

West Wiltshire District Council

Cabinet

5 May 2004

Corporate Priorities

Purpose

To approve revised cabinet priorities to enable the Council to develop a clear way forward in its emerging corporate plan.

Background

A limited number of specific priorities will help the council to focus its efforts on the most important service improvements and developments. This approach is in line with best practice, not least because it:

- ? helps to ensure that resources are used to maximum effect, and
- ? provides the clarity required in any well motivated organisation.

The Council has already adopted a package of priorities, but based on advice obtained from the Audit Commission, it is now intended that a shorter and more refined list is approved. The new priorities also reflect the fact that a great deal has been achieved in a short period of time.

The new list is intended to become part of the emerging corporate plan and have a 3 to 5 year life. There will nevertheless be the need to review the priorities annually to continually test their relevance.

The priorities should be treated as draft for the time being as work continues on the corporate plan and community strategy. When the corporate plan is adopted in September, it is possible that there will need to be some revisions to reflect needs and aspirations discovered as part of the fact finding and consultation work now taking place.

Key Issues

The previous priorities have been reviewed to test their importance and the extent to which this Council can make a difference:

- ? Some have been categorised as supporting principles. These are underpinning principles or approaches that any good organisation needs.
- ? One, namely transport, has not received separate mention being one of many issues that the council needs to influence through its Community Leadership role, rather than something that this Council needs to treat as a top priority.

New priorities have been developed to overcome these difficulties and reflect:

- ? The need to improve some key services to achieve Government targets
- ? Aspirations to improve quality of life
- ? Opportunities to achieve higher standards in customer information and to better use modern methods of communication

New Priorities

The proposed new priorities are:

- ? ***Development control*** - improvements to the service to benefit the customer and achieve higher standards
- ? ***Recycling*** - increases to benefit the environment and ensure Government targets are achieved
- ? ***Affordable housing*** - new affordable housing to meet local needs across the district
- ? ***Access to recreation*** - development and renewal of facilities and creation of opportunities for local people to participate
- ? ***Market town regeneration*** - improved, less traffic dominated local environments as well as better access to services, shops and facilities
- ? ***Customers First*** - a focus on the needs of customers to provide better, easy to access information and services

New Supporting Principles

The proposed principles required to enable the Council to achieve high standards whilst meeting the needs of its community and acting as good employer are:

- ? Sound financial management
- ? Valued and well supported staff
- ? A programme of continuous improvement
- ? A focus on priorities
- ? A well planned approach
- ? Strong community leadership
- ? Accessible democratic decision making
- ? Efficient and effective 'core' services
- ? High quality communication with the public

Way Forward

These priorities, if approved, will be presented to Council on the 12th May for information. The Council meeting will also consider:

- ? How the proposed officer management arrangements and structures will help deliver the priorities
- ? How the corporate plan and community strategies will evolve and help test the relevance of the priorities
- ? How members, and in particular back bench members, can be better involved in developing policy and priorities, together with local delivery and community leadership.

It is intended to initiate some member consultation about each of these 3 issues at the Council meeting.

The revised policies should be treated as coming into immediate effect.

The Corporate plan will need to ensure that each priority is associated with a series of specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound (SMART) objectives.

Options

The Cabinet could adopt any number of permutations of priorities. These proposed priorities are designed to best reflect current needs and aspirations.

The priorities could be reviewed later, but this would adversely affect the move to gain clarity and focus in the current review of management arrangements.

Financial implications

There are no immediate financial implications. However, the priorities will need to guide financial decisions and be integrated into the medium term financial plan. They will need to feature in:

- ? Appraisal documentation for future capital and revenue service bids
- ? Future Service plans & strategies
- ? The Corporate Plan

Background Documents

Source of National Priorities: ODPM Circular 02/2003 Annex A: Statement of shared priorities and the national PSA for local Government, National BVPI's.

Source of existing priorities: Report to Council 5 November 2004

CPA inspection report - 6 May 2004

Human Rights

There are no human rights implications in this report.

Andrew Pate
Chief Executive

Tony Phillips
Leader of the Council