

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-089-2009/10
Date of meeting: 1 February 2010



Portfolio: Performance Management.

Subject: Corporate Plan, Medium-Term Aims 2010/11 - 2013/14, and Key Objectives 2010/11.

Responsible Officer: Steve Tautz (01992 564180).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the proposed structure and format of the Council's new Corporate Plan for the period from 2010/11 to 2013/14, be agreed;**
- (2) That the Council's proposed Medium-Term Aims for 2010/11 to 2013/14, and the draft specific Key Objectives for 2010/11, be agreed;**
- (3) That arrangements be made for an informal joint Cabinet/Management Board meeting to be held as soon as possible, to further inform the content of the new Corporate Plan; and**
- (4) That the proposed structure and format of the new Corporate Plan, the proposed Medium-Term Aims for 2010/11 to 2013/14, and the draft specific Key Objectives for 2010/11, be considered by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

Executive Summary:

The Council Plan for 2006/07 to 2009/10 is the authority's current key strategic planning document, which set out service delivery priorities over the four-year period, with strategic themes matching those of the Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy for the Epping Forest District.

As the current Council Plan has now entered its final year, initial work has commenced on the development of a new corporate plan to take the authority forward over the period from 2010/11 to 2013/14. This report highlights a number of issues in respect of the development of the new Council Plan, to be known henceforth as the Corporate Plan.

The structure of the current Council Plan is largely based around the Council's existing Medium-Term Priorities, which were first adopted in 2002. As part of the development of the new Corporate Plan, the Cabinet has identified a range of new Medium-Term Aims for 2010/11 to 2013/14. As a result of the alignment of the Council's business, budget, and workforce planning and development processes into a clear framework to enable the authority to focus on key priorities and improve performance, it is also necessary to now adopt the Council's Key Objectives for 2010/11.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The identification of its Medium-Term Aims and Key Objectives provides an opportunity for the Council to focus specific attention on how existing areas for improvement will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered for local people.

It is important that relevant performance management processes are in place to review and monitor performance against the Council's aims and key objectives, to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of under performance.

Other Options for Action:

The Council could decide not to set any Medium-Term Aims for 2010/11 to 2013/14 or specific Key Objectives for 2010/11, although this might mean that opportunities for improvement were lost. The publication of a new four-year Corporate Plan provides an opportunity for the Council to articulate its Medium-Term Aims and to develop relevant Key Objectives for each of the next four years.

Failure to monitor and review performance against aims and key objectives, and to take corrective action where necessary, could have negative implications for the Council's reputation and for judgements made about the authority in the Comprehensive Area Assessment and similar corporate assessment processes.

Report:

Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Priorities - 2010/11 to 2013/14

1. The Council's Corporate Plan needs to give regard to the vision for the district set out by the Local Strategic Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy. It also informs all other plans and helps prioritise resources to provide quality services and value for money. The Corporate Plan does not cover everything that the authority does, focusing instead on those issues that matter most to local people, national priorities set by the government and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district. As a strategic document, the Corporate Plan does not contain specific information on the wide range of services that the authority provides, or how it delivers statutory duties or enforces legislation. Details of the provision of services can be found in the individual directorate business plans produced each year.
2. The Corporate Plan is an important element in the Council's Performance Management Framework and corporate business planning processes, in that it informs the content of annual directorate business plans to illustrate the work that directorates and services perform are directly contributing towards the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives. The Corporate Plan also provides the policy foundation for the authority's Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The hierarchy of the Council's strategic framework is illustrated at Appendix 1 to this report
3. As the current Council Plan has now reached its final year, it is necessary to commence work on the initial development of a new Corporate Plan to take the authority forward from 2010/11 to 2013/14. The development of the new Corporate Plan needs to be undertaken in conjunction with the similar development of the new Sustainable Community Strategy for the district by the Local Strategic Partnership, and will need to clearly set out how the Council will deliver its aims and key objectives over the next four years, to ensure improved outcomes for local people. The development of the new Sustainable Community Strategy is currently at a preparatory stage, and is being informed by on-going consultation

and engagement activity, and through a community conference held in December 2009. The new Sustainable Community Strategy will be adopted by the Local Strategic Partnership Board and the Council in June 2010. The new Corporate Plan also needs to reflect the work of the Council in the development of a Local Development Framework for the district, to replace the current Local Plan.

4. The structure of the Council's Corporate Plan has traditionally been based around the authority's Medium-Term Priorities, which were first adopted in 2002. As part of the development of the new Corporate Plan, these priorities were reviewed to ensure their continuing suitability, and a draft set of new Key Priority Objectives for 2010/11 was agreed by the Cabinet at its last meeting. Since their adoption in draft form in early January 2010, these new objectives have been subject to some further review as a result of scrutiny, in order that they can represent the strategic direction of the Council for the next four years and that specific actions can be generated to secure their achievement. The final version of these new Corporate Plan Medium-Term Aims is attached as Appendix 2 to this agenda, for adoption by the Cabinet.

5. The new Corporate Plan will need to evidence that the Council is aware of local issues, with a focus on vulnerable people, and that improved outcomes for local people are being, and will continue to be, delivered. The Plan will need to include specific actions to address national, local and service improvement priorities, that are financed, resourced and have a timescale for completion. The new Corporate Plan will therefore be closely linked to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, outlining the financial resources available to fulfil specific priorities and objectives.

6. The development of the new Corporate Plan is being progressed by the Council's Management Board, and the proposed structure and format of the new Plan is attached as Appendix 3 to this report. It is intended that the new Corporate Plan should be a more focused strategic document than the previous Council Plan, complementing the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy and reflecting those issues and priorities where the Council can have maximum impact. Key Objectives to be included within the Corporate Plan will reflect the Council's Medium-Term Aims for 2010/11 to 2013/14, and identify appropriate actions designed to achieve the aims. It is proposed that an informal joint meeting be held between the Cabinet and Management Board in the near future to discuss and inform the content of the new Corporate Plan.

7. The new Corporate Plan will be submitted to the Council for formal adoption in June 2010. As with previous versions of the former Council Plan, the new Corporate Plan will need to be developed in consultation with customers and service users, voluntary organisations and other public sector organisations, members and staff. Appropriate public and other stakeholder consultation will need to be undertaken during its preparation, and the new Corporate Plan will be considered by the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny on a regular basis during its development. It is intended that the published version of the new Corporate Plan will be somewhat more modern in its appearance than the former Council Plan. A range of relevant photographs, images and graphics will be used to 'illustrate' the new Corporate Plan, the design and production costs of which can be met from within existing budget provision.

8. The Cabinet is requested to agree the proposed structure and format of the Council's new Corporate Plan for the period from 2010/11 to 2013/14, and the proposed Medium-Term Aims for 2010/11 to 2013/14.

9. Whilst the Corporate Plan covers the medium-term (four years), it is also necessary for the Council to identify its immediate priorities for each year, and for these to be factored into the Council's corporate planning arrangements. The identification of Key Objectives for

2010/11 is addressed in the next section of this report.

Key Objectives 2010/11

10. During the last year the Council has implemented arrangements for the alignment of its business, budget, and workforce planning and development processes into a clear framework to enable the authority to focus on priorities, improve performance and the way that performance is managed, and to improve communication and consultation on key priorities. These arrangements have recently been highlighted as an area of best practice by the Improvement and Development Agency.

11. As a consequence of these new arrangements, the Council's key objectives for 2009/10 were agreed by the Cabinet in March 2009, much earlier in the planning cycle than in previous years. However, in order to improve the authority's planning processes further, it was accepted at that time that the identification of key objectives for 2010/11 and future years would need to be brought forward, in order to ensure alignment with the preparation of the budget and directorate business plans for next year. It is therefore necessary to now identify the Council's Key Objectives for 2010/11. Details of the proposed Key Objectives for 2010/11 are attached as Appendix 4 to this report.

12. The Key Objectives adopted by the Cabinet for 2010/11 will be incorporated within a Strategic Action Plan to the new Corporate Plan, and will also be reflected within respective directorate business plans for 2010/11. Formal performance reports against the Key Objectives will be made to the Cabinet and the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel after six months and at year-end. The Strategic Action Plan of the new Corporate Plan will be fully reviewed at the end of each year, and will updated annually to reflect new priorities emerging from such sources as the bi-annual Place Survey, the interim Tracker Survey and the annual Local Strategic Partnership Stakeholder Conference.

13. The Cabinet is requested to agree the Council's proposed draft Key Objectives for 2010/11. This report will be considered by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during February and March 2010.

Resource Implications:

The design and production costs of the new Corporate Plan can be met from within the existing budget of the Performance Improvement Unit. Resource requirements for any specific key priority objective set out in this report will need to be identified by the relevant service director and reflected in the Council's Budget process.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal implications or Human Rights Act issues arising from the recommendations in this report, which ensure that the Council sets appropriate corporate priorities, and monitors progress and reports against the achievement of these priorities.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations in this report for the Council's commitment to the Nottingham Declaration for climate change, the corporate Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative, or any Crime and Disorder issues within the District.

Consultation Undertaken:

The new Corporate Plan will be developed in consultation with customers and service users,

voluntary organisations and other public sector organisations, members and staff, and will be considered by the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny on a regular basis during its development. The specific key objectives for 2010/11 will be considered by the Scrutiny Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during February and March 2010.

Background Papers:

None.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

The respective service director will have identified any risk management issues arising from proposals for the Council's key priority objectives for 2009/10, as set out in this report, therefore no assessment undertaken.

Equality and Diversity:

The content of this report has no specific equality implications. However, the respective service director will have identified any equality issues arising from proposals for the Council's key priority objectives for 2010/11.

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? N/A

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?
N/A

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?
N/A.