

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

6th March 2007

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN 2007/8 UPDATE, PROPOSED CONTENT AND TIMETABLE

Kathryn Stokes – Principal Corporate Development Officer

Summary

1. To inform Scrutiny and to seek Scrutiny's comments on the proposal to produce and print an annual update to the three-year Strategic Plan.

Introduction

2. In 2003/04 the Government issued new guidelines, which reduced the amount of information that had to be contained within Best Value Performance Plans. The new guidelines provided increased flexibility to 'good' and 'excellent' councils and enabled Middlesbrough Council to produce its first Corporate Performance Plan, which subsumed the requirements of the Best Value Performance Plan.
3. 'Good' and 'excellent' councils are required to include the following information in their Best Value Performance Plans:
 - out-turn data for Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs)
 - targets for BVPs in the current year and subsequent two years
 - confirmation that they are adopting the code of practice in their approach to workforce matters and contracting.
4. Under the new CPA methodology Middlesbrough Council achieved a 4-star rating in December 2005, this enabled the Council to retain flexibility regarding how it addresses the Best Value Performance Plan requirements.

5. In 2006 Middlesbrough Council decided to replace its Corporate Performance Plan with a three-year Strategic Plan that articulated the Council's medium-term priorities as well as providing details on the improvement activities to be undertaken within the following year. The rationale for this approach was:
 - to ensure alignment of current plans
 - to formalise medium-term planning
 - in response to external influences.
6. The Strategic Plan incorporated the Council's statutory requirements in relation to producing a Best Value Performance Plan and also included local requirements to strengthen the alignment between performance and budget planning.
7. The Strategic Plan is structured in three parts:

Part I – '*Corporate Overview*' - the Council's long-term vision and medium-term priorities.

Part II – '*Achievements and Future Actions*' - this section reflects on the Council's performance, and includes the actions proposed for the current year.

Part III – '*Supporting Documentation*' - detailed performance and budget information.

Evidence / Discussion

8. Annual updates of the Strategic Plan must be produced in order to:
 - fulfil the statutory requirements of the BVPP
 - outline changes that have occurred over the previous 12 months
 - reflect on achievements made in respect to the previous year's key actions
 - report the Council's performance against BVPIs
 - propose actions for the forthcoming year.
9. The three-year Strategic Plan is widely consulted on, it is a living document that is published to a wide audience and must therefore be regularly updated.
10. It is proposed that the original three-part structure of the Strategic Plan be retained for the annual update, however only parts II and III will be amended and reprinted.

Part I – '*Corporate Overview*' – It is not proposed to alter this section as it outlines the long-term vision and medium-term priorities which are envisioned to remain unchanged for the 3-year duration of the Strategic Plan.

Part II – '*Achievements and Future Actions*' – It is proposed to update and reprint this section following the same format as the original but adding an outline of changes that have occurred over the previous 12 months including:

 - implementing the 2007 Local Area Agreement
 - integrating the 2006 Local Government White Paper
 - responding to any changes caused by the elections in May 2007.

Part III – ‘*Supporting Documentation*’ – It is proposed to update and reprint this section following the same format as the original. Amendments will include:

- a summary of the Local Area Agreement targets the Council is responsible for delivering (including LPSA 2 targets)
- reporting on the Council’s performance against BVPIs during 2006/7.

11. The proposed content for each part of the Plan is attached at Appendix A.
12. The proposed timetable for the production of the Strategic Plan is attached at Appendix B.

Conclusion

13. That Scrutiny considers and comments on the proposal to produce and print an annual update to the three-year Strategic Plan.

Report prepared by Kathryn Stokes – Principal Corporate Development Officer

Telephone Number 01642 729559