

Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Agenda Item:

4

Portfolio Area: Media and Communications

Date: 10 July 2012

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL: MAKING A DIFFERENCE - ANNUAL REPORT 2012

NON-KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the content of the Council's Draft Annual Report 2012 at Appendix A, and consider arrangements for final publication.
- 1.2 That the Executive recommend to Council that Constitution be amended; to remove the Annual Report and Best Value Performance Plan from the Policy and Budget Framework specified items at Article 4.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Council be recommended to agree the content of the Council's Draft Annual Report 2012 at Appendix A, and arrangements for final publication.
- 2.2 That Council be recommended to approve an amendment to the Constitution; to remove the Annual Report and the Best Value Performance Plan from the Policy and Budget Framework specified items at Article 4.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Annual Report Purpose and Content

- 3.1.1 The Annual Report 2012 informs the community of our progress in delivering the Corporate Plan. It sets out progress over the past year in delivering the ambitions and priorities in the Corporate Plan, plans for 2012/13 and performance targets for 2012/13.

3.1.2 Council agreed the content of the Corporate Plan 2008 to 2013, 'Making a Difference' on 25 June 2008.

- 3.1.3 A revision to the framework of ambitions and priorities was agreed at Executive on 9 March 2011, to meet a changing financial and policy context.
- 3.1.4 In July 2011, Executive was advised that the current Corporate Plan is being refreshed and would be in place from April 2012. In order to consider the implications of the Localism Act, to consider resident feedback on community priorities provided in the Residents' Survey 2011, and to ensure reflection of the Council's continuing focus on cooperative working, the Head of Housing, Community and Communications has determined that it is more appropriate for the Corporate Plan to be revised to apply from April 2013.
- 3.1.5 During the development of the Annual Report 2012 much emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the content is formatted to reflect the public facing nature of the document.
- 3.1.6 The narrative section of the Annual Report 2012 was shared with the Council's Readers' Panel and the responses received are generally positive, considering the report a well written and interesting document.
- 3.1.7 Available performance results have been included in the draft Annual Report 2012 at Appendix A, as outlined below:
- Survey based results that apply to the delivery of the Corporate Plan are presented in a narrative form (in the boxes in bold font) on the relevant priority pages throughout the document.
 - Progress performance measures and any outcome measures that are not survey-based are presented at the end of the document. A different approach has been taken to the presentation of the results for 2012. Results are presented in narrative form to make the results more meaningful for the reader.
- 3.1.8 The Cooperative Principles agreed by Executive in January 2011 are set out on page 6 of the Annual Report 2012 at Appendix A. The Cooperative Principles agreed are:
- The Council as a strong community leader
 - Working together with the community and other agencies to provide services based on needs
 - Communities empowered to design and deliver services and play an active role in their local community
 - A clear understanding between the Council and our communities - this is what we do, this is what we will help you to do
 - Joined up and accessible services that offer value for money and focus on the customer.
- 3.1.9 In addition, the Cooperative Principles Logo is included as a key on each priority page of the Annual Report 2012 to indicate the principles the organisation particularly considers are reflected in delivering each priority.

3.1.10 On 7 June 2012, the Leader of the Council approved the draft Annual Report 2012.

3.1.11 In accordance with the Policy and Budget Framework rules in the Constitution, the draft Annual Report 2012 was also considered by the Resources Development and Scrutiny Committee on 21 June 2012. In summary, the Resources Development and Scrutiny Committee made the following comments and suggestions:

- The report was clear and concise
- Consider changing the (triangular) format of the Performance Management Framework diagram at the beginning of the document
- The report should be updated regarding the town centre development to reflect recent announcements in the media
- The graphics on the 'Revitalise neighbourhood centres' priority page should be improved.

Appropriate amendments have been made to the Annual Report 2012 attached at Appendix A.

In addition, the Committee indicated that in future years, consideration should be given to the Annual Report identifying planned objectives that had not been achieved.

3.2 Constitution Amendment

3.2.1 The Annual Report was added to the specified items of the Policy and Budget Framework at Article 4 of the Constitution in 2009, as it was considered a replacement for the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). The requirement for the organisation to produce a BVPP was removed by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (having previously been required to be produced under the Local Government Act 1999, section 6[1]).

3.2.2 On 7 June 2012, the Leader of the Council agreed that the Executive recommend to Council that Constitution be amended; to remove the Annual Report and Best Value Performance Plan from the Policy and Budget Framework specified items at Article 4.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 Annual Report Purpose and Content

4.1.1 The Annual Report forms part of the Council's Policy and Budget Framework at Article 4 of the Constitution.

- 4.1.2 Heads of Service have been consulted to determine the appropriate content of each priority. The content summarises the Council's achievements for 2011/12, plans for 2012/13 and 2011/12 results for performance measures used to measure progress.
- 4.1.3 The Council's Communications Team has contributed to the format and design of the document to ensure that it reflects the organisation's corporate style.
- 4.1.4 Strategic Directors met with the Leader of the Council on Friday 18 May 2012 to consider content. Feedback from the meeting has been incorporated into the draft Annual Report 2012 at Appendix A.
- 4.1.5 Available performance results have been included in the draft Annual Report 2012 at Appendix A. Any outstanding results will be added to the final document prior to publication.
- 4.1.6 The Resources Development and Scrutiny Committee considered the content of the draft Annual Report 2012 on 21 June 2012. Feedback from this meeting has been incorporated into the final draft of the Annual Report 2012 at Appendix A, as indicated in paragraph 3.1.11.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 Implementation of the future projects identified will require investment by the Council. The priorities will inform the Council's budget setting process and the focus of project work identified in the Corporate Improvement Programme.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.1.1 The Best Value Performance Plan is currently one of the specified items of the Policy and Budget Framework of the Constitution at Article 4, as a statutory item. However, the requirement for the organisation to produce a BVPP was removed by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (having previously been required to be produced under the Local Government Act 1999, section 6[1]). It should therefore be removed from the specified items.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for the final Corporate Plan 2008 to 2013, 'Making a Difference'.
- 5.3.2 During the graphic design process of the Annual Report 2012, care has been taken to display information in a clear way to enhance readability. A 'Brief Equalities Impact Assessment' has been carried out to consider the accessibility of the Annual Report 2012.

5.3.3 Individual services and project managers are responsible for the completion of any necessary Equalities Impact Assessments associated with the delivery of planned activity.

5.4 Risk Implications

5.4.1 Individual services and project managers are responsible for the consideration of any risks associated with the delivery of planned activity.

5.5 Policy Implications

5.5.1 The Council's ambitions and priorities set out the Council's improvement programme and form part of the Council's policy framework.

5.6 Other Corporate implications

5.6.1 The Corporate Plan impacts on all council services. Programmes and projects that contribute to its delivery will be reflected in the Council's Corporate Improvement Programme. Delivery of the Corporate Improvement Programme is monitored by Strategic Management Board on a quarterly basis.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Sustainable Community Strategy: Stevenage 2021 - Our Town, Our Future
- Corporate Plan 2008 to 2013, 'Making A Difference'
- Annual Report 2011
- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/contents>
- Localism Act 2011: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents>

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Draft Annual Report 2012.