

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

TO:	COUNCIL		
DATE:	31ST MARCH 2009	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	'LEADING THE WAY': CORPORATE PLAN 2009/2012		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR LOVELOCK	PORTFOLIO:	BOROUGH-WIDE
SERVICE:	CORPORATE POLICY	WARDS:	ALL
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1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the final draft of the Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2012 'Leading the Way', for adoption by the Council.
- 1.2 Due to the size of the complete set of documents that comprise the plan, full copies have been placed in the Members' rooms and will be available at the meeting. The following documents are appended to this report:

Appendix A - High-Level Programme
Appendix B - Transformational Change and Improvement Programme schematic

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Corporate Plan 2009-2012 be approved for publication.
- 2.2 That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, be authorised to approve any final minor amendments to the Corporate Plan prior to publication.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2008/09 set out a range of priorities and initiatives to frame and give focus to the Council's activities, in support of the Local Strategic Partnership's draft Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Reading.

3.2 'Leading the Way', the Council's proposed Corporate Plan for 2009/2012, reflects a different context, politically and economically for Reading and the Council. Whilst maintaining a focus on community priorities, it sets out an enhanced programme for improving the performance of the Council. This seeks to ensure that the Council is able to demonstrate leadership, effective use of resources, value for money and good partnership work for the area.

4. 'LEADING THE WAY': CORPORATE PLAN 2009-2012

4.1 Best practice dictates that the production of Corporate Plans should be used as strategic processes and documents to focus and drive a Council in its delivery of priority outcomes and objectives, as well as help to integrate the people and financial management, business and improvement planning processes for the authority.

4.2 Work has been undertaken to draft a Corporate Plan for publication this Spring. This has involved engagement with Councillors from all parties, senior and middle managers and representative groups of staff through informal consultation.

4.3 Particular importance has been placed on ensuring as wide an awareness of the Plan as possible and a comprehensive communications effort will support its roll-out in the Spring, and it will be posted on the Council's website.

5. CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

5.1 The Corporate Plan 2009-2012 sets out the Council's contribution towards Reading's Sustainable Community Strategy, a programme of transformational change for the Council and budget information, that reflects the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection letter and CPA report for Reading, in focusing on organisational development and culture change.

5.2 The Sustainable Community Strategy itself is a statutory requirement for local authorities to produce in the role of community leader but working in partnership, as set out in the Local Government Act 2000. The priorities within the Sustainable Community Strategy were developed through extensive public consultation and engagement with elected members and representatives of partner agencies of the Reading 2020 Local Strategic Partnership as well as being supported by an extensive evidence base. The document was formally launched at an event in November 2008.

5.3 The strategic objectives and key activities for each of the Sustainable Community Strategy themes have been developed and drafted in the form of service plans, following meetings with members, officers and partner agencies enabling their implementation and monitoring, as part of the Council's performance management arrangements.

5.5 The high-level programme (Appendix A), which lists the strategic objectives within the plan and will form the basis of a new summary version of the plan, is intended to provide an 'easier read', accessible public document. Greater

detail will be provided in the internal, operational delivery plan which will provide a working document primarily intended for Councillors as a reference point, officers and partner agencies.

- 5.6 A Transformational Change and Improvement Programme has been developed out of the good work achieved as part of the 'Improving the Way We Work' section of the former plan. The key areas of focus are suggested as 'Residents and Customers', 'Value for Money' and 'Staff'. Enablers of the achievement of these key priorities will include 'accommodation', 'business improvement and innovation', 'technology' and 'communication'. In addition the programme recognises the context and importance of the political environment in delivering a 'transformed' organisation. A set of council values is suggested, as underpinning the behaviours and attitudes that will be required to deliver the programme and priority objectives for the community. Each element of the programme will be supported and delivered by processes and lead officers, working with Councillors and colleagues alike.
- 5.7 The Corporate Plan is a forward looking document which focuses on the Council's key plans over the next three years. A separate 'annual performance review', to be published in June, will present the Council's achievements and performance in 2008/09 against performance indicators.
- 5.8 Council is asked to approve the final version of the Corporate Plan 2009-2012 for publication. Due to the size of the complete suite of documents that comprise the plan, whilst the high-level programme and Transformational Change and Improvement schematic are attached at Appendices A and B, full copies have been placed in the Members' rooms and will be available at the meeting.
- 5.9 The Corporate Plan will include key financial and budget information, which describes how the Council will resource its plans in 2009/10 and in the medium term. This cross-refers to a more detailed 'sister' document, the medium term financial strategy.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 6.1 The Council has a commitment to supporting the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy in partnership with others. The Corporate Plan confirms this and sets out the contribution the Council will make. It further sets out how the Council intends to go about improving its performance and therefore contribution.
- 6.2 As a consequence, the Corporate Plan provides the 'backbone' to the Council's activities, service and financial planning and organisational development and performance improvement processes, against which individual, team, service and Councillor performance, can be guided and assessed.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 removed the requirement to produce a Best Value Performance Plan.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The financial implications of the Corporate Plan are represented by the Council's agreed budget for 2009/10 and medium-term financial strategy.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Local Government (Best Value and Capping) Act 1999

9.2 Local Government Act 1999:Part 1 Best Value DETR circular 10/99

9.3 Statutory Instrument 3251

9.4 White Paper, Strong Local Leadership, Quality Public Services, December 2001

9.5 Statutory Instrument 2002/305

9.6 ODPM guidance on Best Value Performance Plans: a consultation paper 2004

9.7 Local Govt White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities', DCLG, Oct 2006

9.8 Local Government Act 2000