

DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2008-11**Report By: Director of Corporate and Customer Services****Wards Affected**

County-wide

Purpose

1. For the Committee to consider a draft of the Council's Corporate Plan 2008-11; and to offer comments for Cabinet to consider.

Financial Implications

2. The draft Plan has been prepared so as to be in line with the agreed Medium Term Financial Management Strategy (MTFMS). The only direct costs arise from the printing of the Plan, which are not expected to be more than about £5,000.

Background

3. Under the Council's current Performance Improvement Framework, the corporate plan is rolled forward each year. This is done in the light of the outcomes from the Performance Improvement Cycle, reviewing performance against the existing plan, setting priorities, objectives and targets for the next three years, and specifying the timetabled key actions needed to deliver them.
4. **The draft Plan is at Appendix 1.** This is work in progress. It should therefore be noted that, until Cabinet has considered the draft Plan and the views of Strategic Monitoring Committee, and commended the draft Plan to Council for approval, the detailed content, including the inclusion or non-inclusion of specific projects, is to be regarded as provisional and subject to change.
5. The draft Plan will be considered by Cabinet on 27 March, then submitted to Council for approval in May.
6. The new Local Area Agreement (LAA) is scheduled to be signed off by Government sometime in June. The draft Plan includes the proposals for the LAA as they currently exist. The Plan will need to incorporate the agreed LAA priorities, indicators and targets in due course.
7. The draft Plan is very different in format from its predecessors. Based on best practice in high-performing authorities, it is intended to get across by means of bullet points, rather than as a narrative, both what the Council has achieved and what it is committed to doing in the future. The use of appendices makes it possible to have the best of both worlds: getting across the key points concisely for wider audiences but also providing sufficient detail to mean there isn't a need to produce something separate to manage corporate performance.
8. In particular, there is no need this time round to produce an annual operating plan as an additional document, since the draft Plan provides the targets and key actions

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
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necessary for in-year performance reporting and management through the bi-monthly integrated performance and financial reports. Also, it will be possible to print different parts of the Plan separately for different audiences and purposes, including publicity. At the same time, the Plan can be maintained as one electronic document, with electronic links to other key documents, such as the MTFMS and the corporate risk register.

9. In its final form the Plan will be professionally designed and include suitable pictures to illustrate the key themes and achievements.
10. The substance of the Plan is also different in some important respects:
 - while the top priorities include those in the current (2007-10) Plan in respect of children and young people, vulnerable adults and older people and the economy, these are supplemented by *Affordable housing to meet the needs of local people* and *Better services, value for money, particularly by working in partnership with the Herefordshire Primary care Trust and other local organisations* (see page 6 of Appendix 1, which shows the relationship of the Council's top priorities and Corporate Plan themes to the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy and the proposed LAA priorities)
 - it will include achievements and timetabled key actions for the public service arrangements and other developing programmes, including in respect of data quality and the rationalisation of front- and back-office functions and accommodation.
11. It will, nonetheless, need to be refreshed in due course as the new national indicators and the arrangements for the new system of Comprehensive Area Assessment become clear, together with the medium to longer-term programme of business transformation, including by means of public service arrangements.
12. Even if, as promised by Government, the new suite of national mandatory performance indicators is confirmed shortly, with clear definitions, and can be reflected in the Plan, it will take time to establish baselines for many of them against which targets can be set. Moreover, a lot of the proposed national indicators, including the substantial proportion that depends on surveying the public's perceptions, will not provide in-year information against which performance can be reported and managed.
13. This points to a conservative and precautionary approach to changing current key performance indicators and associated targets, until we know we have better ones (national and local) that we can rely upon. This approach is reflected in the Plan by including some relevant but untried and tested new indicators, but with the majority being the most suitable of those we already use.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee considers the draft Corporate Plan 2008-11, and agrees any comments it wishes to make for Cabinet to consider.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified