

CABINET

9 February 2011

PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 February 2011

ADOPTION OF CHANGE PLANS

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONING TEAM

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RECENT REFERENCES:

[CAB2098](#) – Proposals for a Commissioning Approach – 8 December 2010

[SO122](#) – Draft Change Plans – 11 November 2010

[CAB 2069](#) - Adoption of the Winchester District Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 - 2020, 13 October 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Last November, Council adopted the revised Sustainable Community Strategy for the Winchester District which set out three community outcomes for collective action by the Local Strategic Partnership. At the time, delivery plans for the Strategy (one for each outcome) were already under development. Known as Change Plans, because of their role in driving forward real and significant change for local people, these plans have been through a period of consultation and are presented here for Members to approve. They will set the Policy Framework within which Council works for the coming year.

The report sets out the approach to developing the Change Plans, the integration into the Change Plan process of the Council's traditional service-based business planning cycle, and key issues arising from consultation. A Change Plan has also been developed to support delivery of the Council's 'efficient and effective' corporate outcome. All four plans are appended to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To Cabinet and Council:

1. That Council adopts the four Change Plans at Appendix 1, subject to any final minor amendments to be undertaken by the relevant Assistant Director in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

To Cabinet:

2. That the revised Council Business Planning Process set out in paragraph 5 of the report be approved.

3. That the Scheme of Delegation to Portfolio Holders (as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution) be amended by the replacement of the following (changes shown in tracking):

" To approve relevant ~~business plans~~ **Change Plans** designed to deliver the Council's policy framework within the agreed budget.

4. That the Scheme of Delegation to Officers (as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution) be amended by the replacement of the following (changes shown in tracking):

"Subject to discussion with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to agree changes to approved ~~business plans~~ **Change Plans**, provided that the amended ~~business plan~~ **Change Plan** will continue to deliver the Council's policy framework within the agreed budget."

To Principal Scrutiny Committee:

5. That the Committee considers whether to make any comments on matters of significance to Cabinet or Council, or to otherwise draw attention to other matters to the relevant Portfolio Holder.

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CHANGE PLANS

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONING TEAM

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2010, a report presented to Cabinet outlined the steps already taken by the Council to become a 'commissioning' organisation (CAB2098 refers). This included the creation of a new management structure mirrored by a new line-up of Cabinet portfolios and designed to promote more effective delivery of the community outcomes in the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 1.2 The report also explained that a commissioning approach required the Council to review the way it goes about delivering services, projects and initiatives to ensure that the Council and its partners are meeting the real needs of our community whilst making best use of increasingly scarce resources. That paper set out a definition of commissioning and explained how such an approach could work, and Members approved the principles of a commissioning process.
- 1.3 Commissioning is, at its most basic, a mechanism for getting things done. But in order to get things done, it is essential that we have a clear plan of what needs to be done. Whilst the Sustainable Community Strategy provides the overall direction and priorities for the Winchester District, it must be underpinned by an action plan which sets out the key programmes, projects and milestones by which we can judge our combined success in delivering against the three outcomes of active communities, economic prosperity and a high quality environment. The corporate outcome of being an 'efficient and effective Council' requires an action plan in just the same way.
- 1.4 Consequently, the Commissioning Team has been drawing together a set of three-year plans which are designed to co-ordinate partnership action, resources and management. They are plans designed to bring about real change in our key outcome areas, and have therefore been called Change Plans.

- 1.5 The Change Plans replace the traditional Corporate Business Plan as the Council's Policy Framework for the coming year – which in turn shapes the decision-making of Cabinet. The most significant actions in the Change Plans are set out in Appendix 1 under the relevant outcome area, giving rise to a shortlist of actions similar to that approved in the Corporate Business Plan in previous years.
- 1.6 Much more detailed action plans exist in the full version of the Change Plans available on the intranet, and this will be sent by outcome to the relevant Scrutiny Panels in the March cycle, prior to sign-off through the Portfolio Holder Decision Notice procedure. These more detailed and integrated plans will effectively remove the need for nearly 30 service-based business plans, making the Council's whole planning process more streamlined.
- 1.7 Members are asked to approve the policy framework embodied in the Change Plans at Appendix 1, including the priority actions listed.

2 Producing the Change Plans

- 2.1 The Commissioning Team has worked with a wide cross-section of colleagues, Members, partner agencies and businesses in developing the Change Plans. At a time when organisations supported by national or regional funding have been in a state of flux, it has not always been simple to identify programmes to which partners can commit.
- 2.2 However, the uncertainties of the current economic climate have made partners keener to share ideas and to work collaboratively. By taking the initiative in developing the Change Plans, the Council has reinforced its role as community leader, and begun to bring together new clusters from across the sectors who share the need to deliver services more effectively, more creatively and – of course – more locally in future.
- 2.3 Consultation and evidence-gathering activities have included:
 - workshops with staff and Members
 - discussion with the LSP Executive
 - theme-based meetings with sector groups (eg rural food producers, agencies working to support youth employment)
 - area-based meetings with colleagues and other public agencies (eg Winnall workshop)
 - discussion at the five Scrutiny committees in the November cycle
 - one-to-one meetings with key partners (eg Sparsholt College, Winchester School of Art, the Probation Service)

- requests for feedback through Council networks (eg Parish Connect, the Winchester Entrepreneur, WinACC newsletter, the LSP newsletter)
 - peer to peer networking
- 2.4 The Change Planning period has coincided with the Council's Blueprint consultation. Whilst Blueprint was designed to identify community-led aspirations for spatial planning to inform the Local Development Framework, some of the feedback relates to more functional activities which can be better addressed through the Change Plans. Meetings are continuing with colleagues in Strategic Planning to identify and assess this feedback.
- 2.5 The planning process is iterative: a good business adapts to changing circumstances, new opportunities and emerging threats, so a sound business plan will evolve over time. The Change Plans will also be flexible documents, and Portfolio Holders will work with the Commissioning Team to consider new ideas as they emerge – and to defer or cancel projects which no longer seem attractive or viable.
- 3 Feedback from Consultation
- 3.1 The concept of Change Plans is not difficult, but the approach requires colleagues, Members and partners to think in a new way about outcome-based action and shared accountability. Much of the feedback has been around language and process, and the Chief Executive's 'Dictionary of Commissioning' (which was circulated to Members via the Members' Bulletin following the Member training event led by the Commissioning Team in November) has been helpful in demystifying some of the terminology.
- 3.2 The four Change Plans together are lengthy documents, and the Commissioning Team is particularly appreciative of the time and thought given to the consultation process by individual officers and organisations. Length is a barrier to engagement, and the Team has therefore loaded the plans onto the Covalent system which enables them to be printed in a more space-efficient format as can be seen in the Appendices to this report. It also means that they can be reported via outcome, priority, service or other categories to suit the need.
- 3.3 Colleagues in particular were keen to see targets which were 'SMART' (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed) but the commissioning approach leads us into new territory here. Where the Commissioning Team has identified issues or problems, there may not yet be a corresponding action to redress it: examining the issue and presenting an effective solution may be a commissioning brief in itself. For example, we know that there is a growing problem in relation to unemployed young people as a result of the recent recession and current austerity measures. We might not yet know how to tackle this, but a specification would be drawn up setting out the outcomes we seek to achieve in this area, and organisations would be invited to apply for the commission. An effective solution might as easily come from an arts organisation such as Winnall Rock School as a voluntary organisation or

another public body. The more we move to this commissioning approach, the less specific the actions in the Change Plans will be – and the more important our performance indicators will become. Cabinet will receive a further report on the Commissioning Process in March.

- 3.4 What is already clear is that organisations that are still uncertain of their future shape, capacity and funding will need another chance to review the Change Plans and make their commitments. Officers propose that this happens in the spring, once budgets are set. It is important that there is shared ownership of the Change Plans across the LSP, and that the City Council does not become charged with the delivery of every action.
- 3.5 It is also evident that businesses and organisations are finding it difficult to think beyond one year ahead in these fast-changing times. The Change Plans presented in the appendices to this report focus on 2011/12, but actions for the following two years already exist (see [SO122](#)) and will continue to be added on a regular basis:
- 3.6 With feedback from the Blueprint process still to follow; further partner consultation in the spring, and an ongoing need to be able to respond to new opportunities, it is important that there is a mechanism by which Change Plan actions can be added to, replaced or amended during the course of the year. Members are therefore asked to delegate authority for the amending of Change Plans to the relevant Assistant Director in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder for actions which fall within the Council's policy framework and agreed budgets.
- 3.7 Any action – be it in the Change Plan or new during the course of the year – which will fall outside the Council's policy framework or agreed budgets would be brought before Cabinet (or Council where appropriate) in the usual way for consideration.
- 3.8 Progress against the Change Plans will be monitored through the relevant Scrutiny Panel, and also at Local Strategic Partnership Executive meetings.

4 The Format of the Change Plans

- 4.1 The Change Plans follow a simple format. At the front of the Change Plan document there is a brief analysis of each of the five priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy. These are wellbeing of older people, access to services, reducing the District's carbon footprint, Stanmore and Winnall. These priorities are important, and the Local Strategic Partnership is committed to address these priorities through all its commissions in the coming three years.
- 4.2 The rest of the Change Plans are built around one of the three outcomes in the Sustainable Community Strategy, which are:
- Active communities

- Economic prosperity
- High quality environment

There is also a change plan for the corporate outcome of being an efficient and effective council.

- 4.3 Under each outcome, a set of themes has been identified which reflect the most important issues which have arisen during the consultation and research process. For example, under the high quality environment outcome, there are six themes as follows:
- a) Reduce the District's greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate
 - b) Protect and enhance the District's rich biodiversity and habitats
 - c) Protect and improve our landscapes and townscapes
 - d) Use the District's natural resources wisely
 - e) Minimise the impact of traffic and transport
 - f) Waste minimisation
- 4.4 For each of these themes, there is a brief analysis of the current situation and some principles to guide the actions we take and the goods and services we might buy (or commission).
- 4.5 One significant action for each theme is included at Appendix 1, but there are many more programmes of work to which Members will be able to refer in the full document on the intranet and monitor through the year.
- 5 Council Business Planning
- 5.1 The Council's Heads of Team are traditionally charged with developing a business plan for their service each year. This is presented at the March Scrutiny cycle, and signed off by means of a Portfolio Holder Decision Notice.
- 5.2 As part of a continued transition towards outcome-based planning rather than service-led planning, Heads of Team will use the Change Plans as the basis for their work programmes in future. They will not be presenting individual service plans to Scrutiny in March, but will add their own proposed activities to the relevant outcome areas of the Change Plans which are recorded on the Covalent performance monitoring software used by the Council.
- 5.3 Some business plans have, in the past, tended to include 'business as usual' targets. Where no significant change is anticipated, these targets will in future take the form of concise statistical performance indicators. There will, of course, be some service-based actions driven by external factors such as changes in the law or new Government advice. Teams will also be able to

generate their own list of actions from the Covalent system, if required, to enable ease of reference by their staff during appraisals, team meetings etc.

- 5.4 Heads of Team are receiving training this month which will help to ensure that they challenge their own approach business planning: if targets do not contribute to the delivery of one of the four key outcomes, they will need to consider whether or not they justify the allocation of Council resources.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Moving to a Commissioning Approach requires cultural change, alongside new processes and systems. The introduction of Change Plans represents a step forward for the Winchester District, in seeking to join up the activities of our key partners and to focus all our efforts on the delivery of three agreed community outcomes and one corporate outcome.
- 6.2 The Change Plans presented in the Appendix to this report are part of the continuing evolution of Winchester City Council, and they will be refined over time as the Commissioning Approach beds in. However, officers believe that they represent a wide range of consensus and a long period of evidence-gathering.
- 6.3 Cabinet is asked to approve the Change Plans at Appendix 1 in as far as they set out a policy framework for action under the three outcomes of the Sustainable Community Strategy – already adopted by this Council - and the corporate outcome of being an efficient and effective Council. It is also asked to approve the shortlist of priority actions incorporated in the Change Plans, which replace the former Corporate Business Plan.
- 6.4 Cabinet is asked to recommend that Council adopts them as presented here, on the understanding that they will continue to develop as new opportunities or new challenges emerge. In order to facilitate such development, Cabinet is also asked to delegate authority to the relevant Assistant Director and Portfolio Holder for making additions or deletions to the Change Plans during the course of the year, where they fall within the policy framework and agreed budget of the Council.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

7 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 7.1 The Change Plans are the delivery plans for the Sustainable Community Strategy, as well as for the Council's own 'efficient and effective' outcome.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 The draft change plans presented during the consultation period in November attempted to identify project costs. However, most projects and programmes cannot yet be accurately mapped out, and the availability of partnership resources for joint commissioning is as yet unclear. Costs will therefore be

identified as part of the project planning process. However, the Commissioning Team is aware of the challenge presented to the Council by current funding reductions, and has worked on the assumption that there will be little 'new' money next year other than what can be raised through external grants or partnership contributions. Consequently, many projects rely more on officer time than on finance and a number are likely to be 'low cost' and will be absorbed by existing revenue budgets. It should also be noted that a number of projects will lead to a reduction in the base budget for the Council.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 7.1 Business planning is a process which incorporates the identification of risk, and introduction of measures to mitigate against it. The Changes Plans are themselves intended to reduce the risk that we and our partners will not deliver against the outcomes of the Community Strategy or the Council's own 'efficient and effective' outcome by providing clear direction and a set of agreed programmes to support delivery against them. In order to assess the 'direction of travel' in relation to the four outcomes, programmes are being linked to performance indicators and key indicators are shown in the covering templates for each Change Plan theme.
- 7.2 The Council's Scrutiny process contributes towards the management of risk, through the regular monitoring of non-compliance or exceptions. It is proposed, under the proposed new arrangements for Scrutiny, that Change Plan exception reports would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee each quarter. Any issues of concern could be referred to an Informal Scrutiny Group for detailed examination.

8 EQUALITIES

- 8.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy, which sits above the Change Plans in planning terms, was subjected to an equalities impact assessment. Whilst it was anticipated that the Change Plans would also be impact-assessed, further advice from the Council's Equalities Advisor suggests that this would yield very little in the way of new considerations. He has suggested that the most useful application of impact assessments would be on project plans setting out in detail the scope and nature of each project in the Change Plan. It is too soon in the process for this level of detail, and – as paragraph 3.3 above demonstrates, the Commissioning Approach may lead to a variety of solutions being considered to any one identified issue or problem.
- 8.2 The Council's new integrated assessment model will be used for each Change Plan project as it is developed.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Consultation responses available from the Commissioning Team

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Winchester District Change Plans 2010 - 2013