

## **CABINET**

**28 SEPTEMBER 2010**

### **COUNCIL PLAN REVIEW (POLICY FRAMEWORK) – ADDENDUM REPORT**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Janice Bamber, Customer First and Corporate Services

Report from: Stephanie Goad, Assistant Director Communications, Performance and Partnerships

Author: Caroline Salisbury, Overview and Scrutiny Coordinator

#### **Summary**

To inform Cabinet of the outcome of consideration of proposed in-year amendments to the council plan by Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 September 2010.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 As part of the quarter 1 council plan monitoring report, Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to comment on and make recommendations to Cabinet and Council on proposed changes to the council plan. This follows the established process for changes to the policy framework, which includes the council plan.
- 1.2 Members were advised that it is unusual to propose in-year changes to what is the council's main business plan, but officers were recommending an update to the plan in light of changes made by the Government.
- 1.3 Firstly, it was proposed that, in response to Government withdrawing funding, actions were deleted from the plan where related budgets reductions had been agreed by Council in July.
- 1.4 Secondly, as a result of the abolition of Comprehensive Area Assessment and changes to national monitoring of council performance, officers were seeking to streamline the plan, focussing it and associated progress monitoring on the main change programmes the council intends to pursue to deliver its priorities. This would mean the removal from the plan and from quarterly monitoring, a number of ongoing actions that had been set out in the original version. Under this proposal, the activities would continue to be carried out by the council but would not form part of regular council plan monitoring reports to members.
- 1.4 Some members of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee expressed serious concerns about the proposed approach to amending the plan in year. Their preferred approach was to reflect the impact of loss of funding in

narrative updates against actions, rather than deleting such un-funded activity from the plan. It was felt that that approach would be clearer for the public. In relation to proposed deletions of 'day job' activities from the council plan to streamline monitoring, the majority of the committee were concerned that some of those items proposed for deletion were very important to local people and so should be retained. It was felt that any more major changes should be made as part of the fuller review of the council plan scheduled to take place later this year and to be agreed alongside next year's budget.

- 1.5 The committee focused on a number of actions and indicators proposed for deletion and voted on whether to recommend their retention in the plan.
- 1.6 In accordance with the Council's policy framework rules, the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to recommend to Cabinet on 28 September 2010 and Council on 14 October 2010 the changes to the Council Plan actions and measures highlighted in Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report, **with the exception of** the following actions and indicators which they recommended **should be retained** for the remainder of the reporting year:
  - (a) page 2 of Appendix 1 - action - 'delivery of Phase 2 of the Playbuilder Programme resulting in the refurbishment of 22 play areas by 2012';
  - (b) page 6 of Appendix 1 – action - 'Supported by external funding, we will continue to deliver action plans in our key priority neighbourhoods of All Saints, Strood South, White Road and Twydall, to secure social regeneration';
  - (c) page 9 of Appendix 1 –action - 'Increase public feelings of safety by maintaining a dedicated safer communities officer in each ward';
  - (d) page 25 of Appendix 1 –indicator - 'Number of Sure Start Children Centres';
  - (e) page 27 of Appendix 1 –indicator - 'Timeliness of social care assessment (all adults) - % from first contact to completion of assessment within 4 weeks';
  - (f) page 33 of Appendix 1 – action - 'minimising of congestion arising from roadworks';
  - (g) page 37 of Appendix 1 –indicator - 'Bus services running on time';
  - (h) page 39 of Appendix 1 –action - 'Implement a £1m per annum housing renovation programme for the poorest quality housing in Luton and All Saints';
  - (i) page 40 of Appendix 1 –indicator - 'Repeat homelessness';
  - (j) page 40 of Appendix 1 –indicator - 'Average time taken to re-let council dwellings (days)';
  - (k) page 40 of Appendix 1 – indicator - 'Homelessness decision cases decided within 28 working days (To be local measure)';

- (l) page 43 of Appendix 1 –action - ‘Work to improve Public Spaces/town centre environments through the public spaces working group to be informed by town centre action plans, developed by economic development and social regeneration teams’;
- (m) page 46 of Appendix 1 –action - ‘400 individuals accessing retail workforce training programmes’.
- (n) page 46 of Appendix 1 –action - ‘60 apprenticeships including 40 private sector ones ’.
- (o) page 51 of appendix 1 – action – ‘tackling the barriers to public participation in sport’

## **2. Assistant director’s comments**

2.1 The proposed approach was intended to keep the council plan ‘live’ by updating it, primarily, in response to changes to the budget as agreed by Council. The committee accepted the proposed changes to the plan which flow from changes already agreed to the budget. It has recommended that two actions are retained which were proposed for deletion as a result of funding no longer being available (but not agreed by Council as part of changes to the budget.) These are:

- Playbuilder Phase 2 works to deliver the refurbishment of a further 11 play areas by 2012. This action was proposed for deletion as a result of funding for such schemes being withheld by Government.
- The housing renovation programme which had been dependent on external funding which is no longer available.

2.2 The Committee did not disagree with the desire to have a fundamental review of the Council Plan for next year, including the development of a customer focussed set of measures of success. Members’ issue was with the timing of changes in-year. With the exceptions of the Playbuilder and housing renovation schemes explained above, the actions and indicators the Committee is proposing should be retained all relate to activity that the council will continue to undertake – their deletion from the plan was only ever intended to streamline the performance reporting process to members. Officers will continue to monitor these actions, so it does not cause practical difficulties if Members wish these to continue to be reported as part of council plan monitoring.

## **3. Recommendations**

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet consider the recommendations of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee in formulating their recommendations to Council.

### **Lead officer contact**

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