
CORPORATE PLAN 2006 - 2009

Responsible Cabinet Member: - Councillor John Williams and All Cabinet Collectively
Responsible Director: - Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To present a draft Corporate Plan for approval and adoption which incorporates our statutory requirements for the 2006/07 BVPP.

Summary

2. Under the Local Government Act 1999 the Council is required to publish an annual Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). Following the introduction and revision of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime, growing importance was being placed on improvement planning for which the Corporate Plan is the most important source of evidence.

Information and Analysis

3. Best Value was introduced on the 1st April 2000 as a key element of the Government's programme to modernise local government. It places local authorities under a duty to seek continuous improvement in the way in which they exercise their functions. The Local Government Act 1999, supplemented by government circulars and guidance, sets out the legislative framework for local authorities and places them under a duty to publish an annual Best Value Performance Plan. The Plan has to be prepared and available by the 30th June each year.
4. Starting in 2003 we combined our Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan around a look back on the previous financial year and to describe our future key areas of activity, targets and actions for performance improvement. This became government guidance.
5. Following the introduction of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in 2002 the importance of improvement planning has increased considerably. Accordingly we have further developed the Corporate Plan element which:
 - (a) Gives a rolling three year look forward.
 - (b) Sets out our priorities and actions in the framework of the Community Strategy and the Council's corporate objectives.
6. By combining both elements within one document we will go further than our statutory obligations and produce a single reference point to assess the Council's performance and set out its future direction.

7. The attached draft full document has been produced to ensure compliance with audit criteria and technical accuracy of year-end data. All relevant performance indicators have been collected and are reported. **Appended** to this report is an extract i.e., the Executive Summary which gives a precis of the overall analysis. Following approval the plan will undergo a graphic design stage, further quality testing and a proofing exercise. A copy of the finalised plan will be posted on the Council's website and made available in public buildings on the 30th June. A printed copy will be issued to all Members, staff teams across the authority and key external partners.

Outcome of Consultation

8. Discussions with a range of stakeholders in recent months have informed revisions in the development of this year's plan. These have included elected Members, external auditors and relevant officer groups.
9. In the spirit of the latest guidance, and in particular the reduction in mandatory content, the scope to revisit our style of document has been welcomed. Plans in recent years had grown to a substantial size which, whilst ensuring full compliance with earlier guidance and auditor advice, was increasingly becoming unwieldy. The opportunity has therefore been taken to streamline content – striking a balance between maintaining an accurate and robust performance analysis with greater focus, clarity and readability. The ready availability of technical supporting material and maturity of our systems has allowed for this, enabling the production of a more user friendly and cost effective plan whilst maintaining compliance and good practice.

Legal Implications

10. This report has been considered by the Legal Services Manager for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Legal Services Manager considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

11. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is considered that the attached plan has been drafted in recognition of those requirements and is complementary to meeting the general duty. Community Safety forms a key element within the plan reflecting its status as a Community Strategy theme and the priority attached to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy as a key corporate planning document.

Council Policy Framework

12. The issues contained within this report represent a change in the Authority's policy framework with the adoption of a new combined Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan. In particular it articulates at high level the authority's next stage in organisational development.

Conclusion

13. In the light of latest guidance, user feedback and a review of best practice, the opportunity has been taken to revisit the style and content of the Council's annual Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan.
14. A sharper focus is proposed which concentrates on getting across the key messages and elements of greatest benefit to users whilst reducing or losing some content that has previously been included for completeness or to comply with earlier guidance.
15. A move to a revised and refreshed format reflects the Council's 'Four Star' Excellent rating, the increasing availability and use of technology to access supporting material and a desire to retain a useful and valued corporate planning document.
16. In accordance with all appropriate government guidance, and in consultation with the Council's external auditors and other relevant parties, a draft combined Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan has been produced and is presented here for approval.

Recommendations

17. It is recommended that:
 - (a) Members approve the Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan for adoption.
 - (b) A delegated authority is granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to oversee any minor amendments in the final print production.

Reasons

18. These recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) To meet statutory obligations to produce a Best Value Performance Plan.
 - (b) To ensure content is as accurate and up to date as possible.

Lorraine O'Donnell
Assistant Chief Executive

Background Papers:

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) – Circular 05/2006: Guidance on Best Value Performance Plans.

John Bosson: Extension 2016
JB/jb