

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

9 February 2012

AUTHOR/S: Executive Management Team

CORPORATE PLAN 2012 - 2017

Purpose

1. This report proposes changes to the Corporate Plan following consultation and requests a Cabinet recommendation to Council that the amended plan be approved.
2. It is a key decision as it involves the development of a revised policy framework containing actions which will affect customers throughout the district and was first published in the November 2011 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

2. That Cabinet recommend to Council that the Corporate Plan setting out the Council's vision, aims approaches and actions for 2012–2017 be approved as set out at **Appendix 1**.

Background

3. The Corporate Plan attached at **Appendix 1** is the document that sets out the Council's vision, aims, approaches and actions.
4. The draft Plan was developed using informal and formal feedback from residents, customers and members together with an analysis of the district's demographic profile, the needs of the local community, performance trends and consideration of the external environment/opportunities that exist, for example on growth, economic development and issues such as the abolition of the inspection regime and the removal of statutory performance indicators. It was approved by the Cabinet for consultation in November 2011.

The Corporate Plan in context

5. The Corporate Plan does not exist in isolation. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (also subject to a recommendation to Council on this agenda), Strategic Risk Register, and People and Organisational Development Strategy (see Background Papers for access to these documents) also support the delivery of the Council's priorities and the allocation of resources. The significant financial constraints faced by the Council make it even more important that there is a priority led approach to spending in order to make sure the Council focuses its resources in the right areas.
6. The Plan proposes that the Council should focus on delivering core services, such as planning and benefits, well. It also incorporates the need to strengthen working with key partners such as the County Council and prioritises the Council's approach to economic development and sustainability. Finally, the Plan recognises that the Council needs to invest in both members and employees in order to achieve its ambitious vision.

7. The revised draft proposes performance measures under each aim, which are being developed as a means of measuring the extent to which the Corporate Plan is being delivered effectively. Following its previous review of Performance Management at the Council, the observations of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in terms of measuring outcomes would be welcomed. The Council's new Health Card will be used to report performance both internally and externally in a simple, focused and accountable manner, including to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

Considerations – Consultation

8. The consultation, carried out between 1 December 2010 – 20 January 2011, sought views on the extent to which respondents felt each element of the plan was realistic and achievable, addressed the most important issues to our customers and would, if implemented, improve the quality of their lives. This report sets out the most significant material changes to the plan.
9. The consultation exercise involved an on-line and paper copy survey aimed at staff and residents, broken down into daily questions published from the Council's Twitter account. Officers from the Policy and Performance and Sustainable Communities teams also carried out workshops with 40 Year 10 students at Swavesey Village College to hear about young people's priorities for their local area.
10. Despite extensive publicity, the paper copy, on-line and Twitter surveys generated only 45 responses in total. The Council is continually striving to improve the method and variety of ways in which it engages with staff and residents, including the recent establishment of a Corporate Consultation Panel and increased focus this year on staff engagement in the Council's priorities. As with performance measures, effective internal and external engagement is an issue which the Scrutiny and Overview Committee may wish to explore as part of its future work programmes.
11. The low response emphasises the greater importance which should be attached to the engagement work carried out which informed the first development of the plan. Whilst not a statistically significant sample size, those who did respond provided some useful feedback, which has informed proposed changes to the draft which Cabinet is recommended to endorse. Respondents were generally supportive of the Council's proposals. A summary of responses can be accessed through the Background Papers section below, whilst a schedule of responses to specific comments and queries will be published on the Council's website.

Considerations – Material changes to the Plan

12. The new vision is ambitious and stretching, as it should be, but achievable in the longer term. Respondents to the consultation questioned the achievability as it is by definition very ambitious; however, it is considered an appropriate platform on which to express the council's long-term goals and recommended for approval subject to the reference to a 'superb' rather than 'enviable' quality of life.
13. Following adoption, the aims and approaches will remain constant and the actions will be refreshed each year. The Council's three strategic Aims were supported by consultation respondents, and are recommended for approval without change.
14. The Corporate Plan sets out a number of approaches, which the Council will use to meet its aims. Following consultation, two material changes are recommended:

- Aim A: Communicate and engage with **staff and** residents;
- Aim B: It was considered that the actions relating to infrastructure support for, and maximising community benefits from, new developments, should be redesignated as general approaches not specific actions. Both these issues were confirmed as areas of concern for residents, and will remain the Council's focus in planning and delivering all development.

15. The Council's actions attracted a broad level of support. The majority of the changes from the consultation draft clarify the Council's intentions; those in which material changes are proposed are as follows:

- **A4/A5 Financial sustainability and asset management** – Widened to take into the account strategic finance opportunities for sound investment and innovative use of resources.
- **B3 Employability** – This is a new action, proposed in order to focus on the employment and skills elements of economic development, and how this can have positive impacts on indicators such as demand for benefits.
- **C9 Supporting People / Sheltered Housing** – This action has been revised to reflect the status of future priorities in light of the ongoing review of Supporting People funding being undertaken with the County Council.
- **C11 Community Pride and Village Hero awards** – Expanded to refer to a celebration of rural life and include specific reference to the 2012 Olympics and Diamond Jubilee
- **C13 Community Safety** – New Action proposed to reflect the Council's commitment to working in partnership to enhance Community Safety, taking account new policing arrangements arising from the election of a local Police Commissioner in November 2012.

Options

16. Cabinet may recommend the Corporate Plan to Council as presented or agree additional changes.

Implications

17. Financial	The priorities in the Corporate Plan are reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget for 2012-13.
Legal	None arising directly from this report.
Staffing	None arising directly from this report.
Risk Management	The risks in the Strategic Risk Register have been taken into account in developing the draft Corporate Plan.
Equality and Diversity	A partial equality impact assessment (EQIA) has been drafted (see Background Papers below). The partial assessment provides a signpost to updated and new impact assessments which will be required as part of the implementation of Council Actions during 2012-2013. These will be incorporated within a final programme of EQIA for 2012-13 which will be presented to the Housing Portfolio Holder for approval.
Climate Change	A sustainability appraisal will be prepared for the final Corporate Plan prior to implementation from April 2012.

Consultations

18. The Council has undertaken significant consultation throughout the course of the year and that has all been used to develop the priorities in the draft Corporate Plan. Specific consultation on the draft plan has influenced the changes recommended above. A summary of responses is accessible in the Background Papers section below.

Consultation with Children and Young People

19. As paragraph 9 above.

Effect on Strategic Aims

20. The Corporate Plan will enable more effective delivery of the Council's vision and priorities.

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Background Papers:

Available using the links below and / or from the Policy and Performance Team (01954 713366 e-mail policy.performance@scambs.gov.uk)

- (1) [Strategic Risk Register presented to Cabinet, November 2011](#) (an updated version is available from the Policy and Performance Team)
- (2) Consultation response summary (anonymous)
- (3) Partial Equality Impact Assessment of the Corporate Plan
- (4) [People and Organisation Development Strategy \(presented to Cabinet November 2011\)](#)