

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM: 21

REPORT TO CABINET

9 MARCH 2006

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

COUNCIL DECISION

Corporate - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Gibson and Councillor Coleman

COUNCIL PLAN 2006-2009

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the draft Council Plan for 2006-2009. The Council Plan sets out Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's key improvement plans to contribute to the Borough's Community Strategy.

In 2006 the plan has been updated on an incremental basis, following the successful CPA 2005 result which rated the Council as 4 star and improving well. The Audit Commission highlighted the strength of the Council's plans in its assessment.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to consider and recommend for approval by Council the draft Council Plan for 2006 – 2009.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The Council Plan sets out how the Council will improve its services and contribute to community objectives. The plan is based on the objectives and outcomes already set in the Community Strategy and Service Plans, but provides focus on the key objectives we need to achieve authority wide, and which need to be monitored by Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet. The Council Plan forms the (Best Value) Performance Plan for the Council, which the Council has a duty to prepare on an annual basis under the Local Government Act 1999.

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held, whilst the matter is being considered; not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (paragraph 12 of the Code).

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the draft Council Plan for 2006-2009. The Council Plan sets out Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's key improvement plans to contribute to the Borough's Community Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to consider and recommend for approval by Council the draft Council Plan for 2006 – 2009.

BACKGROUND

1. The Council Plan sets out how the Council will contribute to community objectives. The plan is based on the objectives and outcomes already set in the Community Strategy and Service Plans, but provides focus on the key objectives we need to achieve authority wide, and which need to be monitored by Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet.
2. The principle underlying the development of the Council Plan is that it should be a business plan for the organisation, focusing on key corporate priorities for change, rather than summarising all activities that the Council undertakes. This approach is vital to ensure a clear focus on improvement, but means that some significant service areas do not feature in the key objectives and outcomes. The focus of the plan shifts each year as our key improvement priorities alter over time; it is a three year rolling plan which is updated on an annual basis.

2006 COUNCIL PLAN

3. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of the Authority during Winter 2005 rated the council as 4 star and improving well. It endorsed the Council's overall direction of travel. This year's plan is therefore based around the same set of core objectives as were used in 2005. Within the plan the improvements which link specifically to the CPA inspection are highlighted.
4. The Council Plan has been developed as the negotiations for the second year of the borough's pilot Local Area Agreement (LAA) have been ongoing; links to the LAA have been highlighted within the Plan.
5. The Plan has been developed in partnership with all Services and in consultation with elected members. The development process included:

- a. Consultation with elected Members through the MTFP and Council Plan seminar and drop in clinics in February;
 - b. Consultation with Corporate Directors, Heads of Service and Policy Officers throughout the drafting process;
 - c. Consideration of the results of the 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment of Stockton
 - d. Consultation with the Viewpoint Panel on priorities
6. As an 'Excellent' Council Stockton has the freedom to use its Council Plan to meet the statutory requirement to prepare a (Best Value) Performance Plan. This Council Plan therefore forms our Performance Plan for 2006/7. It will be supplemented by an annex of best value performance indicator information and targets to be published at the end of June, once this data is available.
7. In its guidance on performance plans, the ODPM specifies the intended audiences of these documents:
- a. The primary audience should be the authority itself including elected members and officers
 - b. The Government is a secondary audience, because the plans contain essential information enabling it to monitor performance
 - c. Although Performance Plans must be available to the public, the public are not intended to be the primary audience.
8. This is in line with Stockton's approach: we will ensure that full copies of the plan are provided to members, managers and key partners and the Government. A summary version of the Council Plan will also be prepared for all staff. We must also ensure that the Council Plan is available in public places and that copies can be provided to the public when requested: full and summary versions will also be available over the Internet.

SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES IN 2006

9. As already stated, this year's Council Plan is a rolling forward of the plan for 2005-2008, and there has been very little change to the objectives, which have been updated to reflect new legislation or local policy change. Some additional service objectives have been introduced to reflect changes in legislation or the need to strengthen the coverage of local priorities within the Council Plan, with the most significant updates set out below: -

Key Council Plan objective changes in 2006

New areas	Reason	Reference
Be Healthy : Improve the health of children in the borough	Reflects changing Children's agenda and need to align Council Plan with Children and Young People's Plan	Page 12 SIP Objective 2
Stay Safe: Develop prevention strategies for child safety in the home and wider community		Page 13 SIP Objective 3
Cross Cutting: Improve outcomes for looked after children		Page 14 SIP Objective 6
Cross Cutting: Improve the range and accessibility of services for children with complex needs		Page 15 SIP Objective 7
Meet the housing and support needs of those who are vulnerable or have special housing requirements	Extension of this objective to include support needs reflects our role in supporting people	Page 16 SIP Objective 9
Tackle worklessness by removing barriers to employment and enterprise	To address an emerging policy issue	Page 19 SIP Objective 18
Improve access to services via Public	Reflects public priority	Page 20

Transport and the Road Network	identified in recent work with Viewpoint panel	SIP Objective 19
Continue to increase the efficiency and responsiveness of the benefits service	Change in emphasis to enable focus on both maintaining good performance and improving where necessary	Pages 21/22 SIP Objective 25
Improve the quality of housing services for residents in Stockton on Tees	Change in emphasis to incorporate services as well as quality of housing stock	Page 22 SIP Objective 26
Deliver the access to services strategy	Incorporates and expands work on Customer First	Page 24 OOE Objective 8
Deleted areas: Protect and support vulnerable children and families Implement the Licensing Act Improve transport planning Implement the clean neighbourhoods and environment bill Improve management of the HRA in partnership with Tristar Homes	Incorporated in Children's Plan objectives outlined above Work completed Incorporated within other objectives e.g. Improve access to services via public transport and the road network Work completed Work completed	

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

10. The development of the draft Council Plan has been closely linked to the medium term financial planning process, to ensure that resources are in place to deliver the key objectives and outcomes set out.

Legal

11. The Council Plan forms the (Best Value) Performance Plan for the Council, which the Council has a duty to prepare on an annual basis under the Local Government Act 1999.

RISK ASSESSMENT

12. The systematic annual planning used to produce these plans means that risks are not significant.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

13. The Council Plan sets out the Council's contribution to delivering the Borough's Community Strategy

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

14. Extensive consultation evidence has informed these plans (see paragraph 5), including:
- Consultation with the public
 - Consultation with elected members
 - Consultation with staff.

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Background Papers

Community Strategy 2005-2008
Council Plan 2005-2008.
Medium Term Financial Plan

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

The Council Plan is not ward specific, although it includes objectives and outcomes which relate to neighbourhood regeneration.

Property

The Council Plan includes economic regeneration objectives, including the revitalisation of town centres.