

## COUNCIL ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM:**

**REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**26<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2008**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **COUNCIL DECISION**

**CORPORATE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Laing**

#### **COUNCIL PLAN AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS 2008-2011**

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2008-2011. The Council Plan sets out Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's key improvement plans to contribute to the Borough's new Sustainable Community Strategy.

The first part of the 2008-2011 Council Plan provides information about the Council and its work for local people. The second part is an action plan setting out how we will achieve our 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 approve the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2008 – 2011.

Members are asked to delegate approval of the Local Area Agreement 2008-11 and associated targets to Cabinet

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 provide 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 DECISION**

**COUNCIL PLAN AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS 2008-2011**

**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2008-2011. The Council Plan sets out Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's key improvement plans to contribute to the Borough's Sustainable 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 approve the draft Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for 2008 – 2011.

Members are asked to delegate approval of the Local Area Agreement 2008-11 and associated targets to Cabinet

**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 Sustainable 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.

**2008-2011 COUNCIL PLAN**

4. The 2008-2011 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 the development of the new Sustainable Community Strategy and consultation with local people and Councillors. The plan has been developed in partnership with:
  - Councillors – through seminars on the budget and 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 2008/9. 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.
9. This is the last year that Government will require a performance plan of this type (though we may continue to produce such a plan for our own use). The Local Government White Paper, “Strong and prosperous communities” and the ensuing Act introduce a number of changes to the national performance framework.
10. 2008/09 will be a transitional year for Stockton as we begin to implement the new performance framework. The new framework has the Local Area Agreement at its heart. The agreement which is currently being negotiated will consist of up to 35 measures which will form a performance contract between Stockton and the Government. These measures have to be chosen from a “menu” of 198 measures known as the National Indicator Set or NIS. The NIS is still in development and Local Area Agreements must be submitted to government by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2008 to enable ministers to sign them off by the end of June 2008.
11. However, the measures that are likely to be included in the Local Area Agreement also need to be included in the Council Plan to provide officers and members with a joined up local performance framework. At this stage we are able to indicate in the “success measures and outcomes” section of the action plans where there is likely to be a link to the Local Area Agreement and other measures in the NIS (see key at beginning of action plans in Appendix 1); but in most cases we are not able to provide targets as data is still being collected against emerging definitions and guidance and targets have yet to be negotiated with Government. Subject to Council’s delegation of approval of the LAA to Cabinet, the draft agreement will be submitted to the May meeting of Cabinet before submission to government. Once targets are agreed, the Council Plan will need to be updated.

## **SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS 2008/11**

12. 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.
13. The service improvement plans support the Council Plan and Sustainable 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 eight 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.
14. 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. Performance against SIPs will be monitored and reported to Members twice a year, alongside Council Plan monitoring.
15. 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 Sustainable Community Strategy

### **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Council Plan. The assessment demonstrated that delivery of the Council Plan will have a positive impact on the borough's diverse communities. Further details are available on the Council's website

### **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:**

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#### Background Papers

Community Strategy 2005-2008  
Community Strategy 2008-2021  
Council Plan 2007-2010.  
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.