

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

DATE: 27th NOVEMBER, 2013

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

COUNCIL DECISION

The Leader – Councillor Bob Cook

THE COUNCIL PLAN 2014-17

1. Summary

To present a proposed framework for the Council Plan 2014-17.

2. Recommendations

- I. Cabinet agree the proposed framework
- II. Cabinet agree to the proposed changes to the Cabinet report template as indicated at paragraph 19.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The Council Plan is one of the key policy documents within the Council's Constitution and sets out the ambition, values and direction of travel for the Council within the resources available to it.

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 (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;

- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must 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**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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SUMMARY

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. Cabinet agree the proposed framework
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DETAIL

1. The Council Plan was last reviewed in 2010 and covered the period 2010-2013. Subsequent years have seen the plan reviewed based on an analysis of key policy and legislative changes during the preceding year and known forthcoming changes. Since the production of the last Council Plan, the context in which The Council operates has changed significantly in relation to policy, central government relationships and not least the financial climate. The period for the next Council Plan is likely to see further changes in the financial settlement and will also cover the period leading up to and beyond national and local elections. The plan, therefore needs to be developed and considered alongside the available financial resources as outlined in the MTFP.
2. Historically the process and timescale for producing the Council Plan and the associated performance targets has been through engagement and discussion with Heads of Service and teams in individual Service Groupings, via the Heads of Business Support and Improvement in the respective service groupings, between October and March, aligned to the 8 themes within the Council Plan.
3. It should be noted that since the last Council Plan was produced significant policy, planning and performance capacity has been taken out of the organisation (alongside other 'back office/support services) so as to protect, as far as possible, front line services. It is therefore appropriate to ensure our approach is more focussed, targeted and manageable within the available resource.

CONTEXT

4. The context outlined in the following paragraphs provides the basis on which it is proposed to review the current Council Plan and gives the rationale for the recommended framework.
5. As the Council has sought to address the impact of national policies and legislative changes and the changing circumstances in which it delivers its services on the people it seeks to serve, a number of local policy principles have been agreed through, for example, approval of the Medium Term Financial Plan, recommendations from Efficiency, Transformation and Improvement Reviews. These are outlined below:
6. There has been significant resource invested in the development of the Council branding which is embedded within all of our corporate communications, links clearly with the thematic areas within the current Council Plan, Cabinet Member portfolios, Scrutiny Committee themes and has served us well in terms of resident communication and partner engagement. The recommended framework does not seek to change or detract from these but to add clarity and focus.
7. Neither is it the intention to suppress the ambition the Council has for its residents, businesses and visitors. Ambition and vision which has historically resulted in inward external investment, positive inspection outcomes, high levels of resident and business satisfaction and provided strong strategic and community leadership. The recommended framework provides an opportunity to restate our commitment to our medium-long term ambitions and aspirations, whilst providing a framework to support decision-making, resource allocation, secure external funding and give a clear focus on the shorter term actions.
8. Since the last Council Plan and during the duration of the next Council Plan significant capacity has been taken out of the organisation and through the implementation of the agreed reviews will continue to do so. The 2014-17 Council Plan needs to take both of these factors into account in being realistic and clear about what can be achieved over the duration of the plan.
9. It is recognised that this is a medium-term plan; in line with the financial planning framework and that circumstances are likely to further change over its duration. It is therefore recommended that whilst the plan will cover the period 2014-17 it will be subject to an annual refresh to take account of any change in policy, legislation or financial circumstances.
10. It is not the intention of the plan to capture the totality of the Council's business but rather provide a focus on key strategic priorities and activities and will provide the framework for reporting to Cabinet, Executive Scrutiny and Council. The day-to-day business of the Council will continue to feature in the Business Plans within individual Service Groupings.
11. Whilst it is acknowledged that much of the success of the Council is through its work in partnership with others there is a need, in terms of accountability and transparency, to be clearer about what the Council's plans and priorities are, how it is going to deliver them and how it will know it is doing when set against the context of reducing budgets, growing demographics and increased demand for services.

The Framework

12. The overall outcome for the plan is for "A healthy, vibrant and successful Borough", which captures all of the elements within the current vision for the Borough but is represented in a much more succinct statement.

13. Four key priorities are suggested, each of which is explained in more detail below. Activity will be able to be captured within the current 8 themes and can, if required, be presented and reported either within the key priorities and/or the existing themes/member portfolios (in line with the corporate branding):
- Promoting equality of opportunity (focussing in particular on targeted intervention)
 - Protecting the vulnerable (focusing on intervention and activity aimed at protecting the vulnerable and being clear about what we mean by vulnerable)
 - Developing strong and healthy communities (capturing preventative and universal activity)
 - Creating economic prosperity (universal activity) in line with our ambition for economic recovery and growth
14. A fifth organisational priority of 'Continuing to be an ambitious and effective council that is proud to serve' will capture the organisational values and approaches that underpin everything we do.
15. Key objectives will add more detail to the overall aim/outcome with clarity on how we are going to achieve it will be provided through detailed actions. The plan will be underpinned by identifiable performance measures and targets which will allow progress to be monitored through the existing approved performance management arrangements.
16. Work is also underway to develop an internal performance management database which will provide us with the opportunity to 'tag' the various elements of the plan to support multi-faceted reporting, for example, by priority or by theme.
17. Taking information from a range of sources, including information from the existing Council Plan, the Health & Well Being Strategy and the Green Vision, Appendix 1 seeks to indicate by way of some examples from health and the Green Vision, how the proposed framework would work in practice. Clearly, this information would need to be updated, amended and added to should the framework be agreed.

Next Steps

18. Subject to approval of the framework by Members, officers will work on the detail with a view to a further report to Cabinet to secure sign-off in February/March 2014 for implementation from April 2014. Opportunities for discussion with Members as part of the development of the MTFP will be made available as has been the case previously in relation to Council Plan development.
19. Furthermore, as the Sustainable Community Strategy no longer forms part of the strategic policy framework of the Council, following the review of the Local Strategic Partnership, it is proposed that future reports to Cabinet are no longer required to identify which of the SCS themes the report being presented supports. Instead it is recommended that the Cabinet report template is amended so that reports are required to indicate which of the Council Plan themes and priority areas they support.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The development of the Council Plan is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce the risk.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

The development of the Council Plan underpins all strands of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

N/A

Name of Contact Officer: Lesley King

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Education related? Not specifically

Background Papers: None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: N/A

Property: N/A