

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning and New Communities Portfolio Holders 14 December 2010
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director of Operational Services / Corporate Manager, Planning and New Communities

Planning and New Communities Draft Service Plan 2011/12

Purpose

1. To provide the Planning and New Communities Portfolio Holders with an update on the revised Planning and New Communities Service Plan for 2011/12
2. This is not a key decision

Recommendations

3. That the Portfolio Holder endorses the service plan actions identified in this report and suggests additions to or amendments to these service plan actions if required.

Background

4. The existing Planning and New Communities Service Plan covers the period 2010/11 - 2012/13 and includes some service plan projects intended to run over a 2 or 3 year timeframe. This is therefore a refresh of the service plan designed mainly to introduce new service plan actions to address external challenges and deliver council priorities.
5. The service plan template has been updated during 2010 and the final draft of the service plan will be presented in the new format.
6. This is the first joint service plan for the Planning and New Communities Service, bringing together planning policy, development management, conservation, building control, urban design, arts, sports, economic development and tourism, community development including engagement, facilities and other projects, sustainability and urban design.
7. The service is responsible for delivering a high quality planning service, safeguarding the quality of the built environment, facilitating growth to provide new homes and associated services, and providing a range of services that support the Council's 3 A's, for example through supporting provision of jobs for local people.

Considerations

8. The service plan refresh takes account of a number of significant changes arising from the agenda of the Coalition Government elected in 2010 including the Localism Bill and proposed changes to fee setting regulations for planning applications. The new Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership is very significant in terms of opportunities and challenges. There will be changes to our well-established working arrangements with Cambridgeshire Horizons as the funding is withdrawn during 2011. 2011/12 is the last year of the count down to the Olympics and will be the culmination of three years work across sports and culture.

Planning performance suffered during the implementation of the new Planning ICT system and restructure. We shall focus on continuing to improve performance and customer satisfaction.

9. The service plan needs to deliver the following Council Actions during 2011/12:

ACTION A2: Community Benefit from Development

Engage proactively with parish councils and local communities through the promotion of a more open section 106 system and explore the opportunities for local people to influence community priorities for funding by developers in light of forthcoming government policy.

ACTION B1: Older People (supporting Community and Customer Services)

We will take an inclusive approach to enhancing the quality of life for older people in our community through:

- i) Ensuring appropriate design of new developments and open spaces within our planning guidance
- ii) Promoting access to health advice, sport and recreation in conjunction with statutory and voluntary sector partners.

ACTION B2: Sports Development

We will encourage the development of existing, and the creation of new, sporting opportunities for all age groups through:

- i) Maximising developer contributions towards new sporting facilities for development of over 10 homes
- ii) Working with dual-use sports centres (school and community), local clubs and partners to increase participation and seek opportunities for funding
- iii) Running specific events, with partners, as part of the build-up to London 2012 and prepare to take advantage of the Olympic legacy for participation and economic development.
- iv) Continuing to work with statutory and voluntary health and community partners to increase participation in sport and recreation

ACTION C2: Pride in South Cambridgeshire (supporting Community and Customer Services)

We will work with the County and Parish Councils to develop a system to identify and remove unnecessary street clutter from our roadsides, which have the potential to cause key road safety warnings to be neglected to the detriment of highway safety.

ACTION D1: Local Enterprise Partnership and Economic Development

We will work with our partners as part of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and complete key actions within our Economic Development Strategy to:

- i) Create jobs for local people through best use of our own policies and procedures
- ii) Develop methods to reduce unemployment and fill training and qualification gaps amongst hard to reach groups
- iii) Create and maintain a favourable climate for local businesses, encouraging enterprise, focussing on the proven strengths of the districts business sector and measures to attract and retain the most talented people and to ensure a ready supply of affordable office space.

ACTION D2: 'Business Friendly' Authority

We will build our reputation as a 'business-friendly' authority by carrying out further actions to promote the district to new businesses, building on the local area's

international reputation for excellence in learning and research to assist start-ups and grown-on companies especially in its very high calibre research and business parks. This will include hosting and enabling at least 12 business development workshops within the district.

ACTION D3: Encourage Entrepreneurs

We will build on the success of the first Step Up* event for local entrepreneurs to organise a second event to seek and discover local start-ups with world-class prospects of success.

ACTION D4: Support for Businesses

We will allocate specific funding of £150,000 to continue our support for businesses during the difficult economic climate

ACTION E1: Sustainable Parish Energy Project

We will build on our successful work with parish councils in the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership* to complete key projects set out in our Climate Change Action Plan to contribute to the county-wide target for the reduction of CO2 with links to the Northstowe Demonstrator Project**.

ACTION E2: Renewable Energy (working with Affordable Homes)

We will take advantage of the Government's Clean Energy Cash Back* scheme to install appropriate renewable energy technologies within our housing stock and complete key projects from our Climate Change Action Plan to promote renewable energy generation tied to council assets and for the wider community.

ACTION E3: Environmental and Archeological Schemes

We will work with parish councils and local communities to encourage environmental and archeological enhancement schemes, through:

- i) Further development of Community Orchards and explore a similar scheme for community hedgerows
- ii) A campaign to plant long-lived and large species for the enjoyment of future generations, and review our arboriculture policies to ensure a wide range of species is planted including non-native specimen trees.*
- iii) Identifying suitable areas for tree planting, landscaping and paths for public enjoyment and the protection of wildlife, including corridors of trees to connect existing woodlands.
- iv) Working with local history and archaeological societies to identify and preserve sites of historical and cultural interest, including use of the Conservation award scheme.

* The Council provides the expertise and planting stock before working with local communities to identify sites and seek volunteers to plant and maintain new trees.

Options

10. The service plan includes a range of service improvement actions designed to address the challenges posed by these various changes. The proposed key actions are: Preparing and moving into the post Horizons world - exploration of shared resource options, application of new homes bonus etc etc - in order to achieve strategic growth ambitions

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| 1. | Customer Satisfaction | Implementing recommendations from Scrutiny Task and Finish Group in order to improve customer service – with a focus on Development Control and Conservation |
| 2. | Planning Performance | Meet targets for planning performance |
| 3. | Local Enterprise Partnership | Support the development of the Greater Peterborough and Greater Cambridgeshire LEP, and smooth wind-up of Cambridgeshire Horizons. |
| 4. | Localism | Develop a plan to deliver measures in the Localism Bill, and move into the new (neighbourhood) planning world. Work collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities to achieve strategic growth ambitions. Consider implications and applications of New Homes Bonus |
| 5. | Northstowe | Facilitate the delivery of Northstowe with the County Council and Joint Promoters |
| 6. | Shared Services | Review Joint Urban Design Team, and consider shared service options particularly for Building Control and Conservation |
| 7. | Gypsies and Travellers | Develop plans for the provision of new sites, in the light of proposed new government guidance |
| 8. | Economic Development | Deliver the new Economic Development Strategy; and Actions D1-4 Ensure our planning policies/practice reflect economic development ambitions |
| 9. | Sustainability | Deliver the Climate Change Action Plan; and Actions E1-2 |
| 10. | Sports and Culture | Deliver Actions B1-2, including projects to celebrate the Olympics 2012 |
| 11. | Environment and Archeology | Deliver Actions C2 and E3, including creation of community orchards and other tree planting projects |

Implications

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| 11. | Financial | Budget requirements will be considered in the budget setting process. |
| | Legal | None |
| | Staffing | The posts of Parish Energy Project Officer and s106 Officer are fixed term contracts, and both are relevant to the delivery of particular proposed council actions for 2010/11 |
| | Risk Management | Risks will be identified and managed through the corporate and service area risk registers. |
| | Equality and Diversity | Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out on each policy change as it is developed. |
| | Equality Impact Assessment completed | No NA |
| | Climate Change | The proposed council actions on climate change will directly support this priority. |

Consultations

12. The draft service plan has been produced with regard to feedback from customers including residents, planning agents and parish councils

Effect on Strategic Aims

13.

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| Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all. |
| The Planning and New Communities Service is one of the key roles of the Council. |
| Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all. |
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| Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live. |
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| Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all. |
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| Commitment to providing a voice for rural life. |
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Conclusions / Summary

14. This report sets out in summary form the key drivers that need to be addressed by the 2011/12 service plan. The 'top 11' draft service plan actions listed above will be incorporated within the final Service plan to be taken to the March Portfolio Holder meeting for approval.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

None

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