
CORPORATE PLAN 2008-2012

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor John Williams, Leader
Responsible Director – Lorraine O’Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. For members to approve the Council’s Corporate Plan for 2008-2012. The draft plan is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Information and Analysis

2. Members have previously considered the core content of the draft Corporate Plan – the proposed corporate priorities for improvement – as part of the joint Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan, which was approved at minute C185/Feb/08. The draft attached at **Appendix 1** has been updated with Section 1 added, summarising the current context for the preparation of the plan. The priorities previously considered by Cabinet are contained in Section 2 and are unchanged, but now reinforced with a full set of performance indicators and, where available, targets for the next four years.
3. The draft Corporate Plan has been simplified to focus on setting out high level corporate priorities as part of the new arrangements combining improvement and financial planning. Preparation this year has been brought forward to provide improved linkage between the financial and service planning cycle.
4. 2007/08 has been a year of extensive change in the context for corporate, departmental and service planning. Section 1 of the draft plan reviews the changes, headlined by the production of the new Sustainable Community Strategy, ‘One Darlington : Perfectly Placed’; progress towards a new Local Area Agreement as the principal short-term delivery vehicle for the long-term strategy vision; the development of the new approach to community engagement; changes to performance management and the introduction of a new national set of performance indicators; and further consolidation of a single business and financial planning framework. The lifecycle of the Corporate Plan, together with department and service plans, has been extended from 3 to 4 years with the move to a joint Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan, subject to annual renewal and rolling forward of priorities and targets.
5. The new Local Area Agreement is scheduled for sign-off in June. The formal agreement will be based on 35 improvement targets, based on performance indicators selected from the new national list of 198 indicators, to be delivered over the 3 years of the agreement. The Council will have a leading role in delivering the targets, and this will clearly sit alongside the Corporate Plan proposals as a key corporate responsibility. Whilst the plan and the LAA are being prepared separately, there is a need to ensure that detailed planning, delivery, monitoring and reporting arrangements are closely co-ordinated. Although the full set of indicators and targets to be included in the LAA has yet to be finalised, in practice

there will be considerable overlap with the indicators to be used to measure progress on the Corporate Plan. In Section 2 of the attached draft, the PIs that are likely to be also included in the LAA are identified.

6. The Audit Commission has instructed Best Value Authorities to produce a Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) by the end of June 2008, containing the outturn data for 2007/08 Best Value Performance Indicators. As in previous plans, the document must also contain a statement certifying that individual contracts entered into in 2007/08, which involve a transfer of staff, comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Workforce matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.
7. Target-setting against the new set of national and local performance indicators is currently ongoing. Whilst the draft Corporate Plan includes targets against the majority of PIs, others have yet to be set, for the following reasons. Many of the new PIs have no baseline information against which to set targets, and government has not yet determined how local authorities should proceed on many of these new PIs. Targets for some of the national PIs will be set by partners, or require agreement with partners, and are not therefore available at this time. Finally the extension of the planning cycle from three to four years has resulted in fourth year targets not being available yet for some PIs. Target setting will be continued in parallel with 2007/08 performance reporting and BVPP production.
8. It is therefore recommended that the complete target set for 2008/9 to 2011/12, together with the outturn data for 2007/08, be presented in a future report. This will enable Members to approve all targets, whilst ensuring that the Corporate Plan is in place as early as possible.

Outcome of Consultation

9. The Corporate Plan summarises, at a high level, proposals that have been developed through departmental and service planning. External consultation has been conducted, as appropriate, through those planning processes. Consultation on the Corporate Plan itself has involved members and officers in identifying and agreeing the corporate priorities from all of the proposals generated at departmental and service level, to provide an overall picture of the Council's work plans and establish the essential link in the planning hierarchy between the Sustainable Community Strategy and Department Plans. This engagement in planning was followed by widespread internal consultation.

Legal Implications

10. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor 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. The plan has been drafted in consultation with the anti-social behaviour co-coordinator and relevant actions included as appropriate.

Council Policy Framework

12. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

13. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Conclusion

14. An up to date Corporate Plan, linking the Sustainable Community Strategy into the Council's service planning, is an essential component of the planning hierarchy. The simplified approach set out in the draft plan attached as **Appendix 1** is appropriate in terms of the significantly changed context for service planning and the easing of statutory obligations relating to the production of a Best Value Performance Plan.

Recommendation

15. It is recommended that: -
 - (a) The document attached as **Appendix 1** is approved as the Council's Corporate Plan for 2008-2012.
 - (b) A future report be submitted setting out all performance targets for 2008/09 to 2011/12, together with outturn performance data for 2007/08.

Reasons

16. The recommendations are supported as they will ensure that the Council has a full service planning hierarchy linked to delivery of the new Sustainable Community Strategy for 2008/09.

Lorraine O'Donnell
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Background Papers

There are no background papers

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