

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 28th March, 2007.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Mrs S Fletcher), Cllr Mrs J L Apedaile, Cllr P Baker, Cllr Mrs J Beaumont, Cllr D T Brown, Cllr D Cains, Cllr Mrs P A Cains, Cllr M Cherrett, Cllr B Cook, Cllr C Coombs, Cllr A Cunningham, Cllr I J Dalgarno, Cllr K Dewison, Cllr K Dixon, Cllr J A Fletcher, Cllr M Frankland, Cllr R Gibson, Cllr D Harrington, Cllr Miss B Inman, Cllr E Johnson, Cllr P Kirton, Cllr K Leonard, Cllr K Lupton, Cllr J M Lynch, Cllr Mrs K F Nelson, Cllr S Nelson, Cllr Mrs E A Nesbitt, Cllr W Noble, Cllr Mrs A Norton, Cllr Mrs J O'Donnell, Cllr R Patterson, Cllr M Perry, Cllr Mrs M Rigg, Cllr R Rix, Cllr J M Roberts, Cllr Mrs B Robinson, Cllr F G Salt, Cllr A B L Sherris, Cllr M Smith, Cllr M Stoker, Cllr S F Walmsley, Cllr Mrs M B Womphrey, Cllr M E Womphrey, Cllr B Woodhead and Cllr B Woodhouse.

Officers: J Haworth (CE); A Baxter, S Wilson (CESC); S Daniels, N Schneider (DNS); P K Bell, D E Bond (LD); J Danks, M Skipsey (R).

Also in attendance: No other people were in attendance.

Apologies: Cllr Coleman, Cllr Faulks, Cllr Jones, Cllr Larkin, Cllr Leckonby, Cllr Laing, Cllr Narroway, Cllr Parry, Cllr Teasdale, Cllr Mrs Trainer and Cllr Mrs Wade.

1192 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Brown declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.4 - Council Plan and Service Improvement Plan 2007 - 2010 as he was a Member of Tristar Homes Board and his son was employed by Tristar Homes.

Councillor Leonard declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.4 - Council Plan and Service Improvement Plan 2007 - 2010 as he was a Member of Tristar Homes Board.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.4 - Council Plan and Service Improvement Plan 2007 - 2010 as he was a Member of Tristar Homes Board.

Councillor Roberts declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.4 - Council Plan and Service Improvement Plan 2007 - 2010 as she was a Member of Tristar Homes Board.

Councillor Woodhead declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.4 - Council Plan and Service Improvement Plan 2007 - 2010 as he was a Member of Tristar Homes Board.

1193 Minutes

Moved by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Cunningham and RESOLVED that the Minutes of Cabinet held on 15th March 2007 (Minute Nos 1062 - 1078 except Minute 1075 as this was considered at the next item) be received or confirmed as appropriate.

1194 COUNCIL PLAN AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS 2007-2010

Consideration was given to a report and presentations that provided members with details of the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2007-2010. The Council Plan set out Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's key

priorities to contribute to the Borough's Community Strategy. The Council Plan was supported by Service Improvement Plans which provided more detail on how such key objectives and priorities would be met.

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, 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 undertakes. 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 shifts each year as the key improvement priorities alter over time; it is a three year rolling plan which is updated on an annual basis.

The 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 included information about each service area and its achievements.

The 2007-2010 Council Plan contained two main parts. The first was a narrative explaining about the Borough, the Council, its achievements and future plans. This was supported by the second main part – an action plan which set 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 the 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 2007 once this data had become available.

In its guidance on performance plans, Central Government specified the intended audiences of these 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: ensuring that full copies of the plan be 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 be made available in public places and that copies can 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. SIPs included the key changes, improvements and priorities which required significant attention from Heads of Service to deliver. Core business in each service was covered in Business Unit Plans which sat beneath the SIPs.

The Service Improvement Plans supported the Council Plan and Community Strategy. Plans were 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 included links to other plans, identify actions and milestones, responsible officers, success measures and targets, and risks. In addition where actions had resource implications these were identified.

c. The Medium Term Financial Plan for the service.

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.

Appended to the report were 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 member's library.

Members were provided with presentations from the following service groupings on the content of their Service Improvement Plans 2007/2010 which represented a summary of their more detailed service delivery plans:-

Children, Education and Social Care
Development and Neighbourhood Services

Resources
Law and Democracy
Policy Performance and Communications

Members were given the opportunity to comment and ask questions on each of the above presentations.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2007 - 2010 be approved.
2. The minute of Cabinet held on 15th March 2007 (Minute No.1075) be confirmed.