

# Scrutiny Committee Report

Report of Head of Corporate Strategy  
Author: Emma Morris  
Telephone: 01491 823612  
Textphone: 18001 01491 823612  
E-mail: [emma.morris@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:emma.morris@southandvale.gov.uk)  
Cabinet member responsible: Ann Ducker  
Tel: 01491 823131  
E-mail: [ann.ducker@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:ann.ducker@southoxon.gov.uk)  
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## AGENDA ITEM 6

## Corporate Plan 2012 - 2016

### Recommendation(s)

Scrutiny committee is invited to consider and comment on the strategic objectives, corporate priorities and success measures set out in the draft South Oxfordshire corporate plan for the period 2012 – 2016.

### Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out the proposed strategic objectives and corporate priorities contained in the draft South Oxfordshire corporate plan for the period 2012-2016. It provides an opportunity for the scrutiny committee to consider and comment on these before the plan is finalised in February 2012.

### Strategic Objectives

2. The development of the council's corporate plan is fundamental to the way that the council manages its business effectively. The purpose of the plan is to identify the strategic objectives and corporate priorities, which will drive the council's business during a four year period and help to guide decisions on the allocation of resources. The draft corporate plan for the period 2012 – 2016 proposes a set of new objectives, priorities and measures of success to replace those set out in the current corporate plan, which ends on 31 March 2012.

## Background

3. The council undertakes a fundamental review of its corporate plan every four years. The council reviews progress against the plan annually, in the autumn, and may also agree minor changes to priorities and targets to ensure that the plan remains up-to-date and relevant.
4. The council began work on a fundamental review of the current corporate plan in May this year and has now completed a draft plan for the period 2012-2016. In developing the draft plan we have involved many stakeholders through:
  - two workshops with cabinet members and non-cabinet councillors
  - a workshop with residents and information through Outlook
  - inviting views and comments from local councils
  - inviting views and comments from service teams via their heads of service, staff briefings and our staff newsletter.
5. The draft corporate plan, attached as **annex A** to the report, was published for consultation on Friday 14 October 2011 and the closing date for responses is 3 January 2012. We are carrying out consultation on the draft using a variety of methods:
  - draft corporate plan and consultation questionnaire on the council's website
  - availability of draft corporate plan publicised through Outlook, parish newsletter, newsletter to voluntary and community sector and grant recipients
  - draft corporate plan and questionnaire sent to equalities and disability panels
  - draft document and questionnaire sent to all towns and parishes and information provided at the town and parish forum
  - consultation workshop at the voluntary and community sector forum
  - consultation with key partners through the South Oxfordshire Partnership.

## National and local context

6. The context within which we are developing the new corporate plan has changed. New national legislation particularly relating to neighbourhood planning and localising the delivery of services will have an impact upon the council's work and priorities, although it is not yet clear what this will be in detail. The corporate plan includes objectives and priorities which relate to neighbourhood plans and other initiatives contained within the Localism and Decentralisation Bill, and it is likely that as implementation of the legislation proceeds we will need to review priorities that relate to this to ensure that they remain relevant. The council will have the opportunity to review these annually.

7. A significant change since the current corporate plan was developed is that the government has withdrawn the set of national indicators that local authorities and other public sector organisations were required to report against. It has also ended local area agreements (LAA). These required local authorities to agree with central government targets for up to 35 national indicators addressing issues that had been identified as priorities in sustainable community strategies. While the draft corporate plan continues to take account of the priorities and targets in the Oxfordshire and South Oxfordshire sustainable community strategies the council now has more flexibility in determining its targets and measures.

## **Strategic objectives and priorities**

8. The draft strategic objectives for 2012-2016 are:
- excellent delivery of key services
  - effective management of resources
  - meeting housing need
  - building the local economy
  - support for communities.
9. As in previous plans, for each strategic objective we have identified a number of priorities that the council will focus on during the life of the plan, However, we have adopted a different approach to how we set out these priorities in the new corporate plan by making a distinction between:
- priorities that the council will deliver directly
  - priorities that the council will facilitate or work with partners to achieve.
10. This approach enables us to be clear about those priorities that are the direct responsibility of the council and those which the council will be seeking to influence but does not have direct control over. We can, therefore, set targets and measures that reflect the extent of the council's ability to influence outcomes.

## **Residents Survey**

11. Every two year's, the council carries out a residents' survey through over 1000 face to face interviews with residents, and this year through an online version of the survey as well. The survey provides us with information about the services that are most important to residents, their satisfaction with the council overall, and with specific services. The survey results will, therefore, provide useful information against which to check the draft corporate plan priorities as well as providing data for some of the targets and measures in the plan. The results of the survey are not available in time to include in this report but will be available for us to report at the meeting.

## Financial Implications

12. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report although the corporate plan will be used to guide decisions on the allocation of resources.

## Legal Implications

13. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## Risks

14. Risks will need to be identified specific to individual corporate priorities and included in the operational service area risk register.

## Conclusion and next steps

15. We have carried out a major review of the corporate plan, and developed, in consultation with stakeholders, a draft plan for 2012-2016 setting out new objectives, priorities and measures. The plan will provide a focus for the council's work over the four year period and will also guide decisions on allocation of resources.

16. The draft plan is currently out for consultation, which ends on 3 January 2012. The committee is invited to comment on the current draft objectives, priorities and measures set out in the draft plan attached at **annex A**. Cabinet will consider consultation responses and finalise the corporate plan in February 2012, for adoption by Council.

## Background Papers

- South Oxfordshire Corporate Plan 2008 -2012
- Oxfordshire 2030
- South Oxfordshire sustainable community strategy
- notes of consultation workshops with residents
- notes of consultation workshops with councillors
- corporate plan 2012 -2016 consultation questionnaire.