



PROPOSED CORPORATE PLAN 2008-11

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

27 MARCH 2008

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To ask Cabinet to commend to Council for approval the proposed Corporate Plan for 2008-11.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendations

THAT Cabinet commends to Council for approval the proposed Corporate Plan for 2008-11, subject to such revisions as may be necessary to:

- (a) reflect the terms of the approved new Local Area Agreement; and**
- (b) finalise the detailed content, subject to this being approved by the Chief Executive and the Leader.**

Reasons

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.

Considerations

1. **A draft of the proposed Plan is at Appendix 1.** Some targets and actions are still being negotiated. In particular, 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.
2. The draft Plan is very different in form 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.

3. In particular, there is no need this time round to produce an annual operating plan as an additional document, since the draft Plan will provide the targets and key actions 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 Medium Term Financial Management Strategy and the corporate risk register.
4. In its final form the Plan will be professionally designed and include suitable pictures to illustrate the key themes and achievements.
5. 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 includes initial achievements and timetabled key actions for the public service arrangements and other developing improvement programmes.
6. It will need to be refreshed 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 and performance improvement, including by means of public service arrangements.
7. Even when the full suite of new national mandatory performance indicators is confirmed, with clear definitions, 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.
8. 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.

9. Strategic Monitoring Committee is scheduled to consider the proposed plan at its reconvened meeting on 20 March. Its recommendations to Cabinet will be reported at the Cabinet meeting.

Financial Implications

The draft Plan has been prepared so as to be fully compatible 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 £6,000.

Risk Management

A robust, affordable corporate plan, providing the basis for effective performance management, is a principal means of managing the risks to the achievement of the Council's priorities.

Alternative Options

The Council has determined that it will have an up-to-date corporate plan. The options therefore concern what priorities, objectives, targets and key actions are included in it. These have been determined as a result of the operation of the performance improvement cycle over the past year, as reflected in the MTFMS and the Budget proposals.

Consultees

The Corporate Management Board, Council managers and the Strategic Monitoring Committee.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – the draft proposed Corporate Plan 2008-11.

Background Papers

None identified.