

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR/S: Leader and Chief Executive

9 October 2008

COUNCIL AIMS, APPROACHES AND ACTIONS

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to enable the Cabinet to recommend to Council the adoption of new Council priorities to replace the current Corporate Objectives.
2. This is a key decision because -
 - a) it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget.
 - b) it is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in all areas of the District
 - c) it is not in accordance with the revenue budget, capital programme or borrowing limits approved by the Council, subject to normal virement rules.
 - d) it would lead to the replacement of current objectives approved by the Council.
 - e) it raises new issues of policy
 - f) it increases financial commitments (revenue and / or capital) in future years above existing budgetary approvals.
 - g) it may require the appointment of additional permanent staff for which there is no budgetary provision.

and it was first published in the April 2008 Forward Plan under the heading entitled, Review of Corporate Objectives and Annual Priorities.

Background – The current Corporate Objectives

3. In July 2007 the Council adopted the current Corporate Objectives for the year 2008/09 onwards. The objectives reflected consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Quality of Life survey and other research. The objectives also addressed a range of local and national issues and priorities. These Corporate Objectives formed the basis of service planning and the Corporate Plan for 2008/09 onwards.

Considerations

4. The existing Corporate Objectives were introduced as part of a wide programme of change required to address the findings in the CGI report. A review of the objectives is now appropriate, to reflect our experience since the CGI inspection; the outcome of the re-inspection; developments in areas such as the LAA; changing national priorities; and to give clearer political leadership to the planning and delivery of services.
5. Accordingly, a new set of priorities, set out in the **Appendix**, have been developed. These consist of -
 - **5 Council Aims** giving overall strategic direction.

- **25 Council Approaches** which set out how those aims will be progressed.
 - **33 Council Actions** which are projects or improvements which it is proposed the Council seek to achieve in the 2009/10 year in order to deliver the Aims.
6. These Aims, Approaches and Actions have been developed by Members with subsequent contributions from senior officers in order to assess the realism, achievability and resource implications of the proposals.
7. The new Aims are more directed than the previous Objectives, with commitments, for example, to first class services, a safe and healthy place, and assisting provision of local jobs. The introduction of Council Actions, which are more specific, will give a greater focus for service and budget planning and enable the Council to demonstrate more effectively the progress it is making. Overall, the Aims, Approaches and Actions are a development of the previous Objectives rather than a major change in direction. Areas which are new or have increased emphasis within the “3As” include:
- engagement with customers and the community
 - support for more vulnerable or hard to reach sections of the community
 - a cleaner district
 - economic development
 - recognition of the opportunities for the district arising from the Olympics
8. The Aims, Approaches and Actions are consistent with the Sustainable Community Strategy and the aims and targets in the Cambridgeshire LAA.

Options

9. The option of retaining the existing Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities has been considered but, for the reasons given in paragraph 7, it is recommended that the opportunity now be taken to change to the new Aims, Approaches and Actions.

Implications

10. The impact of the Actions will be assessed through the service and financial planning process. A preliminary assessment has been made of the scale of the final implications, which indicates that the revenue cost in 2009/10 would be about £350,000. Some costs would also fall to be met in the current financial year, but again this will be assessed through service planning and, if necessary, financial requirements will be brought forward.
11. No formal equality impact assessment has been made of the proposals at this stage. The equalities aspect and support for vulnerable people has been strengthened in the Aims, Approaches and Actions. Impact assessments will be undertaken for significant new projects and plans arising from the Council Actions.

Effect on Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities

12. As discussed earlier in the report, the existing Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities will be replaced by the Aims, Approaches and Actions. The arrangements for transition to the new 3As are given in the recommendations below.

Recommendations

13. The Cabinet is recommended to recommend the Council,
 - a) to adopt the Aims, Approaches and Actions given in the Appendix attached to the report, in place of the current Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities,
 - b) that the new Aims, Approaches and Actions take effect immediately – in particular for the purpose of the development of new policies and strategies; service and financial planning; and in committee reports, and
 - c) that the Corporate Plan, existing service plans and strategies based on the current Corporate Objectives remain in force until they would normally be revised.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Previous Cabinet reports on Corporate Objectives; LAA and Sustainable Community Strategy.

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