



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Review of Council Priorities

Date: 2 August 2007

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1. Purpose of the Report

- To update members on progress with the review of Council priorities
- To seek members' endorsement of proposals to progress the review further, and views on wider engagement as part of this progression.

2. Background

Cabinet members met on 27 June 2007 to consider future priorities for improvement for the Council.

The session was facilitated by external consultants Blue Marble. They drew upon material provided by the Council around current priorities, commitments, political priorities, survey data and the current financial situation.

3. Progress made

Members discussed issues arising from this evidence at length, drawing on existing Community Strategy priorities as a starting point.

Members confirmed "Healthy, Green, Safe and Clean" as the Council's overall mission statement, in support of the Council's motto "Omnibus Optimum" (the best for all).

Emerging from this discussion, it was proposed that the following broad themes should form the Council's priorities for improvement for the next four years.

- A high quality local environment
- A safer community
- Good health for everyone
- Children and Young People.

Members began consideration of priority outcomes for each of the priority themes. It was suggested that there ought to be around 5 or 6 priority outcomes for each of the four themes. Suggestions were made for the environment theme (including for instance vibrant and attractive town centres; affordable housing; litter and graffiti, public open space, recycling and waste minimisation; spatial planning/green belt). For the children theme, it was suggested that these ought to closely mirror the “Every Child Matters” agenda themes.

Members also looked at how these priorities might be delivered. There was considerable discussion as to whether “involving the local community” was a priority in itself or a means through which priorities might be delivered – members decided on the latter approach.

It was suggested that the Council should seek to deliver its priorities for improvement through a variety of means including: -

- Involving local communities
- Working with partners
- Identifying and securing external funding to support the council’s own resources
- Efficient and effective ways of working
- Using evidence to understand the needs of the Borough and acting on these
- Focusing on customer needs and expectations
- Meeting regulatory demands.

These would need to be reflected in the business case for future developments.

4. Next Steps

- Further discussion is needed to refine wording of the priorities. In particular, a form of words around the “Children and Young People” priority needs to be agreed that better reflects an emphasis on meeting the needs of children and young people (without appearing to neglect needs of other age groups).
- Cabinet members need to consider the extent to which they would like to engage in further consultation at this stage. Externally, it can be argued that consultation evidence has influenced the process so far and that, if a State of the Borough consultation is progressed as planned in late Autumn as part of the Community Strategy review, the priorities could be further tested in the community at that point. There may, however, be a need to consult with other members in particular at this point as the

current debate has been restricted to Cabinet only. It might also be helpful to share ideas with key partners at this point.

- Further work needs to be done to identify priority outcomes for each of the priority themes, against which targets will need to be set in due course. Baseline positions need to be established against these where not in place (or arrangements proposed to gather this information). This needs to link with related work on current outcomes (for both the Council and Gedling Partnership), as included elsewhere on this agenda and if possible with the Nottinghamshire LAA. Officers will be exploring these issues over the summer period.

5. Timescale

- Priorities, including outcomes, need formal Council discussion and agreement. The aim is for the final draft of these to be presented to October Cabinet and Council after the further work above has been completed.
- Work on outcomes and priorities needs to be progressed in time to feed into Budget/Service Planning 2008/09. This will include a scoring methodology for bids built around the priorities and outcomes. It is anticipated that a methodology will be presented for consideration and agreement by the Leader of the Council in time for application during the 2008/09 Budget and Service Planning process.

6. Recommendations

Cabinet instructions are requested, specifically with regard to wording of the Children and Young People proposed priority, on any further consultation to be carried out at this stage in the review process and on any other related issues.