

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet 10 May 2007
AUTHOR/S: Corporate Manager Policy, Performance and Partnerships
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PERFORMANCE PLAN 2007

Purpose

- 1 To enable the Cabinet to (a) agree the main elements of the 2007 Performance Plan, taking into account statutory requirements, the Council's priorities and the approved Improvement Plan and (b) to make recommendations to the Council on the process for approving the Plan.

Background

2. The Council is legally required to publish a Performance Plan by 30 June each year and there are specific matters which must be included.
3. The recent White Paper proposed that the requirement to produce a Performance Plan would cease from 2009. However, there will be further expectations on councils to publish their performance in a transparent way and in particular to demonstrate how they are contributing to LAA targets. The Council will still require a mechanism for planning, agreeing and presenting its improvement plans and some replacement for the Performance Plan in some form will be necessary.
4. Earlier in the year the Cabinet and Council agreed that the Performance Plan for 2007 should be based on the following priorities:
 - Improving customer service
 - Achieving successful and sustainable communities at Northstowe and other growth areas
 - Increasing the supply of affordable housing
5. It was also agreed that the main areas in which these priorities would be pursued in 2007/08 would be as follows:
 - (a) Identifying ways to allow service users to have a more active role in influencing service improvements.
 - (b) Setting a small number of realistic performance indicator targets to make incremental improvement in important customer facing services – eg planning applications; searches; benefits; environmental services; and housing repairs.
 - (c) Carrying out a Customer Service Review, six months after the introduction of customer service standards, incorporating complaints and a future programme for Service First
 - (d) Setting and achieving realistic customer service targets for the continuing improvement of the Contact Centre.
 - (e) Setting a target for the number of affordable housing completions
 - (f) Setting a target for the percentage of residential planning permissions, which are for affordable housing.
 - (g) Setting up a Community Development Trust for Northstowe or other arrangement for the development and management of community facilities
 - (h) Setting milestones for key stages of LDF, planning permission and Section 106 Agreement for Northstowe.

6. In the last two months services have produced service plans setting out proposals for addressing Council priorities and performance targets for 2007/08. These service plans have been approved at portfolio holder meetings and will form the basis of the 2007 Performance Plan.
7. The Council approved the CGI Improvement Plan on 26 April. The CGI Improvement Plan envisages that over the next few months the Council will develop new objectives and priorities (for 2008/09 onwards) and improved approaches to service and performance planning. Nevertheless, it is important throughout the next year for the Council to maintain its focus on current service priorities and performance targets. It would very much count against the Council if its performance indicator position slipped.
8. Following the May elections, there will be limited scope to modify priorities and plans for 2007/08 to reflect the views of the new Council. This is because the Performance Plan must be published by the end of June and service plans, staff appraisals and budgets are based on the priorities for 2007/08 agreed last autumn.

Proposed Structure of the Plan

9. In the past, the Performance Plan has been used to provide a broad overview of the position of the Council and has included background information on the district wide context, our resource position, issues for Council services, consultation results etc. It is recommended that in the current circumstances the Plan be more focussed on:
 - The CGI (Inspire) Improvement Plan
 - Priorities for 2007/08 and actions to deliver them
 - PI targets outturns and targets
10. The following structure for the plan is suggested:
 - (a) **Introduction**
 - (b) **Objectives, Community Strategy and LAA.** A brief summary of our current corporate objectives; links to the Community Strategy; and what we are doing towards the current Local Area Agreement.
 - (c) **CGI Improvement Plan.** A summary of the Improvement Plan agreed by the Council on 26th April.
 - (d) **Other external inspections.** A summary of the findings of the Planning and Data Quality inspections, together with a summary of the annual Direction of Travel and Use of Resources judgements.
 - (e) **Priorities for 2007/08.** Actions and PI targets to deliver 2007/08 priorities – see **Appendix 1**
 - (f) **Performance Trends.** An analysis of the Council's overall performance on PIs – both historic trends and comparisons with other authorities.
 - (g) **Performance Indicators.** Outturn performance, future targets etc for all national and local PIs
 - (h) **Service Plans.** A reference and link to the service plans agreed for all services.
11. This structure would omit material previously included in performance plans on: resources, efficiency, risk, service issues and consultation results (apart from those which are statutory PIs)
12. Much of the above content would be narrative or (as in the case of the CGI Improvement Plan) has been approved already. The most important new sections of the plan in terms of impact on service delivery (and on which Members' views are

invited) will be:

- (a) Actions and PI targets to deliver 2007/08 priorities. Proposals (largely drawn from service plans) are set out in **Appendix 1**.
- (b) Performance Indicator targets. Work is continuing to draw together the PI information and targets set out in service plans and this will be circulated to Members of the Cabinet as soon as available (by the meeting or before)

Programme for Approval of the Performance Plan

13. In previous years the final plan has been approved by full Council at its meeting towards the end of June ready to meet the end of June publication deadline. Following the decision to reduce the annual number of Council meetings, there will not be a Council meeting in June. The following timetable is recommended:
 - **Cabinet 10th May:** Approval of the structure of the Plan and process for approval. After the meeting all Members will be invited to comment (at the Council meeting on 24th May or earlier) on actions and targets to deliver 2007/08 priorities and all PI targets. Comments will be discussed with relevant portfolio holders and reflected in the draft plan.
 - **Council 24th May:** Approval of as much of the draft plan as can be prepared by then. The Council will be recommended to delegate detailed approval of the Performance Plan to Cabinet
 - **Cabinet 14th June:** Approval of Performance Plan for publication, with any final drafting details to be delegated to the portfolio holder for Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Service.

Financial, Staffing and Risk Implications

14. Financial and staffing implications have already been taken into account in the Council's medium term financial strategy and workforce plan. Risks are built into service plans and service based risk registers.

Recommendations

15. Cabinet is recommended:
 - (a) To consider the priorities for 2007/08 and the actions to deliver them given in **Appendix 1** and to consider whether the proposals in the Appendix will enable the Council to make sufficient progress on its priorities in the next year;
 - (b) To approve the reduced structure of the Performance Plan 2007 (para 10);
 - (c) To approve the timetable and process for the approval of the Performance Plan given in paragraph 13, subject to Council approval;
 - (d) To invite all Members to comment on **Appendix 1** and PI targets (to be circulated) at or before the meeting of the Council on 24 May.
 - (e) To recommend the Council to delegate detailed approval of the Performance Plan to the Cabinet;

Background papers:

- Improvement Plan and Service Plans

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