

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM:

REPORT TO CABINET

15th MARCH 2007

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

COUNCIL DECISION

CORPORATE - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Coleman

COUNCIL PLAN AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS 2007-2010

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2007-2010. The Council Plan sets out Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's key improvement plans to contribute to the Borough's Community Strategy.

For the 2007-2010 Council Plan, additional focus has been given to the first part of the Plan which has been strengthened to include more information about the Council and its work for local people. This is supported by an action plan which sets out how the Council will achieve its objectives and how success will be measured.

The Service Improvement Plans provide more detail on how the objectives will be achieved and link priorities to resources.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to authorise the Corporate Management Team to continue to refine the Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans 2007-2010 prior to Special Council on March 28th.

Members are asked to consider and recommend for approval by Council the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2007 – 2010.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans set out how the Council will improve its services and contribute to community objectives. The plans are based on the objectives and outcomes already set in the Community Strategy, 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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COUNCIL PLAN AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS 2007-2010

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2007-2010. The Council Plan sets out Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's key improvement plans to contribute to the Borough's Community Strategy. The Council Plan is supported by Service Improvement Plans which provide more detail on how key objectives and priorities will be met.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to authorise the Corporate Management Team to continue to refine the Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans 2007-2010 prior to Special Council on March 28th.

Members are asked to consider and recommend for approval by Council the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2007 – 2010.

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

2007-2010 COUNCIL PLAN

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

5. The objectives within the Council Plan have been updated following recent Resident Satisfaction Surveys and consultation with Councillors. The plan has 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

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 2007/8. 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 DCLG 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.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS 2007/10

9. 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. SIPs include the key changes, improvements and priorities which will require significant attention from heads of service to deliver. Core business in each service is covered in business unit plans which sit beneath the SIPs.

10. The service improvement plans support the Council Plan and Community Strategy. Plans are structured to include
 - a. an introduction outlining the strategic direction of the service and key achievements from the previous year;
 - b. action plans linked to the five themes of the Community Strategy and a theme of organisational development. The action plans include links to other plans, identify actions and milestones, responsible officers, success measures and targets, and risks. In addition where actions will have resource implications these are identified.
 - c. The medium term financial plan for the service
 - d. A performance indicator table including both measures and targets.

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

12. Appended to this report are abridged versions of the draft SIPs, focusing on key elements of the action plans. Full draft SIPs have been placed on the Intranet to enable Members to consider them in detail. Once agreed, plans will be published on cd-rom and on the intranet with a set of hard copy plans lodged in the members library.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

10. The development of the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans 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 4), including:
 - Consultation with the public via Residents Satisfaction Surveys
 - Consultation with elected members
 - Consultation with staff.

Contact Officer Details:

Name: Helen Dean
Title: Head of Policy and Performance
Tel No. 527003
Email: helen.dean@stockton.gov.uk

Background Papers

Community Strategy 2005-2008
Council Plan 2006-2009.

Medium Term Financial Plan

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

The Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans are not ward specific, although they include objectives and outcomes which relate to neighbourhood regeneration.

Property

The Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans includes economic regeneration objectives, including the revitalisation of town centres.