

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR: Chief Executive

8 June 2006

PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006/07

Purpose

1. To enable Members to consider the Council's draft Performance Plan for 2006/07 and make a recommendation to Council. A copy of the Plan is enclosed as a separate document for members of Cabinet; it can also be viewed on the Council's website.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.

Quality, accessible services	The Performance Plan has been drawn up to enable the Council to deliver its agreed corporate objectives and priorities for 2006/07 and contribute to the delivery of the Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	

Background

3. All councils are required to produce an annual performance plan, setting out their objectives and priorities for the financial year (April–March), past performance and targets for future service delivery and improvement. It has to be published by 30 June each year.
4. Over the last seven years, this Council has developed the annual performance plan into a document that not only complies with statutory requirements, but is also a useful working document. It can help both external and internal audiences to understand what the Council is trying to achieve and how well it is performing. In particular, it can be a useful tool for portfolio holders, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and officers in monitoring and managing performance throughout the year. Particular emphasis has been given to keeping the document as short and simple as possible. Efficiency savings have been made by publishing the performance plan electronically on the Council's website.
5. The Council's Performance Plan reflects the corporate planning and budgeting decisions made by the Cabinet and Council last autumn. It sets out the actions that the Council has already been taking since 1 April 2006, as well as providing an update on the full-year performance indicators for 2005/06. The Council's priorities were agreed in December 2005 and the 2006/07 milestones were approved in January 2006. Service plans and performance targets were approved by the (then) portfolio holders in March-April 2006.

Corporate issues addressed by the Performance Plan

6. The main elements of the plan are given below.
 - a. **Chapter 2 - Policy Context:** This sets out SCDC's agreed long-term corporate objectives and the priorities for 2006/07 (ie, improving customer service; the

growth areas; and affordable housing). It also identifies the main policies and strategies to be prepared in 2006/07. The Council has agreed to undertake a substantial review of its objectives and priorities from 2007/08, combining the process with the review of the Community Strategy.

- b. **Chapter 3 - The Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement:** This shows how the aims of the Community Strategy relate closely to the Council's objectives and how the Council will contribute to the Community Strategy in 2006/07. As the Government has recently introduced local area agreements (LAAs), it also covers how the Council will contribute to 'stretch targets' in the LAA and how it will continue to contribute to the LAA's development and implementation.
- c. **Chapter 4 - Major Service Issues in 2006/07:** This describes the major issues facing service delivery and the Council's plans to address them. It focuses on delivering our priorities. The plans in this section are drawn from service plans and the milestones set out in Chapter 9.
- d. **Chapter 5 - Resources, Capacity and Value for Money:** This addresses the resources available to the Council and how it can best use them to deliver improving services. Key issues include the pressures facing the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and capital resources and the continuing need to achieve savings and efficiencies. Actions being taken in 2006/07 include: the implementation of the Transformation Project; continued review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy to identify and make available resources to maintain services and progress priorities; and achievement of efficiency savings to meet Gershon targets and the Council's own financial projections.
- e. **Chapter 6 - Inspection and Audit:** This outlines the findings from a number of external audits and inspections that took place in the last year, relating to prioritisation and performance management, use of resources, 'direction of travel', planning services and procurement. It sets out proposals for addressing the issues raised, namely: focusing on setting clear, quantified objectives; developing costed programmes to deliver those objectives; building those costs into our Medium Term Financial Strategy and Workforce Plan; and improving performance management to ensure delivery of quantified objectives.
- f. **Chapter 7 – Consultation:** This chapter explains how we used consultation to influence decisions on savings; how we responded to residents' satisfaction expressed in the three yearly Best Value satisfaction surveys in 2003/04 (which will be run again in 2006/07); other ways in which we seek and use feedback from service users to improve the services we provide; the results from the 2006 Quality of Life survey and how we will use this to develop a new Community Strategy.
- g. **Chapter 8 – Performance Trends:** This compares SCDC's past performance with other councils, highlights performance improvements and outlines steps being taken to strengthen performance management and value-for-money. In spite of difficulties faced in 2005/06, the Council has continued to increase the percentage of indicators where performance is improving or being maintained. The latest national comparisons, relating to 2004/05, also show that the Council's performance was better than the district council average for around half of all national (best value) indicators. This marks an improvement on the 2003/04 comparisons and is particularly encouraging given that four in five district councils spent more on services per resident than SCDC in 2004/05.

- h. **Chapter 9 - Milestones for 2006/07:** These are the milestones approved by Cabinet in January 2006 relating to Council priorities and other major issues such as the Transformation Project, Traveller issues and efficiency savings. Progress on these milestones is reported quarterly to the Cabinet.
- i. **Chapters 10 and 11 - Performance Indicators:** This details the Council's performance figures for 2004/05 and 2005/06 together with targets for the next three years. It covers all those national and local performance indicators (PIs) that are seen as important to the Council, taking into accounts its priorities and the service expectations of residents. Chapter 10 covers indicators that SCDC uses to demonstrate progress on priorities. Chapter 11 includes PIs that reflect other major issues for the Council such as income, finance and efficiency, satisfaction with services, environmental quality, housing provision, partnership and sustainability. All the performance indicators in these chapters are actively monitored and managed and, where appropriate, regular reports made to portfolio holders and quarterly reports made to Management Team and Cabinet.
- j. **Chapter 12 - Other national performance indicators:** These are indicators that the Council does not actively manage, but which it is required to record and publish in the Performance Plan.

Considerations

7. Members have already considered and agreed much of the information on which this Performance Plan is based. Scope for making changes is constrained by the official deadline for publishing the Plan by Friday 30 June 2006. To ensure that the plan is formatted and placed on the website to meet the deadline, this effectively means that the content must be finalised at (or soon after) Council on 22 June 2006.
8. That said, officers are mindful that, since the corporate priorities, service plans and performance targets for 2006/07 were agreed, the composition of the Council and Cabinet has changed. At the annual Council meeting on 25 May 2006, the new Leader put forward some first thoughts on another set of priorities. Though not dissimilar to the previous approach, these put a new emphasis on:
- stronger budgetary controls;
 - maintaining essential services and delivering savings;
 - consulting on existing council housing and future housing needs;
 - 'greening' new settlements and tackling climate change.
9. In the light of these changes, the Cabinet is invited to identify any amendments that it would wish to make to the draft Performance Plan, particularly in relation to the corporate milestones for 2006/07 and the list of actions at the end of chapters 2 – 8. Cabinet members may also wish to take the opportunity to review the performance targets for their respective portfolios.

Implications

10. **Financial implications:** The Performance Plan is based on the Council's current budget and medium term financial strategy. In many cases, the actions and targets outlined in the Plan will be stretching for the Council, but should be achievable, provided that new workload pressures or external factors do not arise during the course of the year.
11. **Legal implications:** The requirement to publish an annual performance plan arises

from the Local Government Act 1999, supplemented by detailed official guidance. The best value performance indicator information, which the Council has to include in the Performance Plan, is externally audited.

12. **Risk management:** If the Council did not publish its Plan on time, or if the auditors were to give only qualified approval of the performance figures, it would probably have an adverse effect on the Council's 'use of resources' judgement. This, in turn, could have implications for a future comprehensive performance assessment of the authority and/or increased external audit/inspection activity.
13. **Equal opportunities implications:** The Performance Plan and the 2006/07 service plans take into account the Council's general and specific statutory duties under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote race equality and good race relations. The Council is committed to treating everyone fairly and justly, whatever their race or background.
14. **Staffing implications:** The Plan features actions and targets from 2006/07 service plans, which have informed officers' individual action plans for the year ahead as part of the staff appraisal system.

Recommendations

15. It is recommended,
 - (a) that Cabinet members suggest any specific amendments that they would wish to make to the draft Performance Plan (see paragraphs 7 – 9); and
 - (b) that Cabinet recommend that the Council authorise the Chief Executive and Director of Finance & Resources, in conjunction with the Council Leader to finalise the 2006/07 Performance Plan, in accordance with official requirement and publication deadline of 30 June 2006.

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Background Papers: All the documents used to prepare chapters 1-9 of the plan are already published, mainly as committee reports or the Council's financial plans and government guidance – including:-

- Reports to Cabinet on 8th December 2005, 12th January 2006 and 9th February 2006
- ODPM Circular 05/2006 – Guidance on Best Value Performance Plans

The performance information for chapters 10 to 12 is stored on a performance management computer system. Information from the system can be obtained by contacting Ian Salter on 01954 713017 or ian.salter@scamb.gov.uk