

Meeting of the Council – 13th July, 2009

Report of the Cabinet

Council Plan 2010: 2009 Annual review

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the proposed structure of the Council Plan policy framework for 2009/10, in light of the long term priorities of the Community Strategy and the relationship with the:-
 - Next Generation Local Area Agreement
 - Medium term financial strategy
 - Human Resource Strategy

Background

2. Members will be aware that the Community Strategy was adopted by full Council in December 2005. 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. In line with the Strategy, the proposed Council Plan has been assessed to ensure that the Council's priorities meet these challenges. The key priorities of the Community Strategy are:-

- Creating a prosperous borough
- Promoting a sense of wellbeing and good health for everyone
- Celebrating our heritage and the diversity of local culture
- Safeguarding and improving the environment
- Promoting individual and community learning
- Making Dudley a safe and peaceful place to live

3. The Community Strategy has also been the starting point in developing the Next Generation Local Area Agreement (NGLAA). This is a three year agreement between the Government and the Council and local partners that has been effective from April 2008. Through the prescribed LAA framework, there are four high level outcome areas.

The four high level outcome areas cover the following:-

- Healthy Communities
- Wealthy Communities
- Safer and Cohesive Communities
- Environmentally Aware Communities

The NGLAA continues to focus on where working in partnership, and setting of local targets with associated funding, can add value and improve services in our borough.

4. Public Consultation: As part of the ongoing consultation process to inform Budget and Council Tax proposals, the Council undertook a further public consultation exercise during September and October 2008, using the Citizens Panel and the Internet. Members will be aware that the results of the 2009/10 budget questionnaire presented at the Cabinet meeting held on 7th January 2009 identified the public's spending priorities. (see Appendix 1)
5. It is against these key factors, their time frames and current Council performance we have reviewed the Council Plan framework and developed a revised Council Plan framework for 2009-10.

Proposed Policy Framework for Council Plan 2009 Review and Directorate Strategic Plans

6. The current Council Plan approved by the Council runs out in March 2010. During 2009-10 in line with the policy framework we will undertake a review of the Council Plan to provide intelligence for the future direction of the next three year Council Plan, in particular the impacts of national issues and the direction provided by the new Sustainable Community Strategy.

However each year we need to review our progress and address areas which are influenced by performance of service delivery, financial aspects and consultation with residents. The 2009 council plan framework review describes the direction for the Council over the coming years to meet the aspirations of the community strategy and the priorities outlined in the Next Generation Local Area Agreement, matched to what is achievable with the planned resources available.

7. The proposal for the continued direction of the six thematic priorities for the Council Plan 2010 are:
 - **Caring Matters:** We want to improve access and support services for vulnerable people to improve their independence and wellbeing. We will also encourage people to lead healthy and active lives and provide more choice of cultural and leisure facilities.
 - **Environment Matters:** We want our environment - parks, open spaces and town centres to be clean and attractive places to be enjoyed by everyone. We will work towards a decent standard of homes and encourage everyone to recycle and compost more of the waste we all produce.
 - **Learning Matters:** We want people of all ages and backgrounds to achieve their potential and ensure all children and young people are equipped to be successful to make a positive contribution in society.
 - **Regeneration Matters:** We want to create a prosperous borough where our town centres are busy thriving places. We will support existing and new businesses to flourish and provide local people with the necessary skills to gain well paid employment.
 - **Safety Matters:** We want the Dudley borough to be a safe and peaceful place to live, work and visit. We will work with partners to continue the reduction in crime, anti-social behaviour and ensure that children and young people stay safe.

- **Quality Service Matters:** We want to build on our success for high quality cost effective public services. We will develop greater choice and flexibility for people accessing our services with a focus on strong partnership working, best use of technology and improved productivity.
8. The proposed Policy framework outlined sets out the direction for future council plans in terms of short, medium and longer-term strategies.
 9. It can be seen there exists a strong association between the overall aspirations of the Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement, the results of public consultation and the Council Plan thematic priorities. Similarly there are clear links with national and local policy issues facing the Authority.
 10. 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. The performance management framework for Council during 2009/10 will be based upon the measures, targets and milestones outlined in the Council Action Plan, and reported to Members through the quarterly performance reports.
 11. 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 policy framework. (see Appendix 2)
 12. On consideration of the information contained in this report, the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 17th June, 2009, resolved to recommend the Council as set out in paragraph 17 below.

Finance

13. 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

14. 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

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

Recommendations

17. The Council is asked to:

- Endorse the policy framework of the revised Council Plan
- Note the alignment of the Council Plan and Directorate Strategic Plans to the Community Strategy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. E. Millward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a loop at the end.

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Leader of the Council

Appendix 1: Budget 2009/10 Questionnaire Results (2008/09 in brackets)

Q1. Overall, do you think spending on services should:

Be increased 32% (34)	Stay the same 60% (59)	Be reduced 9% (8)
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Q2. Now, looking at the main services the Council provides, please indicate for each one whether you think spending should increase, stay the same, or be reduced. (*Rankings obtained by comparing balance of "increase" and "reduce" responses.*)

	Spend should increase	Spend should stay the same	Spend should be reduced	Ranking
Schools	36% (35)	60% (61)	4% (3)	7 (9)
Support to Schools	31% (36)	61% (56)	8% (8)	11 (11)
Youth Service and Community Centres	37% (45)	56% (50)	7% (5)	8 (6)
Adult Education	16% (18)	70% (71)	14% (13)	16 (16)
Libraries / Archives	18% (19)	72% (70)	10% (10)	15 (15)
Refuse Collection, Disposal & Recycling	39% (39)	58% (59)	3% (2)	6 (7)
Street Cleaning & Litter Removal	45% (50)	53% (49)	2% (1)	4 (5)
Maintenance of Roads & Footpaths	59% (59)	38% (39)	3% (2)	2 (3)
Reducing Traffic Congestion	38% (42)	51% (51)	11% (8)	10 (8)
Arts & Entertainment	6% (6)	60% (62)	34% (32)	18 (18)
Museums & Heritage	7% (8)	66% (68)	27% (23)	17 (17)
Parks & Open Spaces	27% (30)	66% (66)	8% (4)	14 (12)
Sports Facilities & Leisure Centres	30% (31)	62% (60)	8% (8)	12 (13)
Helping Create New Jobs & Businesses	40% (41)	49% (45)	11% (11)	9 (10)
Care & Support for Children & Families	29% (31)	61% (58)	10% (10)	13 (14)
Care & Support for Older People	53% (60)	44% (38)	3% (2)	3 (2)
Care & Support for People with Mental Health Problems, Learning or Physical Disabilities	45% (51)	52% (47)	3% (2)	5 (4)
Crime Prevention & Public Safety	63% (65)	35% (34)	2% (1)	1 (1)

Q3. Bearing in mind your answers to questions 1 and 2, which of the following statements best reflects your views on next year's Council Tax:

- a. Overall spending on services should be maintained or increased even if this means an increase in Council Tax well above the rate of inflation. **16%** (17)
- b. Spending on important services should be maintained at the expense of other services, even if this means a Council tax increase above the rate of inflation. **26%** (31)
- c. The Council Tax increase should be no more than the rate of inflation, even if this means significant reductions in spending on services. **58%** (52)

Q4. Are there any other issues we should take into account when considering next year's budget and Council Tax?

Responses relating to specific service issues have been circulated to Directors for consideration.

Q5. To help us analyse the responses to this questionnaire, it would be helpful if you could you tell us:

Your age: 18-24 **2%** (2) 25-44 **22%** (24)

45-64 **47%** (45) 65+ **28%** (28)

Where you live: Dudley **19%** (18) Brierley Hill **21%** (21)

Halesowen **23%** (23) Stourbridge **25%** (23)

Sedgley/Coseley/Gornal **12%** (14)

Is your Council Tax bill reduced by Benefit? Yes **17%** (17) No **83%** (83)

Note: For all questions, nil responses have been excluded from analysis. Totals may not sum to 100% due to roundings.

Appendix 2

Council Plan policy framework- Long-term plan

Community Strategy 2005-2020	Local Area Agreement	Timeline	Next Generation of Council Plans (3 year plans)	Directorate Strategic Plans (annual plans)		
<p>Community vision looking ahead over 15 years to 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a prosperous borough • Promoting a sense of wellbeing and good health for everyone • Celebrating our heritage and the diversity of local culture • Safeguarding and improving the environment • Promoting individual and community learning • Making Dudley a safe and peaceful place to live 	<p>NG-LAA year 1</p> <p>NG-LAA year 2</p> <p>NG-LAA year 3</p>	April 2007	Council Plan 2007-10	2007-08	3 year focus	
		Annual update April 2008	2008-09			
		Annual update April 2009	2009-10			
			April 2010	Council Plan 2010-13		3 year focus
				Annual update April 2011		
			March 2013	Annual update April 2012		
			April 2013	Council Plan 2013-16		3 year focus
				Annual update April 2014		
			March 2016	Annual update April 2015		
			April 2016	Council Plan 2016-19		3 year focus
				Annual update April 2017		
			March 2019	Annual update April 2018		

Council plan policy framework- Hierarchy of plans

