

Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance)

Report to Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board

Date: 22nd April 2013

Subject: Council Business Plan Review 2013-17

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

The current Council Business Plan 2011 to 2015 sets out our strategic priorities and targets. This was refreshed in 2012 to update targets but it was agreed that it would be more formally reviewed after two years. This review is being undertaken and changes are brought forward to Scrutiny for consultation. It is important to recognise that the context we operate in has changed significantly over the past 2 years, in particular the financial context and Commission for the Future of Local Government, therefore the priorities in the Council Business Plan also needs to change. The draft document is attached but the key changes for the Board to consider are:

- Adoption of a “less is more” approach which has reduced the number of priorities and indicators to provide a clearer focus for the organisation on what is important. Service plans across the organisation will continue to be used to capture and monitor the wider actions and activities.
- In line with this a new set of Best Council Objectives form the central part to the new plan to provide some real clarity and focus for the whole council over the next 4 years. Delivery of these objectives is also essential to securing the medium term financial security of the Council which ensures a clearer link to the agreed financial strategy. The objectives also represent a major part of our contribution to outcomes in the city priority plan. The first objective is specifically around quality services which identifies a small number of areas where a specific improvement focus is needed. This deliberately does not include everything but rather is a dynamic list that will be updated regularly to ensure the plan remains live.
- Values remain at the heart of the plan with cross cutting activity identified around behaviours and developing a more enterprising culture.
- For each of the Best Council Objectives we have also included for the first time a number of milestones / success measures for the year ahead which will enable more effective performance management of the plan over the 2013/14. These will be refreshed annually.

Recommendation

Members of the Board are asked to provide their views and feedback on the proposals for the new Best Council Business Plan 2013-17.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report brings to Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board a number of changes and updates to the Council Business Plan for scrutiny prior to approval through Executive Board and Full Council. It is important that the Council's strategic plans remain up-to-date, continue to reflect the main challenges, are relevant to the changing financial context and in light of this also include the right level of ambition for the people of Leeds.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The Council Business Plan aims to set out the strategic priorities for the Council. When the plan was approved in July 2011 it was proposed that the plan would be revised annually to ensure targets remained realistic and achievable and reflected more recent performance. A more formal review was agreed to take place after two years.
- 2.2 The 2011-15 plan included two elements - five cross council priorities aligned to the Council's values and a set of directorate priorities and targets. The directorate priorities and indicators covered a range of issues including our contribution to the city priorities, council service delivery, organisational health indicators and our development/improvement agenda.

3 Main issues

- 3.3 Since agreeing the Council Business Plan the context for local government has changed dramatically with significant budget cuts and some significant areas of rising demand for public services. This is alongside a central Government agenda of devolving power to individuals and communities, increasing choice and providing opportunities for local people to run their own services.
- 3.4 As a response to these challenges Leeds initiated and led a Commission on the Future of Local Government 2012 which sought to examine the role of local government in the 21st century. Central to the work of the commission was the concept of 'civic enterprise'. This is a new leadership style for local government where councils become more innovative and enterprising, business and other partners becomes more civic and communities become more engaged. The findings of the Commission have been used to further develop and shape our best council ambition to become a more enterprising council.
- 3.5 A new medium term financial plan (2013-17) has been developed alongside the budget for 2013-14 which will enable us to invest in our priorities as well as securing significant savings. As part of this the Council has identified 10 main programmes of work that are essential to ensuring our financial security in the medium to long term – initially described as the "Budget Plus". These programmes of work are about improving outcomes for the people of Leeds, both on our own and in partnership with others in the city, as well as helping us work towards our vision for the future of local government. Overall they aim to future proof the council through a mixture of "enablers" that change culture and ways of working to create a fit for purpose structure and asset base as well as programmes that impact more directly on the bottom line i.e. our ability to spend less or generate more income. The significance of these areas of work is such

that they needed to be central to the revised business plan to ensure collective focus and on-going monitoring. Therefore, they have been developed as the 10 Best Council Objectives within the new plan.

3.6 In light of all this and other changes it is important that the Council Business Plan continues to be fit for purpose and enables our leaders to focus on what is most important in order to drive the radical change that is needed to achieve our ambition to be the best. The draft Best Council Business Plan 2013-17 is set out in appendix 1 but the key changes in approach and content for the Board to consider and debate are :

- Adoption of a “less is more” approach which has significantly reduced the number of priorities and indicators to provide a clearer focus for the organisation on what is important. Service plans across the organisation will continue to be used to capture and monitor the wider actions and activities.
- In line with this a new set of Best Council Objectives forms the central part to the new plan to provide some real clarity and focus for the whole council over the next 4 years. Delivery of these objectives is also essential to securing the financial security of the Council which ensures a clearer link to the agreed medium term financial strategy. Many of these also represent our contribution of outcomes in the city priority plan. One objective is specifically around quality services which identifies a small number of areas where a specific improvement focus is needed. This deliberately does not include everything but rather is a dynamic list that will be updated regularly to ensure the plan remains live.
- Values remain at the heart of the plan with cross cutting activity identified around behaviours and developing a more enterprising culture.
- For each of the Best Council Objectives we have also included for the first time a number of milestones / success measures for the year ahead which will enable more effective performance management of the plan over the 2013/14. It is envisaged that these will be refreshed annually.
- It is proposed that we will adopt a more rolling approach to strategic planning which enables the plan to be more flexible and responsive. With a number of elements of the plan subject to annual refresh.
- In line with our Best Council ambition the plan has also been renamed the Best Council Business Plan.

3.7 By having a more focused Business Plan more reliance is placed on Service Plans within Directorates. These will be reviewed to ensure that they include all the key priorities and performance measures, these will be monitored by within directorates throughout the year and used to directly inform team plans and appraisal objectives. These will continue to be published on Insite; and therefore are available to all Members. The 2013/14 plans are due to be published at the end of April.

3.8 The Best Council Business Plan remains an important element of the overall planning framework and these linkages are set out within the draft plan. In particular the link to the City Priority Plan is important. The CPP sets out our Best

City ambitions in terms of outcomes and priorities along with the indicators we use to measure our success. These are delivered and performance managed by the 5 city partnerships many of whom have also developed a broader strategy/plan that sets out the wider range of outcomes/priorities. The role of the Council Business Plan is, therefore, to set out the council's main contribution to these shared outcomes.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 The development of this plan has been subject to consultation with a range of stakeholders including the Best Council Leadership Team, Corporate Leadership Team, Directorate staff and Portfolio holders. Furthermore, and perhaps more significantly the Best Council Objectives (in their current format at earlier version as Budget Plus) are built upon and provide some further detail on proposals that were developed as part of the budget for 2013/14 and the medium term financial plan. Both of these were supported by extensive consultation with the public and other key stakeholders in order to identify spending priorities as well as endorsing the proposals put forward by the council for delivering the budget reductions eg reducing our asset base and charging for services.

4.1.2 The Council Business Plan forms part of the budget and policy framework and these initial proposals are subject to member consultation through the Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board as set out in the budget and policy framework procedures rules and Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.3 A screening process is being undertaken on the new plan to look at how equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is relevant to, and addressed within, the new plan and this will be provided as a background document during the final approval process.

4.2.4 Related to this we have an agreed set of Equality Improvement Priorities 2011-15 which set out a number of specific equality objectives building upon priorities in the City Priority Plan and Council Business Plan. As a result of the changes to the Business Plan proposed in this report the related Equality Improvement Priorities are also being reviewed.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 This report bring to the Board proposals for the updating of the council's priorities which ensures that these remain up-to-date and continue to reflect the most important issues and changing financial context.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 One of the main aims of the Council Business Plan is to enable the council to deliver the medium term financial plan and as such the resource implications are reflected there. The adoption of a more rolling approach to business plan will enable better linkage between the annual budget setting and the business planning process.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications, all information within this report is available to the public.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 The corporate and directorate risk registers are subject to regular review to ensure that they reflect the priorities with the Council Business Plan (as well as the City Priority Plan) and the Corporate Risk Management Policy and processes ensure that the key risks associated with the priorities in these plans are appropriately risk assessed.

4.6.2 There is an increased risk of performance “surprises” as a result of less corporate oversight of the detailed work of Directorates. However, there are directorate processes which will continue to monitor the broader set of information with any key issues escalated as required. In addition Scrutiny would still be undertaking their watchdog role and further work is underway to develop the wrap around performance processes that will ensure that Scrutiny continues to have the right information in order to fulfil this role. In addition the State of the City will continue to look across a broader range of intelligence on an annual basis. Some areas also continue to receive external audit and inspection eg Children’s Safeguarding. A further report will be brought to Scrutiny when proposals have been firmed up to consult on changes to performance arrangements going forward.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The Council Business Plan 2011-15 has been reviewed in light of the significantly changing context in which we are working. This report brings to Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board the initial proposals for the revised Best Council Business Plan 2013-17 for consultation and input.

6 Recommendations

6.2 Members of the Board are asked to provide their views and feedback on the proposals for the new Best Council Business Plan 2013-17 prior to formal approval.

7 Background documents¹

None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council’s website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.