

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 FEBRUARY 2015

REFRESH OF COUNCIL PLAN INDICATORS 2015-2016

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Jarrett, Deputy Leader and Finance

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Summary

The Council Plan is the organisation's overarching business plan, setting out the Council's commitments to achieving certain outcomes during the life of the Plan. Following feedback from members and officers the current plan will be extended into 2015-16. Directorates have been asked to review their respective indicators and key projects used to assess the delivery of the Plan have been reviewed and adjusted. The purpose of this review is to ensure the delivery of the Council Plan is assessed using a focused and informative set of indicators to cover the period 2015-16 that take account of recent financial and service developments. Moving forward it will be the intention to develop a new medium term strategic plan in 2015-16 to replace the extended 2013-15 version.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council Plan is a key part of the budget and policy framework that is developed alongside the capital and revenue budget proposals in order to align the Council's business planning and budget setting process. This process looks at refreshing the current suite of indicators to ensure they are fit for purpose, enabling officers and members to assess the Council's progress in meeting the commitments set out in the Council Plan. As the Council Plan is a policy framework document it is a matter for Full Council.
- 1.2 The refreshed Council Plan indicators will be considered at
- Cabinet on 10 February 2015 and;
 - Council on 26 February 2015.
- 1.3 This paper aims to enable members to consider the proposed suite of indicators, to enable the committee's views to be reported to Cabinet on the 10th February 2015, alongside the 2015/16 budget proposals.

2. Extending Council Plan 2013-15 to 2015-16

- 2.1 As the Council's overarching business plan, the Council Plan identifies objectives the Council wishes to achieve (referred to as its 'priorities'), and as such it is important that it is considered alongside the budget setting process. The Council Plan forms an essential part of the Council's performance management framework, setting out the priorities, commitments, measures and targets against which progress will be judged. The last version of the Council plan (2014/15) has been attached as Appendix 4 for reference.
- 2.2 Members have requested that the current plan be extended for 2015/16 with a refreshed set of indicators and key projects, to ensure that they are focused, informative and relevant to assessing the Council's delivery against key priorities. Members have also expressed the desire for Services to ensure that SMART targets are set for each indicator to ensure that provide accurate and realistic interpretations of Council performance.
- 2.3 The council will look to develop a new medium term strategic Council Plan during 2015-16, that will replace the extended 2013-15 version. This will involve a comprehensive review of the Council's current plan, including its values, aims and objectives in consultation with members, residents, service users, staff and other key stakeholders. This will need to be considered in the current identification of key projects and indicators for 2015-16, to ensure a degree of strategic continuity.
- 2.4 Monitoring of the Council Plan will continue on a quarterly basis, focusing on key measures of success and update on key projects identified as supporting the delivery of the priorities. Management and reporting on operational performance will continue to be undertaken by services and directorate management teams.

3. Refresh of Council Plan Indicators

- 3.1 There are currently 62 indicators used to monitor progress across the four objectives set out with the 2013-15 plan, which include;
- Children and Young People have the best start in life in Medway Council
 - Adults maintain their independence and live healthy lives
 - Safe, clean and green Medway
 - Everyone benefiting from regeneration
- 3.2 Appendix 1 outlines proposed revised suite of measures, which are set out under each Commitment. The total number of indicators currently proposed has been reduced to 59. Table 1 below demonstrates how they are distributed across the current set of objectives. Appendix 3 shows those that have been earmarked for removal.

Table1 – Distribution of measures

Objectives	Original No. of Indicators 14/15	Revised No. of Indicators 15/16
Children and young people have the best start in life in Medway	23	18
Adults maintain their independence and live health lives	14	17
Safe, clean and green Medway	11	11
Everyone benefiting from regeneration	13	12
Values: Giving Value for Money	1	1
Total	62	59

3.3 The number of key projects has also changed from 25 to 26 projects. The projects put forward for consideration are listed in Appendix 2.

Table 2 – Distribution of projects

Key Projects	Original No. of Projects 14/15	Revised No. of Projects 15/16
Children and young people have the best start in life in Medway	5	5
Adults maintain their independence and live health lives	7	5
Safe, clean and green Medway	1	1
Everyone benefiting from regeneration	11	13
Values: Giving Value for Money	1	2
Total	25	26

- 3.5 Some national policy agendas continue to evolve along timelines that do not fit the Council's planning and Member decision-making programme, including the publication of national benchmarking data. As a result a number of indicators still have provisional targets and / or methodologies at this stage.
- 3.6 As the Budget reaches its conclusion at Council on 26 February, some of the commitments included in the draft indicator set may need to be revisited. Changes made to the budget up to and including Full Council may also have an impact, which will need to be reflected in the final version.
- 3.7 A delegation to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Deputy Leader who is portfolio holder for performance and business planning will be requested as part of the report to Council to deal with any necessary changes to align the plan's indicator set to the agreed budget. This will include finalising the few remaining provisional targets by exception and updating the Council Plan document to reflect such changes.
- 3.8 It is also important that the Council Plan is not so fluid as to be meaningless, but at the same time that it can accommodate in year changes if required. If such changes are required they will be presented to members as part of quarterly monitoring.

4 Diversity Impact Assessment

- 4.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has legal duties to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. The priorities in the Council Plan are underpinned by the core value of 'Putting the customer at the centre of everything we do', this reinforces the importance the Council places on meeting the differing needs of customers and promoting equality. The Council has a clearly set out diversity impact assessment process which describes how changes to service delivery or new services and policies should be assessed for impact and the requirement for regular review of the equality impact of services and strategies.
- 4.2 These processes are in place to ensure that the outcomes and initiatives set out by services, and then included in the Council Plan, meet the needs of our customers and are assessed for impact during their development. This means that officers are expected to identify and address any potential adverse impacts in line with legislation and best practice as part of implementation of the Council Plan.

- 4.3 Although the objectives and commitments set out within the plan have not been changed officers will continue to assess and monitor the plan, to ensure compliance with all statutory requirements.
- 4.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment of the refreshed Council Plan indicators has been prepared with the report, in line with the Council's established procedure for new strategic documents. This has not identified any adverse impact on residents with protected characteristics based on the proposed changes to Council Plans key projects and indicator suite.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 As the Council's overarching strategic plan, risks related to delivery of the plan (including controls and mitigating actions) are developed through the Strategic Risk Register and the service planning process (in directorate business plans and service plans).
- 5.2 The local government environment is experiencing unprecedented change across multiple agendas – policy, finance, legal, and citizen and customer expectation. Continuing to communicate with key stakeholders through a clear Council Plan with appropriate measures is a means to mitigate risks arising from a lack of strategic and corporate planning. In particular quarterly monitoring should provide early warning of priorities that may not be delivered as expected and/or performance issues that may draw further external scrutiny.
- 5.3 To reflect the importance of managing risk on behalf of the Council, Directorate hubs were recommended to consider strategic risks as a priority as part of the indicator review process.

6. Financial and legal implications

- 6.1 The Council Plan 2015-16 has been developed alongside the budget. This ensures the financial implications of the Council Plan are considered during its development. The decision to refresh the current suite of indicators within the Plan was influenced by the current financial pressures faced by the Council due to ongoing Central Government funding cuts. This has placed an ever-increasing pressure to focus the Council's resources on areas of greatest need and demonstrate that value for money is achieved through the allocation of scarce resources.
- 6.2 There is no longer a statutory requirement to have a Council Plan. This means that the Council Plan is no longer listed as a plan or strategy which must be adopted by Council in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000. However, the Regulations provide that where the Council determines that a decision on a non-statutory plan should be taken by them, the decision on adoption of that plan must be taken by full Council. Members have decided to retain the Council plan as a key document to guide the business of the Council and communicate its direction. The Council Plan remains a policy framework document within the Council's constitution and so a decision on refreshing the Plan's indicator set must be taken by full Council.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to review the Council Plan Indicators for 2015-16 (Appendix 1) and Key projects for 2015-16 (Appendix 2) and make comments to Cabinet for consideration on 10 February 2015.

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Background Papers

Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/16

Budget proposals 2015/16

Council Plan 2013/15