

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 5 March 2013



Portfolio: Leader (Councillor C. Whitbread)

Subject: Corporate Plan 2011-2015 - Key Objectives 2013/14

Responsible Officer: S. Tautz (01992 564180)

Democratic Services Officer: A. Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Committee consider the Council's proposed key objectives for 2013/14, and comment to the Cabinet as appropriate; and**
- (2) That, subject to the concurrence of the Cabinet, progress against actions to achieve the key objectives be reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis.**

Executive Summary:

1. The annual identification of key objectives provides an opportunity for the Council to focus specific attention on how areas for improvement will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered over the coming year. The key objectives are intended to provide a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for each year, containing specific actions to achieve desired outcomes.
2. The key objectives are not intended to reflect everything that the Council does, but rather to focus on national priorities set by the Government and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district. The key objectives represent the Council's high-level initiatives and over-arching goals for each year, and are agreed alongside the setting of the annual budget, to ensure that the achievement of actions is adequately resourced.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

3. The identification of the Council's medium-term aims over the four-year period of the Corporate Plan, and the annual adoption of key objectives and service delivery priorities, provides an opportunity for the authority to focus specific attention on how areas for improvement will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered.

Other Options for Action:

4. The Council could decide not to adopt key objectives for 2013/14, although this could mean that opportunities for improvement are lost. Failure to monitor and review performance against key objectives and outcomes, and to take corrective action where necessary, could have negative implications for the reputation of the Council and for judgements made about the progress of the authority.

Report:

5. The Corporate Plan for 2011 to 2015 includes an annual supplement reflecting the Council's key objectives for each of the four years to 2014/15.
6. The key objectives are intended to address national and local priorities and specific service challenges, and to provide a clear statement of the Council's overall objectives for each year. The key objectives contain specific delivery actions to be achieved through projects and initiatives, and measurable outcomes to demonstrate progress. Performance against the individual actions is currently reported to the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on a six-month and year-end basis.
7. The Cabinet will be aware that the Council has aligned its business, budget, and workforce planning and development processes over recent years. The key objectives are agreed alongside the setting of the budget each year, and this approach also provides an opportunity for the delivery of the objectives to be reflected within the annual Directorate Business Plans produced for each service area, therefore linking various elements of the Council's performance management framework. In addition to the progress review arrangements for the key objectives set out above, performance against the achievement of the delivery actions within individual Business Plans is also reviewed with the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) every six-months.
8. In order to complete the Business Plans for 2013/14, Management Board has identified a range of proposed key objectives and supporting deliverables, drawn initially from objectives developed for the Chief Executive in discussion with the Leader of the Council. Current progress in respect of the key objectives for 2012/13 has also been reviewed by the Board, and a number of objectives have been carried forward from 2012/13 (with new or revised actions and outcomes), alongside new objectives responding to other issues of national or local importance. The draft key objectives for 2013/14 were considered as part a joint Cabinet and Management Board meeting held in December 2012, and will be circulated separately. The Leader and other members of the Cabinet will present the proposed objectives to the Committee.
9. The Committee is requested to consider the proposed key objectives for 2013/14. The draft objectives will also be considered by the Cabinet on 11 March 2013, and the views of the Committee in this respect will be reported to the Cabinet meeting.
10. Once adopted, the key objectives will be published on the Council's website as a supplement to the Corporate Plan, alongside details of outturn progress against the objectives for 2012/13, later in the year.
11. It is important that relevant performance management processes are in place to review and monitor performance against the key objectives, to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of slippage or under performance. In order to improve focus on the key objectives, it is suggested that, from 2013/14, progress against actions to achieve the key objectives should be reported to the Cabinet and the Overview and the Committee, on a quarterly, rather than six-monthly as at present, basis.

Resource Implications:

Resource requirements for actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2013/14, will be identified by the responsible service director/chief officer and reflected in the budget for the year.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2013/14, will be identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2013/14, will be identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Consultation Undertaken:

The draft key objectives for 2013/14 have been considered by Management Board, and were reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 March 2013.

Background Papers:

Corporate Plan 2011-2015. In order to minimise production costs, the Corporate Plan is currently only published on the website, although physical copies are available on request from the [Performance Improvement Unit](#).

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

A decision not to adopt key objectives for 2013/14, could mean that opportunities for improvement are lost. Failure to monitor and review performance against key objectives and outcomes, and to take corrective action where necessary, could have negative implications for the reputation of the Council and for judgements made about the authority.

Relevant risk management issues arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2013/14, will be identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Equality:

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2013/14, will be identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.