

CABINET

13 February 2007

CORPORATE STRATEGY 2007-2012 – FINAL DRAFT

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Contact Officer: Jen Anderson – Head of Policy Tel No: 01962 848592

Email: janderson@winchester.gov.uk

RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB1334 - Corporate Strategy 2007-2012 – Consultation Draft – 11 October 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Council's Corporate Strategy sets out the organisation's key priorities for the medium term. It is a key document in the Council's policy framework that Cabinet is then empowered to deliver, within the agreed budget. The Strategy is reviewed annually to take account of changing local and national circumstances. The Strategy has led the financial planning process, and will also lead the business planning process. Corporate and cross-cutting actions will be articulated via the Corporate Strategy Implementation Plan (formerly known as the Corporate Business Plan).

This report and appendices set out a final draft Corporate Strategy following the consultation period in October/November, and further consideration by Principal Scrutiny Committee in January. This draft includes recommended amendments in response to comments made during the consultation process, and has been subject to an equality and diversity screening process. If approved by Cabinet, the Strategy will go on to Council on 28th February for adoption.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet recommends to Council:

1. That the final draft Corporate Strategy 2007-2012, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.
2. That delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make any further minor editorial changes.

CABINET

13 February 2007

CORPORATE STRATEGY 2007-2012 – FINAL DRAFT

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Corporate Strategy sets out the organisation's key priorities for the medium term. It is a key document in the Council's policy framework that the Cabinet is then empowered to deliver, within the agreed budget. The Strategy is reviewed annually to take account of changing local and national circumstances but also looks forward 5 years.
- 1.2 Priorities set out in the Corporate Strategy have influenced the Council's financial planning process so that resources to achieve the priorities are available within the relevant timeframe. The Strategy is also leading the business planning process, and corporate and cross-cutting actions will be articulated through the Corporate Strategy Implementation Plan (formerly known as the Corporate Business Plan). The Implementation Plan will be used to monitor progress against the Strategy through the year.
- 1.3 Priorities in the Corporate Strategy reflect the Council's contribution to the delivery of the District Community Strategy (also on this agenda). The Community Strategy is a statutory requirement under the Local Government Act 2000, and addresses wider issues in respect of community wellbeing which can only be achieved through working in partnership with other agencies and local communities.

2.0 Final Draft

- 2.1 A final draft of the Corporate Strategy 2007-2012 is attached at Appendix 1. The initial draft Strategy was available for consultation during October and November. The Strategy was sent to businesses, partnerships, parish and county councillors and was discussed by Principal Scrutiny Committee and the 4 scrutiny panels. It was also available on the Council's website with an online comments form.
- 2.2 The Strategy has now been revised in response to some of the comments received, and reasons given where comments have not resulted in changes to the document. The comments and responses from the consultation draft stage are set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.3 The current draft was also considered by Principal Scrutiny Committee on 15th January 2007 (please see CAB1419 also on this agenda). It was requested that the following addition be made (shown in italics) to the first sentence of paragraph three of page 1 one of the Strategy:

'The City Council will endeavour to meet the needs of all the community and is mindful of its duties in respect of equality and diversity *and disability*'.

It is considered that the original text adequately reflects the Council's intention to play its part in meeting the needs of disabled people and no further changes have been made to the text in response to the comment.

- 2.4 With regard to 'A Modern Council' on page 3, it was suggested that the first bullet be revised with following addition in italics:

'...provides *positive* community leadership'

It is considered that the term 'community leadership' implies that this will be positive, and no further amendment has been made in response to this comment.

3 Equality and Diversity

- 3.1 The Council has legal duties in respect of certain categories of people under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, the Disability Discrimination Act, and new legislation in respect of age. All policies, strategies, projects and action plans must be subject to an 'equality and diversity impact assessment'. The first stage of the assessment is known as 'screening' and should be carried out at the developmental stage of the strategy. 'Screening' is designed to ascertain whether elements of the strategy will be positive, negative or neutral in respect of their impact on particular categories of people. The categories covered by Winchester City Council's impact assessment are gender, race, disability, sexuality, age, and belief. Where the screening process identifies potentially negative impacts a second stage or 'detailed assessment' is made of those particular elements. The detailed assessment results in recommendations for change and identifies where further information is required.
- 3.2 The consultation draft Corporate Strategy was screened as described above. Because the Strategy is very high level much depends on the way in which the intentions it outlines are to be achieved. In other words, the actions/interventions which the Council takes in order to achieve its aspirations will themselves need to be assessed to ensure that they do not result in any unlawful discrimination, or otherwise have a negative impact on target categories of people. The various elements of the draft strategy were assessed to be almost all either neutral, or positive in their potential impact on the target categories. A potential negative was as follows:-
- There is a lack of overt reference to tackling inequalities and promoting equality of opportunity (in line with statutory duties). It was felt that this point should be made clearly within the first few paragraphs of the document emphasising that it refers to all the objectives set out thereafter and reinforced under the 'Inclusive Society' section, and under 'Our Values'. This is recommended in the revised draft.
- 3.3 In undertaking the screening process, a lack of sound information about the current situation and needs of people in the target categories was identified as a problem. This will need to be addressed for the future and is recommended as an action to be included in relevant business plans 07/08.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 This report and its appendices set out the final draft of the Corporate Strategy 2007-2012 incorporating recommended revisions. It is recommended that Members approve the Strategy as drafted, and delegate authority to make any further minor editorial changes to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

5 Resource Implications:

- 5.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Final Draft Corporate Strategy 2007-2012

Appendix 2 – Comments and responses on the consultation draft Corporate Strategy