

Report to: Cabinet

Report Reference: C/014/2006-07.
Date of Meeting: 10 July 2006.



Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Draft Council Plan 2006-2010.

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Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 56 4470).

Recommendations:

- (1) That, in respect of responses received to the consultation on the draft Council Plan for 2006-10, the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be considered; and**
- (2) That, subject to (1) above, the draft Council Plan for 2006-10 be recommended to the Council for adoption.**

Report:

1. Overview and Scrutiny 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. A copy of the most recent draft version of the Plan is attached as Appendix 1 to this report, and the Cabinet will note that the draft Plan reflects the portfolio structure of the authority that was in operation until the recent annual council meeting.
2. Over the last three months, the draft Council Plan and its aims and objectives have been subject to consultation with members, staff, 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. Those agencies, individuals and other organisations that have been formally consulted in relation to the draft Plan are detailed in Appendix 2. Articles in the 'Forester' magazine have also promoted consultation in respect of the new Council Plan, through the local press, and at the former Leader of the Council's weekly media briefing. The draft Plan has been available at the Council's information centres and for downloaded from the website, where an on-line consultation form has also been available. A copy of the feedback form issued with the draft Council Plan is attached as Appendix 3.
3. The level of response to the consultation exercise has been extremely low and, despite the extension of the consultation period to ensure that consultation on the Council's future priorities was as inclusive and accessible as possible, only twenty responses had been received at the time of the preparation of this report. Fourteen of the responses received following the consultation exercise were submitted using the feedback form issued with the draft Council Plan. Of these fourteen responses:
 - 100% found the draft Council Plan very or fairly interesting;
 - 85.7% found the draft Council Plan very or fairly easy to read;
 - 85.7% found the format of the draft Council Plan very or fairly easy to follow;

- 57.1% found it very or fairly easy to find information that they may have been looking for in the draft Council Plan;
 - 100% thought that the draft Council Plan informed readers about the role of the Council very or fairly well;
 - 100% thought that the draft Council Plan informed readers about the issues that the district faces over the next four years very or fairly well;
 - 64.2% thought that the draft Council Plan reflected the priorities of local people very or fairly well;
 - 50% thought that the draft Council Plan made clear the Council's proposed priorities for 2006 to 2010 very or fairly well.
5. Six responses to the draft Council Plan were made in writing, without using the feedback form. These responses, together with those written comments submitted as part of the completed feedback forms, are summarised in Appendix 4 to this report. The names of partner and other organisations commenting on the draft Council Plan are set out with the organisations' respective comments, but feedback and comment submitted by individual residents or members of staff has been anonymised. Where a comment or proposed revision seems sensible or appropriate, or seeks to clarify inconsistency, these have been included within the version of the draft Council Plan circulated with this report. Other comments requiring consideration by members are highlighted in italicised text. The Overview and scrutiny Committee considered the consultation responses to the draft Council Plan at its meeting on 6 July 2006, and the views of that Committee will be reported at the Cabinet meeting.
4. The Cabinet is requested to consider the draft Council Plan and the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with regard to consultation responses, and to recommend to the Council that the Plan be adopted.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

6. To ensure that the Council's future priorities are clearly articulated to residents and partners and that the priorities represent the views of residents and partners.

Other Options for Action:

7. 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. As set out in Appendix 2.

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.