

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting15th March 2007

1. Title of Item/Report

COUNCIL PLAN AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS 2007-2010

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet was reminded that the Council Plan set out how the Council would contribute to community objectives. The plan was based on the objectives and outcomes already set in the Community Strategy, but provided focus on the key objectives the Council needed to achieve authority wide, and which needed to be monitored by Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet.

The principle underlying the development of the Council Plan was 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 undertook. This approach was vital to ensure a clear focus on improvement, but meant that some significant service areas did not feature in the key objectives and outcomes. The focus of the plan shifted each year as the Council's key improvement priorities altered over time; it was a three year rolling plan which was updated on an annual basis.

Service Improvement Plans supported the Council Plan by setting out how key priorities and objectives would be delivered, and their resource implications. The plans also include information about each service area and its achievements.

The 2007-2010 Council Plan contained two main parts. The first was a narrative about the Borough, the Council, its achievements and future plans. This was supported by the second main part – an action plan which sets out how the objectives and priorities of the Council would be delivered.

The objectives within the Council Plan had been updated following recent Resident Satisfaction Surveys and consultation with Councillors. The plan had been developed in partnership with:

Councillors – through seminars on the Residents Survey Results and the Council Plan and through “drop in” sessions for Members to discuss the

plan with officers

Corporate Management Team, Heads of Service and Policy Officers through joint working to develop the plan

As an 'Excellent' Council Stockton had the freedom to use its Council Plan to meet the statutory requirement to prepare a (Best Value) Performance Plan. This Council Plan therefore formed a Performance Plan for 2007/8. It would be supplemented by an annex of best value performance indicator information and targets to be published at the end of June, once this data was available.

In its guidance on performance plans, the Department for Communities and Local Government specified the intended audiences of those documents:

- a. the primary audience should be the authority itself including elected members and officers.
- b. the Government was a secondary audience, because the plans contained essential information enabling it to monitor performance
- c. Although Performance Plans must be available to the public, the public were not intended to be the primary audience.

This was in line with Stockton's approach and full copies of the plan were provided to members, managers and key partners and the Government. A summary version of the Council Plan would also be prepared for all staff. The Council would also ensure that the Council Plan was available in public places and that copies could be provided to the public when requested: full and summary versions would also be available over the Internet.

The service planning framework was reviewed in 2005 and a revised framework put into place to focus on changes and improvements and to bring service and resource (finance, human resources, ICT, procurement) planning closer together. Service Improvement Plans (SIPs) include the key changes, improvements and priorities that would require significant attention from heads of service to deliver. Core business in each service was covered in business unit plans that sat beneath the SIPs.

The service improvement plans supported the Council Plan and Community Strategy. Plans were structured to include

- an introduction outlining the strategic direction of the service and key achievements from the previous year

- action plans linked to the five themes of the Community Strategy and a theme of organisational development. The action plans included links to other plans, identified actions and milestones, responsible officers, success measures and targets, and risks. In addition where actions would have resource implications they were identified
- The medium term financial plan for the service.
- A performance indicator table including both measures and targets.

Plans had been developed to cover all service areas. In some areas it had been sensible to develop combined SIPs covering more than one head of service's remit e.g. Children's Services, Resources. Performance against SIPs would be monitored and reported to Members twice a year, alongside Council Plan monitoring.

Members were provided with abridged versions of the draft SIPs, focusing on key elements of the action plans. Full draft SIPs had been placed on the Intranet to enable Members to consider them in detail. Once agreed, plans would be published on cd-rom and on the intranet with a set of hard copy plans lodged in the members' library.

RESOLVED that the Corporate Management Team be authorised to continue to refine the Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans 2007-2010 prior to Special Council on March 28th.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2007 – 2010 be approved

3. Reasons for the Decision

The Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans set out how the Council would improve its services and contribute to community objectives. The plans were based on the objectives and outcomes already set in the Community Strategy, but provided focus on the key objectives the Council needed to achieve authority wide, and which need to be monitored by Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet. The Council Plan formed the (Best Value) Performance Plan for the Council, which the Council had a duty to prepare on an annual

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday 23rd March 2007 in respect of the resolution detailed above only.

Proper Officer
19 March 2007