

CABINET

**BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK 2008/9
Corporate Plan and Budget Update**

11th December 2007

**Joint Report of Corporate Director (Finance & Performance)
& Head of Financial Services**

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To update Cabinet on the latest position with regard to the 2008/9 Budget & Policy Framework documents, in particular in respect of the Corporate Plan and the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.			
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Referral from Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date Included in Forward Plan	December		
This report is public			

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Framework

- (1) That Cabinet notes the latest position in respect of the documents included in the Policy Framework as outlined in the report.
- (2) That Cabinet note the arrangements in place to prepare the draft 2008/9 Corporate Plan.

Budget

- (3) To note that the draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme will be reported to the January Cabinet meeting.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cabinet has responsibility for making proposals to Council each year in respect of the Budget and Policy Framework. The proposals in respect of the Policy Framework documents and in particularly, the Corporate Plan, are still at the preparatory stage and will require further amendments as the budget process progresses.

- 1.2 At its last meeting, Cabinet considered the initial feedback from its Corporate Plan consultation exercise and agreed a draft set of objectives and priorities that would be used as a basis to prepare its draft revenue and capital budgets pending further consideration of the consultation responses by an informal group of cabinet. This process is underway.
- 1.3 With regard to the budget, Cabinet has been considering existing spending provisions and new requests for future years within Star Chamber throughout the year. This process is still at its formulative stage and no draft proposals are currently available. The first draft revenue and capital budgets are currently being prepared and will be available for Cabinet's January meeting to be considered alongside any proposals from Star Chamber and the provisional grant settlement information.

2 **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 2.1 The policy framework is the collection of Plans and Strategies that can only be approved or amended by full Council. The process for updating these was agreed by Cabinet at the meeting on 24 July 2007. In respect of the Policy Framework documents that are not finance-related, that meeting reaffirmed the delegation of responsibility to the appropriate individual Cabinet members for the review of these documents within the Performance Review Team meetings and for bringing forward amendments.
- 2.2 The plans and strategies that are not finance-related and included in the Policy Framework are set out below with the latest update position and any recommendations for amendment. In most cases the plans and strategies are medium or long-term documents that do not need fundamental changes on an annual basis and where appropriate, any recommendations for changes would only be minimal.

- Community Strategy - Cllr Mace

The Community Strategy - "A Vision for 2020" - was published in April 2004 and subsequently adopted by Council as part of its Policy Framework. The Strategy is being delivered through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and its associated 'Building Blocks, and more recently, as part of the wider delivery of the Lancashire Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The first review of the Strategy is underway and due to be completed early in the New Year. As part of the consultation process, political groups within the council were invited to make representations as appropriate and the deadline for this has now passed.

As part of agreeing the new, refreshed, Sustainable Community Strategy, the LSP Executive will agree a draft for referral to the council for their approval. It is hoped that this will be completed before 31st March 2008. It is important however, that the council keeps abreast of developments to ensure that the Council's own Corporate Plan is consistent with the objectives and priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, and this position is being monitored.

It is also important to note that the County Council is undertaking a refresh of its own LSP Community Strategy – Ambition Lancashire 2005/2025 – and also consulting on the development of a new Local Area Agreement. The council is contributing to this process and the situation is being monitored to again ensure that the council's Corporate Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy are consistent with these countywide strategies.

- Community Safety Partnership Strategy - Cllr Blamire

The Community Safety Partnership, a building block of the LSP, redrafted its 2005-2008 Strategy only last year with only minor amendments to its priorities. However, there is a need to ensure that the strategy is in line with the priorities and targets included in the Lancashire Local Area Agreement (LAA). The position is being monitored and it progresses.

- Sustainability Strategy – Cllr Whitelegg
- Climate Change Strategy – Cllr Barry

The Sustainability (LA21) Strategy “Agenda for Action” was published in July 2003 and subsequently adopted by Council as part of its Policy Framework. Its themes of sustainable development, social inclusion and community cohesion link strongly with the Community Strategy and are managed through the Sustainability Building Block. The Council is also developing its own Climate Change Strategy through a Cabinet Liaison Group and hopes to have a draft available early in the New Year for consideration by Cabinet. Elements of this with resource implications will be considered as part of the budget exercise.

- Housing Strategy – Cllrs Gilbert/Kerr

Council, at its meeting on 8th February 2006, approved the 2005/9 five year Housing Strategy. There are no amendments recommended at this stage

- Local Development Framework - formerly the Local Plan - Cllr Blamire

The various constituent parts of LDF continue to be developed and have informed the budget and policy framework update where relevant. The Core Strategy has been submitted (the first one in the North West) and work is continuing on the other documents in line with the agreed timetable

- Regeneration Strategy – Cllrs Bryning & Archer

The previous Economic Regeneration Strategy has been replaced by the Lancaster & Morecambe Vision which has been produced by the Vision Board and adopted by the Council as its Economic Strategy at its meeting on 12th July 2006. The vision has informed the review of the community strategy and is one of the building block strategies delivered through the LSP. The Vision will be reviewed every two years and no amendments are required at this time to the Economic Strategy.

- Corporate Plan - Cabinet

The Corporate Plan brings together all the Council’s strategic priorities and objectives set out in the other documents included in the policy framework and listed above. Its content drives the allocation of resources that are included in the budget and capital programme and service business plans. The basis of the plan will once again be to combine the strategic district-wide aspirations set out in the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy with the specific priorities of the Council bringing these together under a number of key objectives. It is these key objectives and priorities that will guide the Council’s work and investment over the next three years.

At the time of writing this report, the plan is still at a very early stage in its preparation and can only be finalised once Council has agreed its budget and developed performance management targets. This is scheduled for later in March.

As referred to earlier in the report, the consultation exercise on the Corporate Plan's objectives and priorities ended on November 2nd and was briefly considered at the November cabinet meeting. At that meeting, cabinet noted the responses received to date, and agreed that a small informal group of cabinet members should meet to consider the consultation responses in detail with a view to bringing back recommendations to Cabinet. The Group is due to meet on December 13th with recommendations being reported back to the January Cabinet meeting.

As a further part of the consultation process, the Leader will outline the Cabinet's budget and policy framework proposals to a special open meeting of the Budget & Performance Panel that will meet on 29th January to which all members of the Council, the Local Strategic Partnership Executive, and Economic Stakeholders Forum representatives will be invited.

- 2.3 Cabinet members are asked to note the progress made in respect of the Policy Framework documents and the arrangements in place to develop them further where appropriate.

3 BUDGET PREPARATION

Work is underway in preparing a base revenue budget and updated capital programme for future years but will not be available for this Cabinet meeting. The Local Government Finance Settlement and other key information are expected to be available after the production of this agenda. Where possible, however, outline budget updates will be fed into the Star Chamber meetings to be held before Christmas (and therefore made available to all Cabinet Members).

4 DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A public consultation exercise has been undertaken in respect of the draft Cabinet priorities and the responses are being used to bring forward recommendations. These recommendations for the Corporate Plan and the draft budget proposals will be the subject of a further limited consultation culminating in a presentation by the Leader of the Council to a public meeting of the Budget & Performance Panel on 29th January.

5 OPTIONS AND OPTIONS ANALYSIS

- 5.1 **Option 1** is to note the progress to date in respect of reviewing and updating the budget and each of the policy framework documents.
- 5.2 **Option 2** is to agree an alternative course of action in respect of these.

6 OFFICER PREFERRED OPTION

- 6.1 **Option 1** is the preferred option.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The agreed budget and policy framework timetable requires Cabinet to agree its preferred priorities, set out in the Corporate Plan, and aligned budget proposals for further consultation prior to consideration by full Council in February. This report highlights the progress made to date.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK	
This report sets out the process for updating the Policy Framework and budget in line with the agreed procedure and timetable.	
CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)	
None arising from this report although each of the specific documents will cover each of these aspects.	
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	
None arising from this report.	
SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS	
The s151 Officer has no further comments to add.	
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
Legal Services have been consulted and have no comments to add.	
MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS	
The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no additional comments.	
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None.	