

Scrutiny of the Business Plan 2011 – 2015

Purpose

1. To identify the content of the Council's new Business Plan relevant to the select committees and to determine an appropriate approach for future activity as requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Management and Co-ordination Liaison Board.

Background

2. The revised draft Business Plan was formally adopted at Council on 22 February having been approved by Cabinet the previous week. The 4 year Plan sets out how the Council intends to meet the challenges of reduced resources, legislative change and demographic impact whilst delivering the Council's vision to create stronger more resilient communities and achieving its goals. The Plan describes the changing landscape and strategic direction of the Council and gives a number of benefits and outcomes to the action it will take. The Financial Plan also approved by Council forms an appendix to the Business Plan (all councillors have copies of these documents and the latest version should be retained for future reference).
3. The focus of the Joint Scrutiny meeting on 10 February was the revenue and capital budget 2011/12 but did touch on some of the longer term issues in the Financial Plan as well as references to the Business Plan.
4. The Liaison Board met in the afternoon following the Joint Scrutiny meeting when it received the draft Business Plan. The Liaison Board decided to ask each select committee with the support of scrutiny officers to identify the themes and individual topics from the Business Plan that fell within their remit and ensure that this then became the focus for revising the forward work programmes of the committees.

Approach

5. It was felt that a common approach across the select committees would provide consistency for the future. The select committees already have a guide for how they should run their meetings and also recently discussed optimum size of

agendas and briefing arrangements etc. This will also be turned into a guide for consideration by the Liaison Board at the next meeting. A discussion paper on the benefits of having a positive working relationship with the Executive and the actions necessary to achieve this was also adopted by the Liaison Board last summer. The resulting protocol will be considered as part of the wider governance review on involvement of backbench members in decision making called for by the Leader.

6. Scrutiny officers in consultation with the chairmen and vice-chairmen have been through the Business Plan and have identified the following themes as relevant to the **Children's Services Select Committee**:

Theme	Plan References	Timescale & £ Budget	Scrutiny approach current & future
<p>The Schools White Paper 2010</p> <p>“The paper sets out a strong strategic role for local authorities (LAs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAs are encouraged to use their powers to act early when there is a cause for concern. • There will be more academies and free schools and a new approach will be trialled making schools responsible for the ongoing education of excluded children. • Schools will continue to be responsible for their own improvement and councils may provide improvement support on a traded basis alongside brokering school-to-school support. • LAs have a unique role in bringing together all services for children in a local area so that every child is ready and able to benefit from high quality teaching in excellent schools; • LAs have a particular role in supporting vulnerable children.” 	<p>Business Plan: Summary of Legislative Change</p> <p>(Page 11)</p>	<p>Unknown</p>	<p>Current approach</p> <p><u>Standing update to Committee</u></p> <p>The Committee is kept informed of all major changes emanating from the Department for Education (DfE) through a standing agenda item.</p> <hr/> <p>Future approach</p> <p>Central Government’s programme of change continues apace. The standing update remains necessary to keep the Committee informed.</p> <p>The impact of many of the changes remains to be seen and members may feel it is not yet appropriate to undertake further work. Future areas for attention may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Academies programme: How the LA will help academies to support underperforming schools and broker school-to-school support in general • The impact of schools taking on responsibility for the education of excluded children

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of the Education Endowment Fund replacing the Education Maintenance Award (targeted support for those who face financial barriers to participation in post-16 education) • The results of Prof. Wolf's review of vocational education for 14-19 year olds, for completion by March 2011 • The possible emergence of a scrutiny role in scrutinising under-performing schools
<p>Vulnerable children</p> <p>Family Placement Service</p> <p>“Our service needs to continue to expand to meet the increase in numbers [in LAC]; dedicated foster carers are needed for unaccompanied asylum seekers, disabled children, those requiring respite and vulnerable teenagers. In 2010/11, there was a significant increase in the levels of service needed and this led to a shortfall in the budget - this deficit needs addressing to respond to these needs.</p>	<p>Business Plan: Protect – Invest – Save (Page 52)</p> <p>Financial Plan: Protecting and safeguarding vulnerable children (Page 13)</p>	<p>Annual change in base budgets (millions):</p> <p>2011/12: £0.675 2012/13: £0.650 2013/14: £0.000 2014/15: £0.000 ----- Total: £1.325</p>	<p>Current approach</p> <p><u>Placements for LAC Task Group</u></p> <p>This existing task group have been looking at the Family Placement Service since May 2010. Its members have recently recapped on the work done so far and agreed that the Task Group should continue.</p> <p>Please see the separate Task Group update report included at Agenda Item 10 for more details of how members of the Task Group wish to proceed.</p>

Our Family Placement Service (FPS) also needs to strengthen its post-adoption support to meet the needs of those young people who have been adopted with complex health needs due to maternal drug and alcohol misuse and parental health issues.

Future approach

It is recommended that the existing Placements for LAC Task Group continues to scrutinise this service area (please see separate report at Item 10).

Youth unemployment

“Claimant unemployment in Wiltshire has risen during the recession by 4,500 and Wiltshire’s growth in unemployment has been higher than the national average...”

“There is a clear need for a second phase of Action 4 Wiltshire (A4W) to deal with the challenges of continuing unemployment in Wiltshire with young people in the age group 19-24...[amongst other groups].”

“Financial Plan 2011-15:

“It will be our intention to:

- Provide support for young people to move into employment and training working closely with our partners we have a range of strategies in place to support young people secure employment.
- The 100 in 100 Apprentices Campaign aims to have 100 new Wiltshire apprentices enrolled within the 100 day period
- Working with Job Centre Plus 8 week work experience placements for unemployed 18 – 24 year olds have been secured for 300 young people
- As part of the Action for Wiltshire initiative, the ‘Get Prepared Programme’ (16-18 year olds) supports young people moving into employment, training or further education
- We are ensuring that vulnerable groups have access to additional support and guidance, for example an intensive personal adviser is co-located with the Looked After Children

Business Plan:

Economy and unemployment (Page 54)

Financial Plan:

Protecting the economy (Page 14)

Financial Plan:

Ensure every service that is needed provides clear value for money (Page 30)

Annual change in base budgets (for

Protecting the economy overall) (millions):

2011/12: £1.000

2012/13: £0.000

2013/14: £0.000

2014/15: £0.000

Total: £1.000

Current approach

Basic Skills – reports to Committee

The Committee has received reports on progress with increasing Basic Skills attainment amongst the working age population in Wiltshire (in July 2010 and January 2011).

This included an update on the Action 4 Wiltshire programme as described in the Business Plan.

NEET– figures to Committee

Committee members receive hard copies of performance reports to Cabinet, which contain (when available) the latest NEET figures.

The Committee also received a report specifically on the issue of NEET in May 2010.

Future approach

Members may wish to consider the specific work areas relating to Youth Unemployment listed in the Business Plan (see left) and discuss how if/how they wish to monitor/scrutinise them.

<p>Children's attainment</p> <p>"We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and implement a system to broker school-to-school support, ensuring that there is no detrimental impact in those schools providing support to others build capacity, resilience and sustainability in schools, working with their local communities, where there are particular vulnerabilities, eg schools with a high percentage of children from service families • invest in the provision of support to enable schools to better identify, plan for and meet the needs of vulnerable groups in order to raise attainment. We will challenge and support all schools to be achieving in line with our best performing schools. <p>What we are trying to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure no school is in Special Measures (SMs). • Raise standards even further to ensure no 	<p>Business Plan: Invest in: children's attainment (Page 60)</p> <p>Financial Plan: Investment in children's attainment (Page 19)</p>	<p>Annual change in base budgets (millions):</p> <p>2011/12: £0.270 2012/13: £0.730 2013/14: £0.000 2014/15: £0.000 ----- Total: £1.000</p>	<p>Current approach</p> <p><u>Pupil Performance – reports to Committee</u></p> <p>The Committee currently receives annual reports containing all results from the previous academic year for Foundation Stage up to KS5.</p> <p>These reports contain specific sections on attainment gaps (FSM, LAC, SEN, Ethnic minority groups).</p> <p><u>Fact-finding</u></p> <p>The former Budget & Performance Task Group held Fact-finding meetings focussing on specific service areas (attended by relevant Select Committee Chairmen and Vice-chairs). A Fact-finding meeting held in May 2010 focussed on the work underway to reduce attainment gaps.</p> <p><u>Placement for LAC Task Group</u></p> <p>This task group has received a briefing on the educational support for LAC, which includes the work coordinated by the Virtual Headteacher.</p>
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<p>school is below the new floor standards of 60% combined English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 and 35% 5A*-C GCSE including English and mathematics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all Wiltshire schools are above the national averages for pupils' progress in the national tests • Continue to narrow attainment gaps for vulnerable groups of children and young people year-on-year • Secondary schools continue to be above the national results for the English Bacculaureate in English, mathematics, sciences, humanities and languages. • Improve the percentage of satisfactory primary schools to become outstanding or good. 			<p>Future approach</p> <p><u>Continued monitoring</u></p> <p>The annual Pupil Performance reports provide a useful overview of the attainment of Wiltshire's young people and of attainment gaps.</p> <p>The annual Ofsted rating reports includes the proportion of schools graded as satisfactory, good etc</p> <p><u>Special Schools & Post-16 SEN Task Group</u></p> <p>This Task Group, commencing in March 2011, will include a look at attainment gaps between all pupils and those with SEN in special schools.</p> <p><u>Other approaches</u></p> <p>At the Committee's previous meeting, it was suggested that members might benefit from practical experience of the methods currently being used in classrooms to raise attainment and narrow attainment gaps.</p>
<p>Housing support for young people</p> <p>"We will continue to invest in housing support for young people through the use of the Early Intervention Grant. Effective cross-departmental working has already secured</p>	<p>Business Plan: Invest in: housing (Page 68)</p>	<p>Unknown</p>	<p>Current approach</p> <p>The Placements for LAC Task Group has received a briefing on the Host Family Scheme and homelessness amongst young people in general.</p>

<p>improvements for young people and we will continue to invest in the 'Host Family' scheme which enables young people to have a safe and secure temporary home whilst mediation and return home/other options are pursued."</p>			<p>Future approach</p> <p>It is recommended that the existing Placements for LAC Task Group continues to scrutinise the issue of Housing support for LAC e.g. the Host Family Scheme (please see separate report at Item 11).</p>
<p>Services for disabled children</p> <p>(Systems thinking reviews)</p> <p>"Four service areas have been subject to an initial phase of scoping [for Systems thinking reviews]. This work has aimed to identify the potential for achieving benefits based on systems thinking, including cost savings and improving our customers' experience.</p> <p>The lives of disabled people can very often be characterised by poor support through the transition from child to adult, and a life of repeated assessments. The current system creates confusion and frustration. It also represents poor value for money for the council and its customers. This workstream will establish a system that provides the services disabled people want in the way that best meets their needs and, at the same time, saves money."</p>	<p>Business Plan: System thinking review (Page 75)</p>	<p>Savings from the Systems thinking review <u>overall</u>:</p> <p>(Annual change in base budgets (millions)):</p> <p>2011/12: £1.000 2012/13: £13.598 2013/14: £6.700 2014/15: £0.000</p> <p>----- Total: £21.298 savings</p>	<p>Current approach</p> <p>The update report on Transitions included with this agenda (Item 8) includes an update on the corporate review of services for disabled children and adults.</p> <p>Future approach</p> <p>The scoping stage of the review has been completed and work will continue on the review over the coming months.</p> <p>At this early stage, the Committee may want to request updates on the review as it progresses so it can determine whether more focused work is required.</p>

7. Scrutiny officers, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Executive members, partners and directors, will undertake a work planning exercise around the above themes to establish their delivery, timescales, budget and potential scrutiny approaches. As mentioned above, this exercise should inform a revised work programme and be the priority for any future scrutiny activity. A draft revised work programme will be presented to the Committee for consideration at the next meeting.
8. The Select Committee needs to be aware of the budget implications for support services for 2011/12 and this should be taken into account when determining the future work programme of the Committee, particularly in terms of how much activity can be supported at any one time. The capacity of elected members especially those that lead on key activities should be also taken into account. The Liaison Board and Scrutiny Manager will continue to monitor the overall position regarding workload and pressures but this needs to be done in conjunction with the need to deliver positive outcomes for the Council as a whole.
9. In looking at priorities, it is also important to remember that the focus for O&S Select Committees should be on strategic and policy development matters and not 'local issues' which should be retained for consideration at Area Board level.
10. The forward planning activity outlined in this report should allow for better management of work flow and hopefully scheduling and communication of briefings and meetings. The adoption of the new Business Plan will mean that the current departmental delivery plans will be reviewed. These will also provide helpful detail on relevant themes and activities.

Recommendation

11. The Select Committee is asked to:

- (i) note that Council on 22 February adopted the 4 year Business Plan on recommendation from Cabinet;
 - (ii) note the decision of the Liaison Board on 10 February that work is undertaken to identify relevant content from the Business Plan for the individual select committees;
 - (iii) agree the list of themes set out above but acknowledging that further refinement will be made when more detail emerges; and
 - (iv) recognise the budget implications and the demands on the leading scrutiny members in determining priorities and workload.
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Paul Kelly

Scrutiny Manager (and Designated Scrutiny Officer)

Appendices

Appendix A - current Forward Work Programme