

**Report to: Finance and Performance
Management Overview and Scrutiny
Panel
Date of meeting: 25 April 2006**



Portfolio: Finance and Performance Management

Subject: Draft Council Plan 2006-2010

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Committee Secretary: S G Hill (EXT 4249)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Scrutiny Panel note that the timescale for consultation on the draft Council Plan for 2006 to 2010 has been extended by a period of two months.

Report:

1. (Head of Human Resources and Performance Management) The Scrutiny Panel has previously considered the proposed format and structure of the new Council Plan for 2006 to 2010, and agreed the draft document for consultation purposes.
2. The new Council Plan and its aims and objectives have since been subject to consultation with members, residents, partner agencies and other local and representative organisations, so as to ensure that actions and resources are targeted at those areas of greatest importance. A period of one month was set for the consultation period and those agencies and other organisations that have been formally consulted in relation to the draft Plan are detailed in Appendix 1 to this report. Consultation in respect of the new Council Plan has also been promoted by articles in the 'Forester' magazine, through the local press, and at the Leader of the Council's weekly media briefing. The draft Plan is available at the Council's information centres and can be downloaded from the website, where a consultation form can also be completed on-line.
3. The results of the consultation undertaken in respect of the draft Council Plan were due to be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 April 2006, with the document then being referred to the Cabinet later this month and the Council meeting on 24 April 2006 for adoption. However, the level of response to the consultation exercise is currently extremely low, and no more than about twenty responses had been received at the time of the preparation of this report. In addition, the originally agreed consultation timescale for the Council Plan did not meet the requirements of the Code of Practice on Consultation and Policy Appraisal, agreed with the local voluntary and community sectors as part of the Epping Forest District Local Compact, that identifies that wherever possible a twelve week period will be allowed for consultation with the voluntary sector.
4. In view of the need to ensure that consultation on the Council's future priorities is as inclusive and accessible as possible, it was considered appropriate for the consultation period on the draft Council Plan to be extended. Given the key role of the local

voluntary and community agencies in representing sectors of the district, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel has agreed that the consultation period should be extended by two months, in order to comply with the provisions of the Local Compact.

5. The results of the consultation undertaken in respect of the draft Council Plan will now be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 6 July 2006. The draft document will then be referred to the Cabinet on 10 July 2006 and the Council meeting on 25 July 2006 for adoption, before being professionally designed and printed in accordance with the Council's corporate identity guidelines.

Reason for decision:

6. To ensure that consultation on the Council Plan and the authority's future priorities is as inclusive and accessible as possible, and to comply with the provisions of the Epping Forest District Local Compact.

Options considered and rejected:

7. To not extend the consultation period in respect of the draft Council Plan None. The Council is expected to identify its key priorities and the content of the previous Council Plan was highlighted as a weakness in the first round of second-tier Comprehensive Performance Assessments, and the contribution of residents, partners and service users is critical to this process.

Consultation undertaken:

8. Consultation in relation to the recommendation contained in this report has been undertaken with the Finance and Performance Management Portfolio Holder, the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel, and the Management Board.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Consultation on the new Council Plan can be met from within existing budget provision

Personnel: None

Land: None

Council Plan/BVPP reference: The Council's Customer Charter sets out a commitment to consult service users and residents

Relevant statutory powers: None

Background papers: None

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: None

Key Decision reference: (if required) None