

Executive

16th May 2006

Report of the Head of Performance Improvement

Corporate Strategy and Council Plan

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present members of the Executive with the draft 2006-9 Corporate Strategy and describe how it will link to, and reshape, annual Council Plans.

Background

2. The development of a Corporate Strategy is a significant step forward in helping to set out the direction and priorities of the Council over the medium-term. It is an essential component in CPA terms. It also addresses issues about “lack of direction” identified in a number of corporate reviews.
3. In the absence of such a strategy, in corporate planning terms, we have relied on the annual Council Plan/BVPP to articulate the Council’s strategy and direction – albeit largely and necessarily for a 12 month period. The Corporate Strategy fills this void. It sets out a longer-term direction for the Council and means that the Council Plan in future will be the Council’s “in year” delivery plan supporting the Corporate Strategy as well as the Council’s other key strategies. The Council Plan also fulfils statutory BVPP requirements

Our Corporate Strategy

4. We have now developed a 3 draft -year Corporate Strategy (Annex A) which will become the key planning document at a corporate level. This Strategy will be supported by annual Council Plans which set out the key actions and improvements which need to be delivered “in year”.
5. At the heart of the Corporate Strategy are the thirteen Improvement Statements which have been developed over the past few months. These have been developed jointly by all chief officers with input from the Leader, Executive and Shadow Executive and as such have a high degree of ownership and buy-in. This will be key to ensuring that the Corporate Strategy generally, and the Improvement Statements specifically, succeed in helping to give us clarity and focus; key requirements in CPA terms.

6. In developing the Strategy, the likely implications of prioritising the thirteen Improvement Statements have been considered. These implications are described in detail in the Strategy and include:
 - being the focus of senior management attention
 - shaping CMT/Executive agendas
 - influencing resourcing decisions
 - providing the focus for corporate performance monitoring
7. Further work is however required to develop how exactly the Corporate Strategy will “make a difference” in practice.
8. The Strategy includes key one and three year actions which are in existing plans, and existing key measures. These are however intended only to be illustrative. It is anticipated that these actions will be reviewed as part of more detailed work being undertaken on each priority with the possible addition of new actions and amendment or deletion of others. As part of this process, it is also anticipated that “better measures” (not necessarily those measures which currently exist) will be developed to measure/monitor progress against the Improvement Statement outcomes.
9. The Corporate Strategy also sets out clearly how the Improvement Statements fit with the Council’s Corporate Aims and the wider Community Strategy Aims. This helps link different levels of the planning framework together and maintains the essential “golden thread”. The Council Plan will provide more information on these elements, with all performance indicators and key actions continuing to be set out under the eight Corporate Aims.
10. Taken together, the 3-year Corporate Strategy will express the corporate priorities for the Council and annual council plans will set out the actions to deliver them. Clear and effective signposting between both documents will therefore be essential, as will signposting between the Council Plan and other key strategies.
11. The Corporate Strategy will need to be reviewed annually to inform annual Council Plans. We may also need to update the document to take account of the Local Area Agreement for York and any revised actions or measures. We do not however anticipate that the Improvement Statements (priorities) would change within the currency of the 3 year Strategy. This will provide the required longer term focus.
12. The strategy will be important to all our stakeholder including staff, partners, elected members and government bodies (for example, the Audit Commission). It will be particularly important in helping to communicate the Council’s priorities to our staff and to help maintain focus on them. Given its importance it is envisaged that the document, both its content and appearance, would be something to be proud of.

13. The attached draft still needs final editing and further improvements to its presentation prior to publication, but includes the main elements which will be in the final document – including at its heart, the Improvement Statements. Subject to approval of the Improvement Statements and the overall content of the Corporate Strategy by the Executive, it is anticipated that the final Corporate Strategy will be produced by end of May. In order to achieve this date, the Executive is asked to delegate approval to final editing/presentational changes to the Leader and Chief Executive.

Council Plan

14. The Council Plan will set out, in more detail, what we intend to do deliver year on year to support the Corporate Strategy (i.e. the next plan will cover key actions for 2006/07). Performance targets shown in the 2006/07 Council Plan however, will need to cover a 3 year period to comply with BVPP statutory requirements.
15. Another important requirement of BVPP compliance is that the Council Plan must clearly demonstrate the golden thread of delivery and improvement between corporate strategy and front line service planning and delivery. We therefore propose using the eight Corporate Aims as key themes for setting out the delivery of our priority improvement statements.
16. This year's Council Plan will be developed in 3 sections:
 - Section 1: Introduction and context – forewords, customer/resident feedback, current performance under CPA and the management of resources (i.e. basic staffing and finance information).
 - Section 2: Delivering our Corporate Strategy – key actions for 2006/07
 - Section 3: Performance tables – 2005/06 outturns and 3 year targets
17. The Council's existing 69 corporate objectives will be retained, at least in the short term, and these will be shown in the Council Plan. The intention is to set the role of the corporate objectives as reference points for long-term continual improvement across all services. This then helps to focus on the key priority actions within each aim highlighting areas where improvement will need to be stretched or delivered more effectively/quicker.

Aligning 'performance' improvement

18. In this year's Council Plan (as in previous years), we will publish outturns and targets for over 300 performance indicators in the Council Plan. These are currently all linked to one or more of our corporate objectives and the vast majority are included in 2006/07 service plans. This allows us to demonstrate clear golden thread links between our corporate aims/objectives and service delivery.
19. Linkages have also identified the between the 13 improvement statements and the 69 corporate objectives and can now align performance measures to priorities. Given the existing links between service plans and corporate

objectives, the golden thread is demonstrable across all areas of our Corporate Strategy. This exercise will also allow us to develop performance scorecards for all 13 improvement statements. These will be needed to help monitor progress against our priorities throughout the year (i.e. they can be used for the 2 performance monitor sessions).

Recommendations

20. Executive is asked to:

- a) Agree the draft 2006-9 corporate strategy document - attached as Annex 1.
- b) Delegate approval for any final editorial/presentational changes to the Leader and Chief Executive with a view to producing the Corporate Strategy by end May 2006.
- c) note the proposed changes to the format of the 2006/07 Council Plan.

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Annex A Draft Corporate Strategy