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**Meeting of the Cabinet - 15<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

**Report of Chief Executive**

**Council Plan Review 2006/2007**

**Purpose Of Report**

1. To seek Cabinet endorsement for the refreshed Council Plan policy framework for 2006/07, in the light of the public consultation undertaken during 2005, and the relationship with the medium term financial plan for the Authority.

**Background**

2. As part of the integrated review of Council priority and resource allocation this report provides the context to identify the council's priorities for 2006/07, using the outcomes of public consultation, the draft Community Strategy, and the resources context for the Council. The review is set against a background of improving public satisfaction with public services – showing an increase from 51% in 2003 to 59% in 2005.
3. The results of the 2005/06 Budget Questionnaire show the public's spending priorities, 54% felt that there should be no increase, of which 9% felt there should be a reduction. Of those who voted the priorities for spending were:-
  - Crime prevention and public safety (78%)
  - Maintenance of roads and footpaths (71%)
  - Care and support for older people (62%)
  - Reducing traffic congestion (58%)
  - Care and support for people with mental health problems, learning or physical disabilities (55%)
  - Schools (55%)
  - Street cleaning and litter removal (55%), and
  - Regenerating the local economy (52%)
4. Arts and Entertainment was the only service to have a substantial amount (22%) of respondents state that spending should be reduced.
5. Appendix A shows the voted choices for increase, status quo and reduction.
6. Following the extensive engagement and consultation phase on the Community Strategy, the results of the Dudley Borough Challenge consultation have been collated and analysed, and a final strategy produced. The final strategy was adopted by full Council in December 2005. The strategy shows that the public's priorities for the Borough over the next 15 years are:-
  - Promoting stronger communities within the borough.

- Creating a prosperous borough.
  - Promoting a sense of well-being and good health for everyone.
  - Celebrating our heritage and culture.
  - Safeguarding and improving the environment.
  - Promoting individual and community learning, and
  - Making Dudley a safe a peaceful place in which to live.
7. Appendix B shows the results of the public vote made available to all households in the Borough. This was based on the five themes which evolved into the above priorities with the exception of “Celebrating our heritage and culture”. The latter is however reflected in the votes cast against the more detailed list of 15 “main aims”. The priority of “making Dudley a Safe and Peaceful place to live” gained the greatest share of the vote at 28.3%.
8. It is against this background the controlling group considered the emerging budgetary pressures for 2006/07 and put forward the recommended budget for consideration by Cabinet and full council
9. The outcome of the review was a range of proposals which were submitted in accordance with the Council’s constitution to each Select Committee.

### **Proposed Policy Framework for Council Action Plan 2006/07**

10. The current three year Council Plan approved by the Authority runs through until 2008. The key priorities originally within the Plan are:-
- Caring Matters.
  - Environment Matters.
  - Learning Matters.
  - Regeneration Matters.
  - Safety Matters.
  - Quality Service Matters.
11. It can be seen that there exists a strong association between the overall objectives of the new Borough Strategy and the Council Plan priorities. similarly there is a clear and direct link with national and local policy issues facing the Authority.
12. There are some issues which need consideration however, namely:-

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Response</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review of the medium to long term implications of the new Community Strategy objectives, given this now stands as a 15 year vision.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Dudley Community Partnership has committed itself to review by each thematic partnership of its key plans and commitments during 2006 – with implications therefore for the 2007 Council Plan update.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The focus upon heritage and culture within the Community Strategy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Launch of the draft Culture Strategy demonstrates progress by the Council, which will be included within the Council Plan update, by reference to its impact on each Council Plan theme. However the existing Council Plan priorities also accurately reflects public preferences for allocation of resources. No change is proposed therefore at this time.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The implications of the new focus upon Children’s Services and Adult, Housing and Community Services for future policy priorities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key service improvement commitments from each area will be reflected within the Council Plan update. However, possible changes to the overall Council priorities may emerge with the full implementation of the new Council structure and be incorporated within the 2007 update.</b></p>

13. Members are asked to confirm that the overall priorities of the Council Plan are appropriately reflected, in order that a more detailed Council Action Plan can be compiled by April.

### **Review of Directorate Strategic Plans**

14. To ensure that the Council Plan effectively drives the priorities of the whole organisation each Directorate produces a Strategic Plan which relates the overall objectives of the Plan to the work of individual teams. The work on developing these Plans also aims to identify key linkages across themes and organisations.

15. Subject to guidance from Members on the overall priorities of the Council Plan, the Strategic Plans will be finalised by April.

### **Finance**

16. Delivering Council Plan objectives depends upon the Council reviewing its resources for redirection into its key priorities. This process 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

17. 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

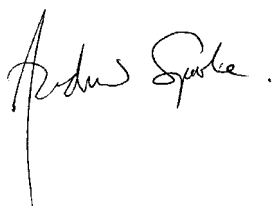
18. Consultation on the Community Strategy involved a wide range of different communities and organisations, including disabled people. BME communities and children and young people. Their views were incorporated in the final strategy and the identification of their priorities expressed.

19. Implementation of the Council Plan framework will involve actions to promote equality and in relation to children and young people.

## Recommendations

20. Cabinet are asked to:-

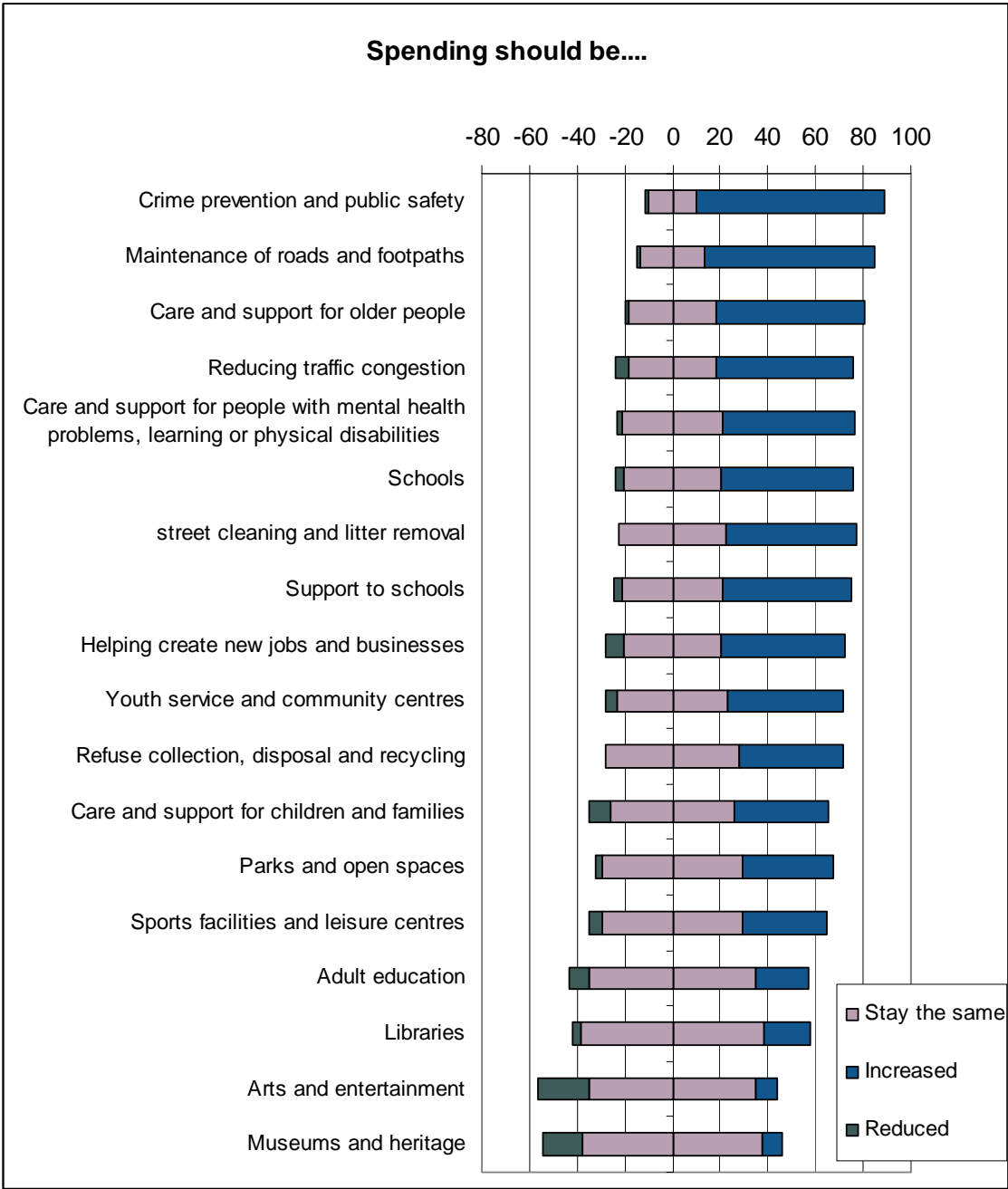
- Endorse the policy framework of the revised Council Plan.
- Note the alignment of Strategic Plans to the Council Plan framework.



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**Appendix A: Citizens' Panel choices for spending on services**



## Appendix B: Dudley Borough Challenge public vote showing popularity of choices

Votes Cast	%	Vision Choice
2074	14.92	Less antisocial behaviour...
723	5.20	More activities to meet needs of young people
1136	8.17	Less use of Illegal drugs & alcohol abuse
	<b>28.30</b>	<b>Making Dudley a safe &amp; peaceful place to live</b>
1581	11.38	Improved health for everyone...
394	2.84	More participating in physical activity/healthy ea
498	3.58	Fewer people smoking
	<b>17.80</b>	<b>Promoting good health &amp; wellbeing for all</b>
980	7.05	More vibrant town centres...
868	6.25	More people getting skilled and better paid jobs
761	5.48	Good affordable leisure & recreational facilities
	<b>18.77</b>	<b>Creating a prosperous and attractive borough</b>
560	4.03	All parents helping children to learn & develop
854	6.15	Excellent pre-school and primary education...
646	4.65	Variety of learning opportunities...
	<b>14.82</b>	<b>A learning community</b>
798	5.74	Better public transport...
419	3.02	Good mix of housing...
1605	11.55	Everyone taking pride in local environment...
	<b>20.31</b>	<b>Safeguarding &amp; improving our environment</b>

