

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-099-2009/10

Date of meeting: 19 April 2010



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Performance Management.

Subject: Medium-Term Aims 2010/11 to 2013/14 and Key Objectives 2010/11

Responsible Officer: Steve Tautz (01992 564180).

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Council's Medium-Term Aims for 2010/11 to 2013/14, and the specific Key Objectives for 2010/11, be agreed.

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. 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:

Medium-Term Aims - 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. 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 meeting in February 2010. Since their adoption in draft form, these new objectives have been subject to further review and consideration by overview and 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 report, for adoption by the Cabinet.

4. The Cabinet is requested to agree the proposed Medium-Term Aims for 2010/11 to 2013/14.

5. 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

6. 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.

7. 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 agree the Council's Key Objectives for 2010/11.

8. A draft set of new Key Objectives for 2010/11 was also agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting in February 2010. Since their adoption in draft form, these new objectives have also been subject to further review and consideration by overview and scrutiny, in order to ensure that they represent specific actions to secure the achievement of the Council's Medium-Term Aims in 2010/11. The final version of these Key Objectives is attached as Appendix 3 to this report, for adoption by the Cabinet.

9. 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 be updated annually to reflect new priorities emerging from such sources as the biennial Place Survey, the interim Tracker Survey and the annual Local Strategic Partnership Stakeholder Conference.

10 The Cabinet is requested to agree the Council's proposed Key Objectives for 2010/11.

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

Equality and Diversity

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. 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.

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