

**Meeting:** Executive

Portfolio Area: Council-wide

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> November 2003

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL – “CHANGING GEAR” (CORPORATE BUSINESS STRATEGY) 2002/03 – 2006/07**

(Chief Executive’s)

**KEY DECISION**

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**1 PURPOSE**

To consider revisions made to the Council’s Corporate Business Strategy – “Changing Gear”.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 To agree the proposed revisions to the Council’s Corporate Business Strategy – “Changing Gear” as outlined in Appendix A

**3 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Corporate Business Strategy is a key document for the Council and needs to be considered as part of its performance management framework. It provides the link between the Community Strategy and the plans for delivering services to the public. The document continues to set out a programme of major change and will be included as part of the 2004/05 Best Value Performance Plan, which summarises the Council’s performance against its priorities and future plans.

3.2 The Council reviews its Corporate Business Strategy each year, prior to the budget determination process. This ensures that the priorities identified within it remain the focus of the Council over the forthcoming twelve months. A review of the **Corporate Business Strategy – “Changing Gear”** has taken place during September and October this year through consultation with officers and members of the Council’s Performance, Priorities and Improvement Group (PPIG).

3.3 As part of this year’s review, a rationalisation of the Ambitions and Key Development Areas is proposed. The aim is primarily to:

- enhance and clarify the Council’s focus in order that delivery of the strategy can be better achieved

- improve the links between the Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Business Strategy

3.4 A draft version of the reviewed Corporate Business Strategy **Stevenage Borough Council – “Changing Gear”** can be found in the Members' library as an Appendix to this report.

#### 4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 As part of the original Corporate Business Strategy 2002/03, a commitment to a vision for the next 5 to 10 years was established and published in the Best Value Performance Plan. This has been revisited, to ensure it reflects the direction in which the Council is currently moving (see Appendix A).

4.2 The proposed rationalisation of the Ambitions and Key Development Areas included in the Council's Corporate Business Strategy –“Changing Gear” are set out below:

Ambitions	Priorities
Community Leadership	Engaging Local Communities Development of partnership working Enhancing the image of Stevenage
The Regeneration of Stevenage	Affordable housing The expansion of the town A vibrant town centre Revitalised local communities, community facilities and shops Improved community safety
First class customer service and good quality services from the Council	The cleanliness and condition of the local environment Sustainable management of waste The provision of a top quality housing service to tenants and people in need of housing One stop experience customer service
A fair and inclusive community	Equalities

4.3 The first significant change is in the use of terminology. After consultation with Performance, Priorities and Improvement Group on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2003, it has been recommended that the Council adopts the term 'Priorities' rather than 'Key Development Areas'. The proposed change should ensure that a consistent set of terms are used between the Council, external scrutiny and regulatory agencies.

4.4 While this rationalisation may appear significant, the ambitions and priorities identified do not result in a change of direction for the Council. Essentially they are the same as those stated in the previous years, but have been restructured in order to demonstrate the focus of the Council on a specific range of areas believed to be both important and in need of improvement. Detailed information regarding these changes can be found in Appendix A. The restructure has also resulted in the establishment of clear user focussed outcomes, an area that was recognised as requiring improvement from last year.

4.5 In addition to the rationalisation, the review also identified a need for the Corporate Business Strategy to demonstrate how the organisation would ensure it has the capacity to deliver. A section entitled 'Building the capacity of the organisation' has been developed from the 'Change Management' section of the 2003/04 BVPP. It is proposed that this section will include a range of support areas, some of which were previously recognised as Key Development Areas.

4.6 The capacity building areas identified are:

- E-government & Business Process Re-engineering
- Performance Management (identifying performance measures)
- Sustainability
- Risk Management
- Procurement
- Information & Communications Technology
- Human Resources (inc. People Development)
- Financial Management
- Asset Management

4.7 Restructuring the Corporate Business Strategy in this way strengthens links to the emerging Community Strategy. The regeneration of the town is a strong policy theme throughout the draft Community Strategy and as a result of the proposals; the Council has clearly stated one of its ambitions as 'The regeneration of Stevenage'.

4.8 It is important for members to note that, the development of the Corporate Business Strategy has taken place in conjunction with the 'Self Assessment' being produced for the Council's forthcoming Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

4.9 Furthermore, having only 4 ambitions will enable improved communication of the Council's Corporate Business Strategy to staff and other stakeholders.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial Implications**

5.1.1 The '**Changing Gear**' programme required initial investment by the Council, which has been the subject of separate reports to the Executive but should provide increased efficiency savings in future years.

### **5.2 Legal Implications**

5.2.1 The Corporate Business Strategy provides a policy framework within which the Council makes its decisions. However, this does not imply that any decision subsequently made by the Council has been predetermined by agreement to the Corporate Business Strategy.

### **5.3 Policy Implications**

5.3.1 The Corporate Business Strategy – 'Changing Gear' sets out a programme of major change to the Council's policies. Following the review described, no alterations are proposed to alter the Council's overall policies.

## **5.4 Other Implications**

- 5.4.1 There are no other direct implications resulting from this report, but implications may result from the implementation of plans and policies in the Corporate Business Strategy.

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- Stevenage Borough Council – 2003/04 Best Value Performance Plan

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix A – Proposed revisions to the Corporate Business Strategy
- Appendix B – Corporate Business Strategy – “Changing Gear” (in members library)