

Service Plan: Democratic Services – 2007/08

Part 1. Purpose of the Service

To facilitate the Council's decision-making and scrutiny processes, support Members in fulfilling their roles and publish information on decisions and the democratic process. To lead work on and inform areas of the CGI Improvement Plan relating to Member development and the political management structure. The outcomes are properly made decisions and a well-informed public who know how to get involved in local government if they wish, along with the appropriate structures to enable SCDC to establish and maintain high standards of corporate governance led by Members and officers with the right information and skills to do the job effectively.

Part 2. Plans to Improve Your Service in 2007/08

#	Action	Supporting Information (eg resources, outputs, outcomes and risks)	Complete by Month	Responsible Officer
Actions to Improve Customer Service (Council priority):				
1	<p>Improve external communication and investigate new ways to improve public access to and involvement in decision-making with a particular focus on public participation at meetings, transparency of decision-making and accessibility by hard-to-reach groups. Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the organisation of evening Cabinet and other Committee meetings and those, which may take place around the district. • Investigate public speaking at Planning Committee, to be developed in conjunction with a smaller committee considering fewer applications. • E-mail Agenda link to parish councils and take steps to encourage them to publicise meetings within their localities. • Ensure Agenda, reports and minutes are available in large text and in different languages. 	<p>Resources: Within existing, though with potential problems with servicing arrangement (see risks).</p> <p>Outputs: Well-organised evening and external Cabinet meetings. A firm case in favour or against public speaking at Planning. Agenda links e-mailed to T&PCs. Evidence of wide distribution within localities. Agenda clearly to be available in large text and in different languages.</p> <p>Outcomes: A better-informed public with new and enhanced means to access to the Council's decision-making processes.</p> <p>Risks: Implications for staff of evening and/or external Cabinet and other meetings. (Risk 1) May lead to resource gaps depending on take-up of the service.</p>	<p>Oct 07 & Mar 08</p> <p>Jul 07</p> <p>May 07</p> <p>Jul 07</p>	<p>RM/HA/PA</p> <p>IS</p> <p>HA/All</p> <p>IS</p>
Affordable Housing and Growth Area milestones (Council priorities):				

2	<p>Provide an efficient and effective administrative service to support formal Member bodies involved in meeting affordable and growth area milestones, overseeing the successful establishment of the Northstowe Development Control Committee and reviewing the operation and effectiveness of such bodies where appropriate. Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with lead officers and Members to undertake a review of the process for approval of key LDF documents. • Oversee the successful set-up and operation of the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee. 	<p>Resources Review within existing; new arrangements may have resource consequences in terms of officer time commitment.</p> <p>Outputs: A clear consensus on the best way forward. Appropriate administrative arrangements for the establishment of the Northstowe DC Committee and Forum</p> <p>Outcomes: A more efficient process for developing and approving LDF documents. Efficient and effective joint planning arrangements which will assist in delivering the growth agenda</p> <p>Risk: Member and Officer opposition to change, to be overcome by hard evidence and thorough analysis of alternative options. Resource constraints, to be addressed by review of staffing levels. Servicing the Northstowe DC Committee and associated member meetings (e.g. Development Control Forum) will have significant implications for resourcing levels and capacity within the team. Also it is subject to the receipt of adequate government funding over a 3-year period. Should this funding not be forthcoming it will be necessary to re-prioritise the team workload accordingly, with an understanding that we may have to drop other meeting to enable us to service the statutory joint planning committee.</p>	<p>Sep 07</p> <p>Jun 07 (set-up) Sep 07 (operation)</p>	<p>RM</p> <p>RM/IS</p>
<p>Actions to mainstream Council policies (Community Safety, Climate Change and Equalities):</p>				

3	<p>Provide an efficient and effective administrative service to support formal Member bodies involved in the development and implementation of corporate policies, strategies and other initiatives, reviewing the operation and effectiveness of such bodies where appropriate. Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lead administrative work to ensure that the Climate Change Group carries out its terms of reference and reports back to Council within agreed timescales. 	<p>Resources: Within existing</p> <p>Outputs: The completion of a comprehensive work programme with recommendations to Council</p> <p>Outcomes: A clear strategy for addressing the climate change issue within South Cambridgeshire supported by an action plan with SMART targets.</p> <p>Risk: Slippage of timetable, to be addressed through SMART project objectives.</p>	Mar 08	IS
Actions to deliver LAA targets:				
4	<p>Support the work of the Climate Change Group in reviewing the Council's Climate Change plan in pursuance of aim 6 of the existing Community Strategy (A high quality environment)</p>	<p>Resources: See 3 above.</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <p>Risk:</p>	Mar 08	IS
Actions to improve the service provided by your team:				

5	<p>Remain at the forefront of improvements to the Council's decision-making structures, focussing during 2007-08 on the implementation of the CGI Improvement Plan and on clarifying internal processes for the benefit of officers, members and residents. Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake further review of the Constitution and decision-making structures with a focus on the role of Cabinet, Portfolio Holder meetings and responsibilities and Advisory Groups. • Work with stakeholders to undertake review of the Scrutiny and Overview function. • Communicate clear deadlines for the receipt of reports and the dispatch of Agendas. Agree appropriate ways to enforce such deadlines. • Communicate clear parameters for the type of meetings we are able to service within existing resources. 	<p>Resources: Within existing, using the support of the IdeA and other organisations wherever it is available.</p> <p>Outputs: Propose revisions to put to the Constitution Review Working Party, Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Council as appropriate. Production of clear deadlines and parameters.</p> <p>Outcomes: Clearer, more transparent and accountable decision-making structures. A more effective means of constructively challenging the executive and contributing to policy development. Agreeing a clear and robust system to manage the internal process for the production of draft and final reports. To enable a clearer focus on our core activities of supporting political management arrangements and Member bodies responsible for the development and implementation of policy.</p> <p>Risk: Failure to address the CGI concerns (risk 2) Operational difficulties caused by fewer Council meetings (risk 3). Inability to cope with increased workload within existing resources (risk 4). Failure to comply with statutory deadlines (risk 6). Possible consequences of the Local Government White Paper (risk 7.)</p>	<p>March 08</p> <p>March 08</p> <p>Jul 07</p> <p>Sept 07</p>	<p>RM</p> <p>PA</p> <p>HA/MJ</p> <p>MJ</p>
<p>Actions to improve the efficiency or Value for Money of your service:</p>				

6	<p>Continue to seek ways to improve the way we work, having regard to the need for economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To schedule fortnightly team meetings with a standing item on service improvements. To reduce the number of hard copy Agenda printed by 10% (<i>add detailed figures – current and target</i>) 	<p>Resources: Within existing. Savings should result from reduced print runs.</p> <p>Outputs: Fortnightly team meetings in the diary. Target to reduce printed agenda achieved.</p> <p>Outcomes: More effective co-ordination of team workload, the identification of pressure points on particular officers and ways to address them. Cost savings from reduced print runs and more widespread use of e-government.</p> <p>Risk: Resistance to the reduction in distribution of hard copy.</p>	<p>Apr 07</p> <p>Mar 08</p>	<p>RM</p> <p>All</p>
Actions to develop and support your workforce and learning:				
7	<p>Prioritise Member development and lead on initiatives to assist the process. To ensure that members of the team have the necessary skills to carry out their roles effectively and to support all officers within the organisation to maintain constructive relationships with Members and develop their understanding of the decision-making process. Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development and implementation of an integrated, needs-based and comprehensive Member development programme. Identify and develop a programme to address gaps in knowledge of the Modern.Gov system within the team and amongst all Members and officers, including the provision of e-learning modules for Contact Centre staff. Identify and meet, subject to resources, training needs within the team in terms of refresher training and career development. 	<p>Resources: Within existing officer resources. Corporate training budget may be available to meet professional training requirements.</p> <p>Outputs: Design and implement a Member development programme, working with colleagues in legal and HR as appropriate. Carry out training sessions (workshop, electronic) for the team all selected officers around the building. Identify training need and meet subject to resource constraints.</p> <p>Outcomes: Members who receive the right training for their experience, skills and positions on the Council. Within the team, a consistent and thorough working knowledge of Modern.gov. Effective understanding of how the system operates across the Council. Appropriate professional and self-development for staff leading to enhanced service delivery and the ability to meet new challenges.</p> <p>Risk: Resource constraints within the team and across the organisation. Lack of buy-in to Member Development Programme. Team training budget insufficient to meet full needs.</p>	<p>Jul 07</p> <p>Dec 07</p> <p>Mar 08</p>	<p>GM</p> <p>HA</p> <p>RM</p>

Actions to address risks to your service:			
	None above the risk threshold requiring mitigation plans.		

Part 3. Performance Indicators

Key to Colour Code in 05/06 "Top Quartile" column:

Top quartile		Middle to top quartile		Bottom to middle quartile		Bottom quartile	
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PI Code	PI Description	Past Performance					Future Targets		
		05/06		Top Quartile	06/07		07/08	08/09	09/10
		Target	Actual		Target	Estimate	Target	Target	Target
Customer Service									
SF710	% Public satisfied they can influence decisions affecting their local area (Note 1)	25%	17%				25%		?
Affordable Housing and Growth Areas									
Community Safety, Climate Change, Equalities									
Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets									
Service Quality/Provision									
Finance, Efficiency and Value for Money									
Workforce and learning									
SF715	% Councillors attending at least one skills development training session	85%	61.4%		68%		72%	78%	85%
Other PIs									

Note 1: This is obtained from a 2-yearly countywide survey.

Part 4. Looking to the Future

Major issues or needs which your service will need to address (both to maintain the level of service and new issues such as legislation, growth areas, demographic change)	Resource Requirements (Finance, staff, skills equipment etc)	Please tick appropriate years				
		08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
Responding to the requirements of the Local Government White Paper – new political management arrangements, revised scrutiny regulations.	Implications for team workload from need to work up and consult on revised proposals and the creation of new statutory committees. May be training needs also.	✓	✓			
Implications of administering the growth area Agenda: Northstowe Joint DC Committee plus others.	Officer resources.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Implementing revised Standards regime – local investigation of all cases.	Officer resources.	✓				
New ways of working in response to the CGI report.	Officer resources, training.	✓				