 bus services do a loop of the city centre, allowing interchanges at all the major bus and tram stops, bus stations and the rail station. The high frequency service ensures that 85 per cent of Nottingham's residents can access employment along these two routes within 45 minutes.

Community safety and crime reduction

Councils work closely with the police to reduce levels of crime and disorder in their communities and enhance the local environment. They consider the crime and disorder implications of every policy and operational decision made by the authority. Many councils employ different types of community wardens, who work alongside the police in their local areas. In addition, they work closely with the police and fire services to develop community initiatives, particularly with schools and young people.

- Nine out of 10 local councils have community safety agreed as a corporate priority.³⁵
- 95 per cent of councils employ at least one or more, full time equivalent community safety officers. 56 per cent of councils employ teams of three or more full time equivalent community safety officers.³⁶
- Crime is tackled in every local area by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). There are 376 CDRPs across England and Wales, which combine local authorities, police and other organisations to tackle local crime and disorder.³⁷
- Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) aim to protect the public from activity that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress; an order placed on an offender will prohibit them from conducting specific anti-social acts or entering defined areas. Between 1999 and 2004, 4649 ASBOs have been used by local authorities and the police, to protect residents in their homes in England and Wales.³⁸
- There are 245 schemes in England and Wales, the majority of them run by local councils. Collectively, they provide 675 street wardens, 349 street crime wardens and 445 neighbourhood wardens.³⁹
- £32 million is spent by local authorities in relation to emergency planning, well above the sum of £19 million allocated by central government. Local authorities provide 'around the clock' emergency planning cover; following new civil contingencies legislation, 81 per cent of planning units estimate a growing need for an increase in staff levels.⁴⁰



Photo by Third Avenue, www.third-avenue.co.uk

Youth inclusion project

The Cardiff Youth Inclusion Project, run in partnership with Cardiff City and County Council's Youth Offending Team, works with at-risk young people. It provides them with positive activity and guidance to reduce the risk of them offending or being socially excluded.

The scheme regularly works with 50 young people and during holiday periods offers activities for 150 young people. Local adults are also recruited as volunteers to assist. Activities include peer education, buddying and one-to-one support as well as fun ones with an educational element such as arts, design and technology, sport and healthy living.

There was a 54 per cent reduction in arrest rates of those on the programme in May/June 2005.

Social services and health

Local authorities provide a range of care and support services to children, families and vulnerable adults in their local area. In particular they provide support for older people, adults with physical or learning disabilities or mental health needs and carers who look after a dependent adult. Councils also co-ordinate local fostering and adoption services.

- In 2003-04, councils in England spent £16.8 billion on personal social services.⁴¹
- An estimated 3.4 million hours of home care were provided to around 355,600 households (368,400 clients) in September 2004. Around 26 per cent of households (92,300) received intensive home care support which is an increase of six per cent from 2003.⁴²
- 216,840 people aged over 65 years were being supported by local authorities in residential, nursing and other care on 31 March 2004.⁴³
- In 2003/2004, expenditure on services for children and families accounted for 24 per cent of total gross current expenditure, whilst expenditure on services for older people accounted for 44 per cent.⁴¹
- An estimated 60,800 children are being looked after by local councils in England. Of these, 68 per cent are in foster placements, 13 per cent are in children's homes and residential schools and 10 per cent are placed with parents.⁴⁴
- Local councils in England provided a total of 22 million days of care to looked after children during the year ending 31 March 2003, 11 per cent more than in 1998/1999.⁴⁴
- 3,500 children were adopted from care during the year ending 31 March 2003, a three per cent increase on figures for the previous year. This means that seven per cent of looked after children, during this period, were adopted - 59 per cent (2,100) were aged between one and four years and 29 per cent (1000) were aged between five and nine years.⁴⁵



Healthy boxes

Penwith District Council is promoting a fitter lifestyle for residents by delivering 'healthy boxes' at 15 drop-off points in the area on a weekly basis. A standard box costs £4.00 and contains eight items of fresh, locally produced fruit and vegetables and a recipe card.

The project has assisted growers in the area by providing a guaranteed market for their produce and gives residents in rural communities easier access to fresh foods.

The project shows positive partnership working between members of the local strategic partnership including Penwith District Council and the Health Promotion Service's, Healthy Living Initiative.

Education and lifelong learning

All county councils and unitary authorities have a major role to support school improvement and a responsibility for schools and education services in their areas. This can range from the provision of adult education services, to play schemes, pupil referral centres and educational psychologists.

- Local education authorities administer 25,500 schools in England; 91 per cent of pupils are taught in nursery, primary and secondary schools, and special schools or pupil referral units that are administered by local authorities.⁴⁶
- Almost 42 per cent of local council day-to-day spending is on education for 2004/5. This equates to approximately £35.2 billion.⁴⁷
- All authorities except one are judged to be achieving the top two CPA scores for their education service.⁴⁸
- There are 378,000 full-time equivalent teachers; and 243,000 full-time equivalent support staff (compared to 152,000 in 1999) in local authority administered nursery, primary, secondary and special schools or pupil referral units in England.⁴⁶
- Nearly 8.3 million children attend schools administered by local authorities, An estimated 581,000 children attend independent schools.⁴⁶
- the average class size in local authority administered primary schools in January 2005 is 25.6, and the average class size in maintained secondary schools was 27.3.⁴⁹



Flying start scheme

Hambleton District Council offers help to primary pupils who need extra support when moving up to middle school. The children are invited to attend Allertonshire Middle School for two weeks after the end of the summer term. This allows them the opportunity to acclimatise to their new surroundings and develop relationships with teachers.

The children attend extra lessons if they need help with specific subjects. Incentives include leisure activities, free swimming, participative arts and also a half-day trip to a visitor centre. The group are asked to return the following year and mentor new children through the scheme.

Housing

Local authorities are expected to draw up strategies for all housing in their areas, based on proper assessments of need, including the needs of homeless people and to make the best use of all the resources available in the light of local circumstances. They are responsible for the maintenance, improvement and development of housing in their local area and are also responsible for grants available to older homes, helping to adapt the homes of elderly and disabled people and funding housing associations to build new housing.

- There are 21,660, 475 households in England and Wales, 30 per cent of these (6.5 million) consist of one-person households - an increase of just over a quarter since 1991.⁵⁰
- The 'Right to Buy' scheme was introduced in 1980 enabling local authority tenants of two years to buy their homes at a discounted price. By the end of March 2004 around 1.65 million houses had been sold through this scheme, in England.⁵¹
- In 2003, 18 per cent of all households in England rented from the social sector, 12 per cent from the council and six per cent from a registered social landlord. This includes renting property from the Council or a Registered Social Landlord.⁵²
- The most important issue for local authorities is increasing the supply of affordable housing. Issues ranked next in importance are meeting decent homes standards and tackling homelessness.⁵³
- The percentage of all housing stock that belongs to local authorities has declined over the years. In 1979 nearly a third (29 per cent) of stock belonged to local councils, this has decreased to 11 per cent in 2004.⁵⁴
- Councils rate their relationship with social landlords as excellent or good at 96 per cent of councils, 82 per cent for GOR and 82 per cent for Housing Corporation. 50 per cent of authorities report excellent or good working relationships with private developers.⁵³



Improving housing conditions

Leicester City Council's renewal strategy aims to provide a decent home for all of its citizens. The council has improved housing conditions using Leicester's in-house home improvement agency.

During 2004-2005 130 homes were 'made decent' through home improvement grants and 155 were adapted using disabled facilities grants. The council carried out 14 environmental schemes which benefited over 400 properties. Leicester advised 1473 households on home maintenance and energy efficiency and as a result 289 homeowners received Home Maintenance grants to make their homes wind and watertight. Additionally 3126 homes were made more secure and 512 properties received other 'handyperson' services via the citywide home maintenance strategy.

Arts, sports and culture

Councils have wide-ranging involvement in the cultural provision of their local communities. In particular they are responsible for local libraries, the management of entertainment venues and the co-ordination and promotion of a variety of events and leisure activities in their local area.

- Local authorities in England operate over 3,000 central and branch libraries and over 500 mobile libraries.⁵⁵
- There are some 3,600 public library service points in England with a vast range and volume of services available to the public. Many are also free at the point of use and 49 million public enquires were fielded by library staff in 2002-2003.⁵⁶
- Each year local government spends over £800 million on public libraries.⁵⁷
- 75 per cent of the public are satisfied with the parks and open spaces provided by local authorities, 54 per cent of the public are satisfied with the sports and leisure facilities provided by local authorities.⁵⁸
- Local councils spend approximately £261.2 million on arts and arts activities. In 2002/03 council net spending on council run venues and contracted out venues equaled 56 per cent, 31 per cent of net spending went to grants to arts organisations or artists.⁵⁹
- 7.7 million adults and 2.1 million children use parks for sporting activities each year. Local councils provide over 21,000 playgrounds and play areas.⁶⁰



Photo by Third Avenue, www.third-avenue.co.uk

Disability sports

Over the last three years Eastbourne Borough Council has taken action to bring a range of sporting activities to young people and adults with disabilities.

A vast array of activities including football, athletics and boccia are organised. Participants are asked to request sports they would like to play and wherever possible these are met. The age of those taking part ranges from six to 70, and each week the scheme attracts up to 170 participants.

Young people and adults with disabilities are given the opportunity to participate in sport in a safe, friendly, social environment.

Environment

Local councils have a number of responsibilities surrounding the sustainability and improvement of their local environment. They oversee a range of activities such as street cleaning, household refuse collection, waste management, recycling schemes and street scene maintenance.

- The amount of municipal waste collected by local authorities in 2003/04 was 29.1 million tonnes.⁶¹
- The amount of recycled household material collected through kerbside schemes rose to 1.3 million tonnes in 2002/03, an increase of 69 per cent from the previous year. The proportion of the households covered by kerbside schemes rose from 58 per cent in 2001/2 to 67 per cent in 2002/3.⁶²
- 17.7 per cent of household waste (4.5 million tonnes) was collected for recycling in 2003/04, up from 14.5 per cent in 2002/03.⁶²
- 84 per cent of the public are satisfied with the household waste collection carried out by local authorities.⁵⁸
- The number of abandoned vehicles reported to local authorities in England and Wales rose from 597,305 in 2000-2001 to 828,534 in 2002-2003 - an increase of 28 per cent.⁶³
- 68 per cent of the public are satisfied with the waste recycling facilities provided by local authorities.⁵⁸



Food on the go

Businesses in Glossop are being invited by High Peak Borough Council to do their bit to improve the town's environment. Those selling food or drink are asked to sign up to a voluntary code which encourages them to keep the area outside their shop tidy, for example provide a bin, reduce product packaging and display the campaign poster supplied by ENCAMS.

The scheme has led to businesses working together with the local authority to look at ways of tackling litter. A recent survey of street cleanliness shows a marked improvement between January and April 2005.

Planning and regulation

Councils have different levels of planning responsibilities. They deal mainly with planning applications and enquiries, and will guide development in accordance with the local development plan and framework.

Councils receive many types of planning applications, which range from listed building and conservation area consents, to permissions to display advertisements. Councils also have regulatory responsibilities, such as trading standards and environmental health.

- Local authorities in England and Wales estimate spending £649.3 million on planning and development activities. In addition, £262.8 million is spent on economic development and promotion.⁶⁴
- In 2003/04, district planning authorities in England received 675,000 planning applications, a six per cent increase on figures for the previous year. 625,000 planning applications were decided - the highest numbers in 14 years, where figures have been rising consecutively for eight years.⁶⁵
- 92 per cent of applications decided were granted compared with 91 per cent the previous year; and 73 per cent of all planning decisions were made within eight weeks, seven per cent higher than in 2002/03.⁶⁵
- During the last year (2002) local council environmental health officers carried out 544,000 inspection visits to food premises. Forty five per cent of the businesses inspected were forced to take some kind of corrective action.⁶⁶
- More than 800,000 trading standards complaints from customers were received by 200 local councils and around 3,500 prosecutions were carried by councils.⁶⁶



Turkey trot

Selby District Council found an original way to alert consumers to the importance of food hygiene and cooking. The week before Christmas, staff from the environmental health department dressed up as a turkey and a chicken and handed out leaflets at local supermarkets. These gave advice to shoppers on how to cook poultry safely. Over Christmas many families are struck down by food poisoning due to cooking poultry incorrectly.

Besides providing entertainment, the use of the turkey and chicken costumes captured local media attention to spread the message as far and wide as possible.

Cities, seaside and countryside

Tourism can be a principal form of revenue for many local economies, and can be an important factor in regenerating communities. Councils in different areas may take into consideration a range of factors when developing their tourism strategies. For instance, those in coastal, seaside areas will have different priorities to those in city areas. Councils see the redevelopment and enhancement of their town centres, whether rural or urban, as important objectives. Most councils work closely with their business community, often through a dedicated economic development department.

- Local councils authorities in England and Wales estimate to spend around six per cent of their leisure and recreation budget on tourism, equating to some £132 million.⁶⁷
- In 2004 UK residents made 126 million visits and trips and engaged in 408 million overnight stays, spending £24.3 million.⁶⁸
- Around 25 million trips were made to the UK by overseas visitors, spending approximately £11.9 billion.⁶⁹
- In the UK, 22 per cent of visitor attractions are owned by local authorities. Nearly a quarter of the visits made to attractions each year are to local authority-owned ones.⁷⁰
- Local councils provide and manage 84 per cent of tourism and information centres in England.⁷¹
- There are an estimated 2.1 million jobs in tourism in the UK, some 7.4 per cent of all people in employment. There are more jobs in tourism than in construction or transport.⁷²
- Tourism is one of the largest industries in the UK, worth approximately £74.2 billion to the UK economy.⁷³



Paths to prosperity

East Sussex County Council's 'Paths to Prosperity' scheme is a real winner with the public and local businesses. Twenty-nine different leaflets have been produced giving details of rural walks and providing information about the difficulty and length of the trip. Useful information about local pubs, bed and breakfasts, cafes and other services on or near the route are also listed.

The three year programme will eventually cover 60 new and improved routes with the aim of attracting more visitors to the area and boosting the local economy. So far 321 local businesses have joined up to the scheme and four new websites to promote the scheme have been created.

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