

	
Executive	31 st March 2009
Report of the Director of Resources	

The Refresh of the Corporate Strategy

Summary

1. This report presents Members with information describing how the current Corporate Strategy has been refreshed to align with the Sustainable Community Strategy, in order to provide the Council with an improved strategic direction for the future. It asks the Executive to endorse the refreshed draft Corporate Strategy, which will be delivered between April 2009 and March 2012, and refer to Full Council for approval.

Background

2. Corporate Management Team (CMT) decided to refresh the Corporate Strategy to ensure greater alignment with the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 placed upon local authorities the duty to co-operate with partners, and the subsequent revisions to the local government performance framework have made it a statutory duty for local authorities to demonstrate how they are working with their partners to deliver local services (via the LAA). Other local authorities are having to make stronger alignment to the LAA and the SCS in order to prepare for the new performance framework – the Comprehensive Area Appraisal (CAA).
3. Additional influences to this decision were strong views from the Corporate Leadership Group that there were too many strategic elements within the original strategy, which made it difficult to monitor. CMT also highlighted the need for measurable targets, both short term and long term, to demonstrate the progress that is being made against them. This will allow more effective monitoring to regularly check whether we are on track to achieve priorities.
4. The strategy also includes the major project/improvement activity in which the Council is involved - in particular major investment areas. One of the problems we face with the current strategy is producing evidence of change for our residents, and performance managing not only the priorities, but also the other elements of the strategy.

5. Completing this work is also a priority within the Single Improvement Plan.
6. The rationale for the refresh of the strategy is important, and is driven by other important issues such as:-
 - The CPA Corporate Assessment questioned how well the "golden thread" was embedded in CYC; hence the need for better alignment .
 - The alignment of our Corporate Strategy with the SCS and LAA will allow better financial planning and remove confusion/duplication from the annual planning and budget process.
 - It is considered desirable for all teams to understand how they contribute to CYC aims.
 - Greater alignment with the financial strategy.

Process

7. The process of the refresh has evolved, as it has been through various stages of development
8. Firstly, CMT held intensive sessions to specifically focus on this year's refresh of the corporate strategy. The decision was made to carry out a thorough refresh this year due to the rationale mentioned above, to ensure the Strategy would be fit for purpose in the future.
9. A meeting with the Leader of the Council, the Director of People and Improvement and officers from the Performance and Improvement Team took place to discuss the possible way forward to develop the Strategy. It was suggested involving cross party Members at an early stage in the process via workshops. The way forward was agreed.
10. Meetings took place with the other Group Leaders to explain the process and to request that they encourage their members to attend.
11. The Chairs of the workshops (CMT members or representatives), decided on the invitation lists for the workshops and invitations were sent out.
12. Workshops were held under each theme to put forward actions to be delivered in the year 09/10, that were realistic, deliverable and measurable.
13. Executive received a paper on the progress of the refresh, and it was decided that officers would - take an overarching corporate view of the outcomes of the workshops together analyse potential gaps in the output from the workshops, and cross check against resources. They

would then develop the longer term element of the strategy, via workshops if necessary, or by consultation with key officers.

14. Executive and CMT were fully engaged in this development process via consideration by email of at least three drafts, and comments were incorporated as the strategy evolved.
15. The LAA targets used within the Strategy were updated with the results from the LAA refresh.

The refreshed corporate strategy 2009-2012

16. The seven themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy (our 20-year blueprint for partnership working), form the basis for the structure of the refreshed Strategy. These themes are: the Sustainable City, the Learning City, the Thriving City, the Inclusive City, the Healthy City, the City of Culture and the Safer City. In addition, there is an 8th theme, the Effective Organisation, that looks at our internal processes and how they enable us to deliver on the seven citizen-focused themes.
17. The format of the Corporate Strategy has therefore changed. Instead of the existing ten priorities, there will be eight themes, and under each theme there will be medium term (three year) commitments, as well as one year milestones, that can be completed and measured within that year. The existing Corporate Values remain unchanged and shown in the Effective Organisation theme, while the Direction Statements will no longer be shown as a strategic element in their own right.
18. Annex A shows the published version that is aimed at staff and external audiences. Annex B shows the more detailed accompanying 'accountability' spreadsheet which will be contained in the back of the published version and updated each year.

Monitoring

19. During the year, and at the end of the year, quantifiable measures of overall progress made on the Council's priorities will be produced. This performance monitoring will be a key element of the Finance and Performance reports that come to the Executive.
20. The spreadsheet in Annex A connects each commitment in Annex B with a 2012 result and 09/10 specific actions and milestones. The actions will have full delivery plans within the responsible directorate, which can be used for more detailed monitoring as Members wish.
21. In future years, the one-year milestones will be considered using the commitments for focus, in time for inclusion within the budget cycle. This will ensure that our Corporate Strategy and budget cycle are fully aligned. Our aim is to show a clear golden thread running from strategic long-term priorities to annual service plans, with budget processes supporting priorities.

The current Corporate Strategy

22. The priorities, directions statements, values and imperatives were all considered as part of the refresh process. As you would expect, there is a strong link between the previous Strategy and the refreshed Strategy, as the issues are still very important to the people of York.
23. A few examples of where the previous Corporate Strategy elements can be seen in the refreshed Strategy are shown in the table below.

Previous Corporate Strategy	Refreshed Corporate Strategy
Directions Statements	
We will seek to place environmental sustainability at the heart of everything we do	We now have the theme 'Sustainable City' which demonstrates our commitment and identifies key actions that we will deliver under this agenda
We will promote cohesive and inclusive communities	We now have the theme 'Inclusive City', which demonstrates our commitment and identifies key actions that we will deliver under this agenda. Equalities is also a important element in the SIP which is contained in the Effective Organisation theme.
Priorities	
Decrease the tonnage of biodegradable waste and recyclable products going to landfill	A specific commitment under Sustainable City - We will reduce the environmental impacts of council activities by making it as easy as possible for residents to recycle, investing in new ways to avoid landfill methods and through the carbon management programme
Increase the use of public and other environmentally-friendly modes of transport	A specific commitment under Thriving City - We will improve York's transport infrastructure by developing three new park and ride sites
Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces	A specific commitment under Thriving City - We will improve the quality of the local environment and the condition of York's streets and public spaces
Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects	A specific commitment under Thriving City - We will enhance skill levels within the York workforce to meet the changing needs of the local economy, by assisting employers to take advantage of training opportunities
Improve the economic prosperity of the people of York with a focus on minimising income differentials	A specific commitment under Thriving City - We will implement a programme of support for local businesses and communities to ensure that York does better than the regional and national average during the economic downturn

Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest	We now have the Healthy City theme which demonstrates our commitment and identifies key actions that we will deliver under this agenda
Improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city	A specific commitment under Inclusive City - We will provide more affordable homes.
Imperatives	
School Modernisation Strategy	A specific commitment under Learning City - We will transform learning opportunities for children and young people by building or modernising new schools
Responding to York's changing population	A specific commitment under Healthy City - We will ensure that council services are able to respond to the changing population
York Stadium	A specific commitment under City of Culture - We will develop proposals to complete the building of a Community Stadium for the City that will provide high quality sport, recreation and other community focused opportunities
Our new office accommodation	A specific commitment under Sustainable City - We will develop a single site solution for the Council's new Headquarters which cuts the Council's carbon footprint by 75%
Values	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering what our customers want • Providing strong leadership • Supporting and developing people • Encouraging improvement in everything we do 	Represented in the Effective Organisation Theme

Communication

24. There will be various communication methods used to ensure that information is available to all audiences.
25. As previously mentioned, Annex A and B will be combined and copies will be printed and sent to Members and senior management for reference.
26. Posters will be produced which will show the 8 themes of the Strategy, which will be displayed in offices and public areas within our buildings. More detailed posters will show further information on each of the themes.
27. Staff road shows will be held to introduce the 8 themes, and staff will be asked how their work contributes to the theme/s. The posters showing the detailed theme information, and pocket sized theme

guides will then be sent out to the relevant offices, to be displayed or put in vehicles.

28. The Strategy will be shown on the internet and intranet, with a fully downloadable version available. A press release will be sent out after approval.

Consultation

29. Details of the consultation can be found in the section called 'Process', on the second page of this report.

Options

30. The options are for Executive to :-
 - a) Agree and endorse the Corporate Strategy 2009-2012, and refer onto Full Council for approval, or
 - b) Suggest changes that would lead to future agreement

Corporate Priorities

31. The proposals have a direct effect on the Corporate Strategy as the paper is recommending a refresh.

Implications

32.
 - (a) **Financial** Strong links were developed during the refresh process between the Corporate Strategy and the Financial Strategy, in particular, the proposed actions are supported by resources and affordability featured in the development of the commitments. The Council's medium term financial planning is driven by the commitments within the corporate strategy. For more information, refer to the Financial Strategy 2009-13.
 - (b) **Human Resources (HR)** There are no HR implications
 - (c) **Equalities** Equalities issues were considered as part of the development of all 8 themes. Specific equalities issues will be addressed through the Inclusive City theme and through the SIP in the Effective Organisation theme.
 - (d) **Legal** The Local Government Act 2000, and the councils constitution Part 3A page 6 para 3.1a) xii states that Executive is responsible for preparing and submitting the draft Corporate Strategy before sending to Full Council for approval.
 - (e) **Crime and Disorder** There are no Crime and Disorder implications
 - (f) **Information Technology (IT)** There are no IT implications

(g) **Property** There are no Property implications

Risk Management

33. Failure to agree the Corporate Strategy could result in the Council receiving a low score under the Corporate Area Assessment framework, which could damage the image and reputation of the council.

Recommendations

34. The Executive is asked to:

a) Note the content of 'City of York Council – Corporate Strategy 2009/2012' , and in particular to:

- Agree the draft refreshed Corporate Strategy as appended to this report, and refer onto Full Council for approval

35. Reason: To ensure that the Council can demonstrate its contribution to the wider aims of the city, as described in the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.

36. Reason: To improve performance monitoring and management arrangements of corporate priorities.

Contact Details

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	Report Approved	√	Date:19th March 2009
Wards Affected: <i>List wards or tick box to indicate all</i>			All √
For further information please contact the author of the report			

Background Papers:

The Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2025
The Local Area Agreement. 2008-2011

Annexes

Annex A – The Corporate Strategy 2009-2012

Annex B – An accountability spreadsheet