

Meeting of the Council - 16th July, 2012

Report of the Cabinet

Council Plan 2013: 2012 Annual Refresh

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek endorsement of the 2012 Council Plan refresh in line with the Council Plan policy framework for 2010-13.

Background

2. The Council adopted the Sustainable Community Strategy in February 2010 following the strategy review during 2009/10. This sets out the agreed partnership vision and aspirations for the borough over the next 15 years. The key purpose of the Strategy is to influence all other strategies and plans produced by the Council and our partners, to ensure they work to a common set of goals.
3. Public Consultation: The Strategy review was achieved over a number of months and involved statistical research, engagement with residents, partnerships and organisations in focus and work groups. In addition there is ongoing consultation with the public regarding the Council Plan priorities, which are entered on the Community Engagement database and reported periodically to the Cabinet through the Quarterly Performance reports.
4. The proposed Council Plan 2012 refresh has been assessed to ensure that the Council's priorities continue to contribute towards the aspirations of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This refresh also takes into account the other key influences and strategies, notably;
 - Local Cabinet priorities
 - Medium term financial strategy
 - Corporate Human Resources Strategy
 - Dudley Equality Scheme 2012-15
 - National priorities set by Central Government
5. It is against these key factors, their time frames and current Council performance that we have reviewed the Council Plan 2010/13 and developed a revised Council Plan for 2012/13.

Proposed Council Plan 2012 refresh and Directorate Strategic Plans

6. The proposed Council Plan 2012 refresh describes the direction for the Council over the coming years to meet the priorities of the Cabinet, aspirations of the Community Strategy and the national priorities set by Central Government and issues that matter most to local people, matched to what is achievable with the planned resources available.
7. The proposal is to align the Council Plan to the seven priorities identified by the Cabinet with a focus on objectives to deliver key services. This also includes a refresh of the Council's vision and ambition statements in line with the Cabinet priorities.
8. **Our ambition is to make Dudley Council amongst the best local authorities in Britain;** one we can all be proud of,
 - That regularly punches its weight as one of the largest local authorities in Britain.
 - That is at the forefront of new ideas and is one of the most innovative local authorities in Britain.
 - That has a solid reputation for delivering excellence for the people it serves.
 - A borough of opportunity, where our young people will be able to compete for jobs in a wider and increasingly competitive global economy.
9. **Our vision: Dudley Council is renowned for providing excellent public services.** Our vision serves as the framework for our ambition to make Dudley Council amongst the best local authorities in Britain by stating what we need to accomplish. We must strive to excel in all that we do to ensure we provide efficient and effective services for local people that deliver real value for money.

To achieve this we will focus on:

 - Setting high standards for Council services
 - Making the most effective use of resources
 - Demonstrating the highest ethical standards
 - Promoting good governance standards
 - Building strong collaborative partnerships

In achieving our ambition we must be clear about our future strategies including:

 - Motivating and engaging our workforce
 - Making the most from our physical resources
 - Revitalising our engagement with local communities

These will serve as the standard against which all services aim to provide.
10. To be one of the best local authorities in Britain we must be clear about our future challenges and set high standards for community engagement, service delivery, people's contribution, reputation and safeguarding.

11. **Community engagement:** Clearly the most important judges of our services are the people who live and work in the borough. We will endeavour to create greater community engagement to provide the opportunity for local people to influence better outcomes. As Dudley Council, we will:
 - Listen to what local people say
 - Respond to what local people tell us
 - Be accountable for our performance
 - Provide value for money
12. **Service delivery:** In pursuit of our ambition we must provide excellent public services with high levels of customer satisfaction. We must aim to delight the customer in every aspect of our work. Customer expectations are rising all the time, our partners must raise their standards in line with ours. Each service must play its part to provide local people with the absolute best experience.
13. **People's contribution:** Becoming an excellent provider of public services is a direct personal challenge to us all on the standards we set ourselves, this is about personal standards, teamwork and pride. Pride in the service we provide starts with pride in ourselves. A decision we can all take to not settle for anything but the best. Creating an excellent local authority begins with this choice.
14. **Reputation:** The challenges for the future do not involve just doing the old ways of doing things better, but finding new, innovative ways of improving public outcomes. We must be recognised as an innovative and creative organisation, one that is responsible, caring, and environmentally aware and embraces equality in everything we do.
15. **Safeguarding people** is an essential element of our vision and we are committed to ensuring that all vulnerable adults and children in the borough are kept safe and can flourish in their lives as part of the Dudley community. Principally, in the Council we do this through the activity of our social care services for adults and children and they are shown in the action plan. Other Council services contribute to the wellbeing of our community in many ways such as through our leisure services, our regeneration work and working closely with our partners.
16. The seven Cabinet priorities for the Council Plan are;
 - **Young people:** Giving every child the best start in life, a borough where young people are able to achieve, and fulfil their potential.
 - **Regeneration, skills and employment:** Enable all young people and adults to maximise their capabilities, a borough that will focus on creating an environment that supports businesses and attracts new industries to provide jobs for local people.
 - **Tackling crime, fear of crime and anti social behaviour:** Local business and residents have safety and security, a borough where people are safe, and feel safe enjoying a sense of freedom from crime and anti-social behaviour.
 - **Caring for the elderly and vulnerable:** Ensure people live their lives with dignity and respect, a borough where the elderly and vulnerable have fair access to services which support independence and quality of life.

- **Health and wellbeing:** Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention, a borough where people enjoy good health, wellbeing and are supported to make healthy choices for a more active lifestyle.
 - **Greener, cleaner and environmentally friendly:** Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities, a borough where people care for a natural built environment that is attractive, healthy and safe; and live in homes suitable to their needs and wishes.
 - **People being served better:** Giving local people customer friendly and responsive services, a borough where people enjoy greater choice and flexibility to access high quality council services.
17. There is a strong association between the new priorities and their key objectives and the connection with the aspirations of the Community Strategy and clear links with national and local policy issues facing the Council.
18. Subject to approval from Members on these priorities forming the overall focus for the Council, the Council Action Plan will be developed to set out a portfolio of key objectives for each priority. These will be underpinned by specific detailed actions, which are short-term time sensitive intermediate steps and generally output driven that influence the overall long-term outcomes.
19. In addition, to ensure that the Council Plan effectively drives the priorities of the whole Council each Directorate produces a Strategic Plan, which relates to the objectives of the Council Plan through to the work of individual teams. These will be completed and published in line with the annual planning cycle.

Performance Management

20. The performance management framework for the Council Plan during 2012/13 will be based upon the key performance indicators, and their respective targets and milestones outlined in the Council Action Plan, and reported to Members through the quarterly performance reports and will be subject to scrutiny from the Cabinet, Corporate Board and Scrutiny Committees.
21. The Cabinet considered this report at its meeting on 20th June, 2012 and recommended the Council to approve the course of action as set out below.

Finance

22. Delivering Council Plan objectives depends upon the Council reviewing its resources for redirection into key priorities. This is achieved by linking Council Plan objectives clearly into the Annual Revenue and Capital Budget processes and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy. All costs and associated funding requirements are considered as part of those processes.

Law

23. The Council has adopted a Constitution under the provisions of Part II of the Local Government Act 2000. In line with Regulations made under the 2000 Act, the full Council must set the budgetary and policy framework. Article 4 of the Constitution sets out the Policy framework and includes the Council Plan as one of the specified documents, which must be approved by full Council.

Equality Impact

24. Consultation on the Community Strategy involved a wide range of different communities and organisations, including disabled people, black and minority ethnic communities and children and young people. Their views were incorporated in the final strategy and the identification of their priorities expressed.
25. Implementation of the Council Plan framework will involve actions to promote equality and in relation to children and young people.

Recommendation

26. That the refresh of the Council Plan 2012 be endorsed and that the Council note the alignment of the Cabinet's priorities to Council Plan and Directorate Strategic Plans.



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Leader of the Council