

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder

18 October 2012

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Corporate Services)

CORPORATE SERVICES – AGREEMENT OF SERVICE PRIORITIES FOR 2013-14

Purpose

1. This report sets out service priorities for Corporate Services for 2013-14, presented for Portfolio Holder approval as the basis for the development of the full service plan.
2. This is not a key decision as it relates to approval for a series of draft priorities which will be developed into specific actions and targets as part of the emerging full service plan.

Recommendations

3. The Portfolio Holder is recommended to agree the emerging priorities set out in the Appendix to this report as the basis for the development of the Corporate Services service plan for 2013-14, noting that resource requirements will be incorporated as part of the review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and development of detailed estimates.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The recommendation is required to enable Portfolio Holder endorsement for service priorities to inform the development of 2013-14 service plans.

Background

5. Following an alteration to the service planning process in 2011, service priorities are required to be approved in advance of full and final plans being prepared for publication on 1 April 2013.

Considerations – Policy context and service priorities

6. Corporate Services will continue to support South Cambridgeshire District Council to achieve its corporate objectives and provide services to the key internal and external customers of the Council in an accessible, effective and efficient manner, in an environment of major legislative and demographic change, and amidst ongoing pressure to reduce public sector spending.
7. The table at Appendix A to this report sets out key priorities for 2013-14 for Corporate Services and the key principal local, regional and national drivers for each. They represent a combination of new initiatives in response to our changing environment and to customer feedback, as well as objectives to take forward and build upon existing projects and achievements.
8. Service plan priorities relevant to the Finance and Staffing Portfolio in respect of Revenues and Benefits (Welfare Reform), Finance and Human Resources will also

be submitted to the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder's meeting on 16 October 2012 for endorsement.

Considerations – Resources

9. The service priorities identified in the Appendix will be taken forward using existing resources wherever possible. It should be recognised that unavoidable impacts such as those of new communities and welfare reform on revenues and benefits and ongoing internal restructuring on Human Resources, may impact adversely on operational performance if current resource levels are unable to meet future service demand.
10. The Revenues and Benefits Service has identified a possible requirement for additional short-term resources to deal with the immediate consequences of the new Localised Council Tax Benefit Scheme being introduced in April 2013. Subject to developing policy in respect of localised business rates, the Portfolio Holder and Cabinet may wish to consider the allocation of resources to maintain and enhance collection performance on a longer term basis. These issues will be taken forward as part of the development of draft and final estimates and incorporated within the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy as appropriate.

Options

11. The Portfolio Holder is invited to endorse the service priorities as presented; however, he may alter or amend the priorities, having regard to the policy context within which the service operates and to the needs of customers.

Implications

12. Financial	As set out in paragraphs 9-10 above.
Legal	Detailed estimates for all Corporate Services will be submitted to the Portfolio Holder in December 2012, with the exception of Revenues and Benefits. Those estimates will be reported to the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder due to strategic finance issues relating to revenues and benefits falling within that portfolio.
Staffing	None specific relating to this report and recommendations
Risk Management	The final service plan will include a section summarising key risks affecting the service and measures to mitigate against them.
Equality and Diversity	See below
Equality Impact Assessment completed	No This report has not been impact-assessed; however, the final service plan will contain an equality impact assessment overview, signposting where specific services and projects will need to be subject to fuller Equality Impact Assessments.
Climate Change	None specific relating to this report and recommendations.

Consultations

13. The service objectives identified in the appendix have been informed by a variety of consultation and engagement methods, including internal and external customer

satisfaction surveys, and full consultation on key policy considerations to inform the Scheme for Localised Council Tax Support (LCTS).

Consultation with Children and Young People

14. Consultation on the LCTS identified specific impacts on families with children which are being taken into account in the development of the final scheme. The Policy and Performance Team will undertake full consultation on the draft Corporate Plan and MTFs following Cabinet approval in November 2012, which will include the District's Youth Council.

Effect on Strategic Aims

15. The service plan proposals will contribute to the delivery of all the council's strategic objectives, linking the Aims, Approaches and Actions through a Golden Thread to service-level priority action plans and individual objectives.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

Contact Officer: Alex Colyer – Executive Director (Corporate Services)
Telephone: (01954) 713023
e-mail: alex.colyer@scambsgov.uk