

CABINET
20 OCTOBER 2009

REPORT ON THE CORPORATE PLAN 2010-2014

Executive summary

This report outlines the work to prepare a new Corporate Plan for the Council. It includes a summary of the Corporate Plan and highlights the key priorities identified. These priorities will provide a focus for the organisation over the next four years. This means resources may be directed or redirected towards their achievement and where appropriate the council will work through partnerships to maximise the success achieved. The contribution of services to the Corporate Plan priorities will be detailed in service plans.

Proposal

That the Cabinet:

1. reviews the summary corporate plan and make any comments
2. reviews and agree the priorities
3. notes the next steps to finalise, produce and communicate the plan

Reason for proposal

1. All high performing organisations have a Corporate Plan, business plan or equivalent to direct and focus their work.
2. An ambitious and effective Corporate Plan will focus and galvanise the organisation's resources to deliver its strategic priorities during the next four years.
3. The new Corporate Plan is in preparation and a key stage has been reached in which the future priorities need to be confirmed. This will allow the plan to be progressed to the final stage. It will also help to inform deliberations on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the detailed budget discussions for 2010-11.

Laurie Bell, Policy, Research and Communications

Contact Details: 01225 718214

REPORT ON THE CORPORATE PLAN 2010-2014

Purpose of report

1. This report outlines the council's draft Corporate Plan covering the period 2010-14. Cabinet views are sought on the content of the plan and particularly the proposed priorities. It may also wish to comment on the next steps required and the way the plan will be produced and communicated internally and externally.

Background

2. The council is changing and developing rapidly and faces many significant challenges ahead. It will have to manage a wide and diverse range of services with decreasing resources and heightened customer expectations. It is vital that the new Council plans how it will manage these challenges and produces a Corporate Plan that clearly sets out its vision, goals and priorities for the next 3 – 5 years aligned to its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
3. The plan should clearly state to our customers, communities and stakeholders what the council is prioritising and why and where it will be allocating its resources to ensure the priorities are delivered and the goals and vision are realised. It will also guide and direct councillors and officers to ensure that all decisions and activities support the effective achievement of the vision, goals and priorities. Our priorities will be based on clear evidence of community needs and aspirations determined through robust research and local consultation.
4. The Corporate Plan should also reflect the targets set out in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Wiltshire, which have been agreed and are being monitored by the Government. The Corporate Plan will be assessed by the Audit Commission as part of Wiltshire Council's Direction of Travel and its Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). An effective Corporate Plan aligned to the work of the council will be vital in achieving a successful update.
5. A First Year Plan 2009-10 was produced for the new council by the Implementation Executive, which set out key actions that the council would deliver in its first year. It focused on the first year only, recognising that longer term priorities and actions would be determined by the newly elected council. The Plan sets out clear tangible actions under the overarching vision **to create stronger and more resilient communities** and each of the three key goals:
 - **High quality, low cost, customer focused services**
 - **Local, open, honest decision making and,**
 - **Work together to support Wiltshire's communities**

The actions focus on making a positive impact and difference to our customers, communities and stakeholders. The plan has been widely communicated and distributed to raise awareness of what the new council is setting out to achieve and deliver in its first year. Many of the actions have now been delivered or are underway and are on target to be completed by the end of the year.

Main considerations for the council

Producing the new Corporate Plan

6. The new Corporate Plan is being coordinated by the Policy, Research and Communications Service with support from a working group of senior officers representing all departments. This will help to ensure there is full engagement and commitment of all departments to the process. The involvement of councillors and other partner agencies will also occur at various points, including Cabinet. A summary timetable and work plan for production of the plan has been produced, see Appendix 1. It is closely linked and runs in parallel with the preparation of the MTFS and budget setting process for 2010-11.
7. The draft Corporate Plan summary and overview is attached at Appendix 2. This is very much a working draft report and should be treated as such. The full plan is still in preparation and will be available subsequently once the priorities are confirmed. It will include four main sections - summary, introduction and context, the priorities, and delivery.
8. In preparing the plan, the working group has taken account of many influences but particularly the evidence and intelligence about Wiltshire, the financial pressures we are facing, the Local Agreement for Wiltshire (LAW) and the Local Area Agreement (LAA), the corporate programme of projects, political priorities, and the promises made in the original LGR bid to government. Together they provide the framework for drafting the plan and setting out the challenges and priorities facing the Council.

Key influences

Evidence and intelligence

9. The priorities for the council should reflect what we know about Wiltshire and the issues that it is facing. Robust evidence and intelligence provides a picture of what needs to be addressed and where resources need to be focused. A wide range of evidence and intelligence is being produced and used to help develop the Corporate Plan. This includes:
 - The Health and Well-being Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which was launched in June. Other assessments will follow including an economic assessment in 2010.
 - The spatial research currently underway for the Local Development Framework core strategy
 - Summary profiles for all the Area Boards. These provide an overview of key issues affecting local communities. Full community area assessments are

now in preparation and will help to inform the 'State of Wiltshire' debate at the Wiltshire Assembly.

- The report commissioned by the Wiltshire Assembly on the impact of the credit crunch in Wiltshire.
- The Place Survey 2008 which provides an up to date picture of resident views on a range of key issues. The Council is now preparing to repeat this survey for 2009.
- Feedback from the first Comprehensive Area Assessment.

All of this work and other sources will provide critical information and evidence for supporting the identification of priorities.

Financial pressures on public sector spending

10. Over the last decade, economic prosperity has allowed for considerable investment in public services. The recent financial crisis and the subsequent legacy of high levels of national debt will result in huge pressures on public sector spending for the foreseeable future. For the council it means there is likely to be a significant reduction in government grants, less income from our own services, and a political mandate to keep council tax rises as low as possible. It will have to find new ways to provide services with fewer resources available.

LAW and LAA

11. The Plan will link to a number of the priority areas agreed by the Wiltshire family of partnerships, the Local Agreement for Wiltshire (LAW) and the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The LAW and LAA contains ambitions and targets under the headings – building resilient communities, improving affordable housing, lives not services, supporting economic growth, safer communities which also feel safe, and protecting the environment.

Corporate programme of projects

12. The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) has looked at the key areas of work and transformation that the Council is either undertaking or will need to undertake to transform services and achieve the efficiencies as set out in the move to one council bid. These projects will be closely tied to achieving the Corporate Plan goals and priorities.

Promises made in the 1C4W bid

13. The 'We're Ready' and 'Next Steps' original LGR bid documents detailed a number of key promises that we must achieve as a new unitary Council. The government will judge our success at least in part on the delivery of these promises. They relate to savings and efficiencies, services and customer access improvements, and effective local area governance. The delivery of these promises will be integral to the Corporate Plan.

The challenges

14. There are some significant challenges that the council must address over the coming years. Some relate to things we can control while others are completely outside our control but will have a major impact on our services and resources. Some are highlighted here.
- Less than 50% of people are satisfied with council services (47.5%). However, whilst this needs to improve it is still above the England and South West averages (45.4% and 43.9% respectively).
 - Some of the services that residents say are most in need of improvement include road and pavement repairs, activities for teenagers, affordable decent homes, traffic congestion and public transport.
 - Only a third of residents agree with the statement that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.
 - The elderly population in Wiltshire is set to more than double over the next 20 years.
 - Homes continue to be less affordable, taking account of incomes, in Wiltshire compared to the rest of the South West and England as a whole
 - The government grant settlement for councils is likely to be significantly reduced over the coming years.
15. It is important the Corporate Plan takes account of the key challenges facing the Council. To ensure all the issues have been picked up an externally focused PESTLE analysis (Political, Economic, Socio-economic, Technology, Legislation, and Environment) and internally focused SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis has been carried out. A summary of both these analyses is attached at Appendix 3. In addition, a more detailed assessment has also been carried out at service level.

The priorities and options considered

16. Priorities are things the council wants to achieve and by definition are more important than anything else. Priorities are needed because local communities often have complex and diverse needs and aspirations that cannot always be met and choices need to be made. It recognises the council cannot do everything. In identifying and setting priorities it is very important that only a small number are selected and the Plan currently identifies nine priorities. If more are identified it can become increasingly difficult to direct and focus the resources of the council and their importance can be diluted and undermined.
17. Taking account of the wide range of influences and challenges a number of potential priorities for the council have been identified. They are grouped under four themes of family / people, community, place and council. A long list has been produced and a number of priorities are suggested for selection, see Appendix 4.

18. The suggested priorities are:

- **Family / people:** Working in partnership to support vulnerable individuals and families Increasing the potential of young people
- **Community:** Local voice local choice
- **Place:** Improving our roads and pavements
Supporting the local economy
Meeting housing needs
Reducing our environmental impact
- **Council;** Achieving savings, efficiency and value for money
Customer focus and improved access to services

The reasons why these priorities have been short listed relate to a variety of inter-related issues. They include being of particular concern to the community; reflecting key national socio-economic factors; being required to deliver promises made in the bid to be a unitary council; and finally local political mandates. More information on why the priorities have been selected is included in the Plan.

However, it is recognised that in identifying and short listing priorities a judgement has been made balancing many different issues and other potential priorities may be preferred by Cabinet. However, if priorities are added others should ideally be removed in order not to compromise the organisations capacity to deliver them.

Impact of Corporate Plan

19. The Corporate Plan will have wide ranging implications for the council. It will affect all services and will require a 'can do' culture, interdepartmental working, and more joined up partnership working to take place. Its impact against the standard report headings include:

- Environmental impact: the importance of place is explicitly recognised as a theme in the plan.
- Equalities impact: the national equalities scheme for local government has been taken into account in the plan.
- Risk assessment: An ineffective Corporate Plan has a number of risks including:
 - A lack of clear focus and direction for the organisation
 - The possibility of conflicting priorities occurring between strategies, political aspirations, and services
 - One Council cultural change may be more difficult to achieve
 - Employees not understanding how their role fits into the council's work
 - Potential failure to realise LGR benefits
 - Corporate planning, budget planning, community planning, and performance management cycles not properly linked together

- A negative CAA area and organisational assessment
- Financial implications: the corporate plan will have financial implications. However, the priorities have not been costed in detail. This will come later as part of the annual budget setting process, when specific bids are made for projects.
- Legal implications: there is no statutory requirement to produce a corporate plan. However, the Comprehensive Area Assessment and other inspections often use a corporate plan as a key piece of evidence to identify and understand the priorities set by the council.

Conclusions and next steps

20. The First Year Plan 2009-10 is being implemented and achievements are being communicated internally and externally.

21. The new Corporate Plan will be in place for implementation from April 2010. It must be a key driver for action in the Council and should set the agenda for focusing its work through partnerships. This will be achieved via the budget setting process and underpinned by service plans and key supporting strategies which will ensure actions are identified to deliver the priorities. The Corporate Plan and corporate programme of projects will form a key part of the Cabinet's forward plan. Externally, the Council is taking the lead through the Wiltshire Assembly, the Public Services Board and the Wiltshire Coordinating Group. Many of the priorities and actions will only be fully achieved via joint work in these partnerships.

22. The Plan will be closely linked to a number of other corporate processes currently underway including:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and budget proposals for 2010-11. An iterative process will occur with the Corporate Plan providing information to the MTFS about future priorities and the MTFS feeding back information on finances and affordability. When complete, the MTFS will be the resource strategy for the Corporate Plan and reflect what is needed to achieve each of the priorities
- The update and implementation of the Local Agreement for Wiltshire (LAW) and Local Area Agreement (LAA)
- The corporate programme of projects and the work of the resource delivery group
- Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and the requirements for corporate planning
- The development of other supporting strategies

A corporate planning cycle is being developed which will link together the corporate plan, performance, community planning and budgetary processes.

23. Communicating the Plan internally and externally will be crucial to ensure councillors, all staff, partners and the wider community are aware of the priorities and future direction of the Council. It should allow for example, staff to understand how their contribution and role is important and fits into the wider picture. If successful a 'golden thread' should be evident linking the Corporate Plan priorities down through service plans and into individual action plans and appraisals. It is proposed two versions of the plan are produced. A full version will be produced for senior councillors and officers and a summary version for external publication to all Wiltshire Council staff, councillors, partner organisations, local people and the media. Some innovative and exciting ideas to maximise and maintain the profile of the plan will be developed.
24. Following this Cabinet meeting work on preparing the full Corporate Plan will continue with support from the Corporate Plan Working Group. A proposal is being developed to transform this group into a programme board which can then focus on working up the detail of how each of the priorities will be taken forward. It is intended that service directors will be asked to take a lead on each of the priorities and involve other relevant staff whose expertise is needed. This will allow service directors and staff to work on issues that cut across the organisation and outside of their own service areas.
25. It is important that the council consults on its Corporate Plan priorities and budget plans and proposals both internally and externally. Internal consultation will occur with Cabinet, Scrutiny, the Corporate Leadership Team and the Extended Leadership Team. External consultation will use a variety of surveys, meetings and events, including People's Voice, the Place Survey, Area Boards and other public meetings. The timing of this consultation is summarised below. It should mean valuable feedback will be available in January 2010 to help finalise the Corporate Plan priorities, MTFS and budget programme for 2010-11.

Corporate Plan and budget consultation

Consultation	Intended purpose	Timescale
Internal		
Cabinet and Cabinet Liaison meetings	Developing the Corporate Plan, MTFS and budget for 2010-11	Oct 2009 – Feb 2010
Scrutiny meetings	Engagement and review of Corporate Plan, MTFS, and budget for 2010-11	Oct 2009 – Feb 2010
CLT / ELT	Review and assessment of priorities and budget options. Involvement with work to draw up detailed plans on how each priority will be taken forward and delivered	10 Dec and other meetings to be scheduled
External		
Place Survey	Service satisfaction questions	Questionnaire sent out mid October
Area Boards – 18 meetings	Budget voting cards to set priorities for spending	Mid Oct 2009 – Early Jan 2010

Consultation	Intended purpose	Timescale
People's Voice	Questions about priorities and services	Questionnaire sent out early November
Budget consultation events: 3 public and 1 business meeting	Explores budget priorities and issues	November

26. The full plan will be brought back to Cabinet on 11 February 2010. It will then be submitted to Full Council on 23 February 2010 for final approval. The Corporate Plan will then be reviewed and refreshed each year to formally assess progress against the priorities and to ensure its continued relevance.

Laurie Bell
Service Director Policy, Research and Communications

Report authors: Paul Mountford, Policy Officer; Nick Darbyshire, Policy Officer; and Matti Raudsepp

8 October 2009

Background papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Corporate Plan Working Group notes and discussion papers

Appendices

Appendix 1 Timetable

Appendix 2 Corporate Plan

Appendix 3 PESTLE and SWOT analysis

Appendix 4 List of potential priorities with suggestions highlighted