

Subject: Corporate Priorities

Status: For Publication

Report to: The Cabinet

Date: 21st February 2007

Report of: Executive Director of Resources

Portfolio

Holder: Leader of the Council and Policy and Performance

Key Decision:

NO (Policy and Budget Framework Matter
for Council Approval)

Forward Plan

General Exception

Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek agreement to revised corporate priorities, following consultation, for recommendation to the Full Council.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report are designed to provide greater focus to the Council's priorities and to deliver further improvement in the corporate planning process.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report. However, the strength and effectiveness of the corporate planning process is clearly central to supporting councillors in maintaining focus on the most important issues. Clear and relevant priorities which accurately target the most significant areas are at the heart of an effective corporate planning process.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 Proposed revisions to the Council's corporate priorities, which are the areas where the Council wishes to allocate time, effort and resources were published for consultation in December. The consultation process has run alongside that on the budget, including the involvement of the Area Fora, but has also included additional Overview and Scrutiny involvement and the use of questions in surveys which the Council was already committed to undertaking.

- 4.2 The initial feedback from the East Lancashire e Partnership survey of 1,100 residents indicates that there is broad support for the areas of activity identified as priorities. In particular regeneration (supported by 59.4%) and promotion of the Borough (supported by 54.4%) scored highly. However other key elements of the priorities such as street cleanliness and refuse collection (clean and green), provision of right first time responses (quality services for customers), and improvements to leisure facilities (health and well being) also received very high levels of support. These results would seem to indicate broad support for the Council focusing its attention on the areas identified in the new priorities.
- 4.3 Similarly the preliminary results of the winter 2007 Feedback Panel survey indicate very strong support of the proposed priorities with each of the outward facing priorities being rated as very important or vital by more than 2/3rds of respondents.
- 4.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Policy Task Group considered the proposed priorities at their meeting on 7th December 2006 and made comments around the following areas:
- *The fact that the priorities are general in terms of prioritising expenditure.* As indicated in the report to the Task Group there is a conscious move away from including specific projects as priorities, given that projects will be handled through the programme management process. In addition broader priorities reflecting both the influencing and delivery roles of the Council are a reflection of the growing maturity of the organisation and the need for us to begin to make an impact on issues that cut across traditional service boundaries such as health and well being.
 - *The process for developing the priorities and a specific recommendation that the Cabinet consider an all member workshop to allow all elected members to contribute to the development of future reviews of priorities.* It is clearly possible to do this, however it is a matter for the Cabinet to determine the process and guidance is requested on this.
- 4.5 There has also been some comment that greater understanding is required as to why the particular issues identified as priorities are important. This is a valid criticism both in Rossendale and many other councils and the attached document aims to set out an explanation of why these issues are being prioritized.
- 4.6 It is proposed to reword the suggested priority around maintaining the skills of the workforce to reflect the broader approach to human resource management which contributes to the overall delivery of the Council's objectives.

4.7 In light of the broadly favourable reception for the proposed new priorities it is proposed that the following are adopted as corporate priorities for 2007/08 and beyond:

- Delivering quality services to customers (*Customers, Improvement*)
- Delivering regeneration across the Borough (*Economy, Housing*)
- Keeping our Borough clean and green (*Environment*)
- Promoting Rossendale as a cracking place to live and visit (*Economy*)
- Improving health and well being across the Borough (*Health, Housing*)

Enabled by:

- Strong financial management and the delivery of value for money services (*Improvement*)
- Equipping members to fulfil their role as leaders in the community (*Community Network*)
- Effective Human Resource management and maintaining a workforce with the skills to deliver the priorities for the Borough (*Improvement*)

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

5.1 These priorities are reflected in the budget proposals which are to be considered elsewhere on the Cabinet's agenda.

6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

6.1 The Corporate Priorities are central to what the Council will achieve in the future.

7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

7.1 The provision of Equality of Opportunity and delivery of services in an equitable manner is a cross cutting theme, but has a particular impact in terms of the delivery of quality services to customers. The rewording of the suggested enabler to include the wider sphere of Human Resource management reflects the broader approach the Council is taking to managing this valuable resource.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Council is growing in maturity as an organisation and the revision of the corporate priorities in the way suggested in this report is reflective of that growing maturity. The areas where it is suggested that the Council devote time, energy and resources are supported by the results of quantitative consultation activity as well as by the longer term goals set out in the Community Strategy.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 The Cabinet are recommended to recommend that the Full Council approve the new corporate priorities set out in para 4.5

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 As described above, consultation through random and citizens' panel surveys, with the business community and community network and with the Council's own Overview and Scrutiny function.

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There are no background papers to this report