

Committee: CABINET

Date of meeting: 19 November 2008

Subject:	Vision and Top Priorities 2009-11
Lead Officer:	Head of Organisational Improvement
Portfolio Holder:	Leader – Councillor Roy Taylor
Link to Council Priorities:	All
Exempt information:	None
Delegated status:	For recommendation to Council on 3 rd December, 2008
Key decision:	Not applicable

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The report outlines the draft top priorities for 2009-11, which have been developed following extensive consultation. Cabinet are asked to give consideration to the findings from the consultation and the revised version of the Top Priorities.

Following consideration of the responses received from the consultation the following Top Priorities 2009-11 have been developed. Outlined below are a revised version of the Top Priorities:

- Commitment to value for money
- Commitment to our community
- Commitment to staff
- Commitment to ~~service delivery~~ **better services for our residents**
- **Commitment to the environment**

Cabinet will recall that each year flagship activities are agreed. They provide a snapshot of the key activities we will undertake in 2009-10 to support our Top Priorities. They help to define what we mean by our Top Priorities. Their achievement will be an important measure in assessing our success. Outlined in the report are examples of activities which are proposed for 2009-10.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (A) THE RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED TOP PRIORITIES (2009-11) BE NOTED; AND**
- (B) THE PROPOSED VISION AND TOP PRIORITIES (2009-11) BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL FOR AGREEMENT AND INCORPORATED INTO OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS FOR 2009-10 (PARAGRAPHS 15 & 16).**

REPORT:

1. Cabinet will recall that as part of our overall strategic planning cycle during June/July of every year, we undertake a review of our Vision and Top Priorities for the Borough, develop our rolling financial strategy and review our asset

management plan and capital strategy. This is an important process that links our business planning aspirations with our budget setting process so that we ensure that we can match our means and plans.

2. The purpose of this report is to ensure that our Vision and Top Priorities continue to reflect the Council's priorities and those of the communities of the Borough. It is important to reappraise our priorities so that we can ensure that the Council's resources are effectively matched.
3. One of the key characteristics of high performing authorities is that the executive Members focus on necessary change and continuous improvement. An integral part of this approach is to set corporate priorities in order to make significant progress towards the achievement of the approved long-term objectives.
4. As an excellent authority we have already demonstrated that we have the key components in place to support this, particularly in terms of the Cabinet and Council being clear about our priorities and objectives. However, there is no room for complacency and we must ensure that we continue to refine our approach to identifying our Top Priorities in the context of our longer term Vision and to ensure that they cascade effectively throughout the organisation and, crucially, are mirrored in, and supported by, our Financial Strategy, Asset Management Plan and Capital Programme.

5. **Vision 2008-2013 and Top Priorities 2009-11**

In 2008 the Council adopted a new Vision for the Council and, following a light touch review during June 2008, it is suggested that this Vision remains valid for 2009-11.

6. For the purposes of the consultation process the following Top Priorities were used:
 - a commitment to effective service delivery;
 - a commitment to value for money;
 - a commitment to our community; and
 - a commitment to our people.

These were the priorities which were agreed at the meeting in July for further consultation.

7. The development of the Top Priorities is based on a review of the following data sources:
 - Elmbridge Sustainable Community Strategy: 2006 to 2015
 - Financial strategy
 - The Council's Corporate Plan, Service Delivery Plans and Performance Indicator information
 - National legislative requirements or changes
 - Consultation feedback from public, stakeholders and service users (and non-users)

- Surrey-wide Local Area Agreement
- Census data
- Performance data 2001/02 to 2007/08 (national and local performance indicators)
- Policy trends – national, regional and local
- Results of internal reviews (Value For Money)

8. Consultation process

During August to October 2008 a variety of consultative processes and activities were undertaken to seek views and opinions as to whether the proposed Top Priorities 2009-11 for the Council are supported by the wider community and stakeholders. These included:

- Consultation with the Residents' Panel (Sept 2008);
- Consultation via the Council's Business Panel (Sept 2008);
- Web consultation (Sept 2008);
- Questionnaire placed on the IMPACT (young persons) website (Oct 2008);
- Workshops with Members of the Staff Panel (Sept 2008);
- Report and presentation to the Member Employee Advisory Group (Oct 2008); and
- Consultation with the Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Oct 2008)

9. Results of Consultation with the Residents Panel and Business Panel

As part of this years consultation activities a self-completion survey was sent out to the entire Resident's Panel of 1268 residents. In total, 737 panel members responded to the survey. This represents a response rate of 58%.

All four top priorities were considered by the vast majority of residents to be a high or medium priority. However, the highest priority was 'A commitment to Value For Money - ensuring that we spend your money in the ways that best improves local lives' (89%), followed by 'A commitment to Service Delivery - ensuring that we deliver the things that we say we are going to' (77%).

As part of this years consultation activities a self-completion survey was sent out to the entire Business Panel of 205 businesses. In total, 42 panel members responded to the survey. This represents a response rate of 20%.

Also all four Top Priorities were considered by the vast majority of businesses to be a high or medium priority. However, the highest priority was 'A commitment to Value For Money - ensuring that we spend your money in the ways that best improves local lives' (88%), followed by 'A commitment to Service Delivery - ensuring that we deliver the things that we say we are going to' (76%). The other two priorities ('A commitment to service delivery - putting you, our customers, at the heart of everything we do' and 'A commitment to our people - ensuring that we have the right people to deliver excellent services to you'), whilst still a high priority, was slightly less so for the Business Panel.

Top priorities: residents' views

The table below shows the percentage of residents that view a priority as high, medium or not a priority.

Priorities	High Priority	Medium Priority	Not a priority	Don't Know
A commitment to Service – Putting you, our customers at the heart of everything we do	74%	23%	2%	1%
A commitment to Value For Money – Ensuring that we spend your money in ways that best improves local lives	89%	10%	1%	0%
A commitment to delivery – Ensuring that we deliver the things that we say we are going to do	77%	20%	2%	1%
A commitment to our people – Ensuring that we have the right people to deliver excellent services to you	71%	27%	1%	1%

Top priorities: business views

The table below shows the percentage of businesses that view a priority as high, medium or not a priority.

Priorities	High Priority	Medium Priority	Not a priority	Don't Know
A commitment to Service – Putting you, our customers at the heart of everything we do	59%	39%	2%	-
Commitment to Value For Money – Ensuring that we spend your money in ways that best improves local lives	88%	10%	2%	-
A commitment to delivery – Ensuring that we deliver the things that we say we are going to do	76%	22%	2%	-
A commitment to our people – Ensuring that we have the right people to deliver excellent services to you	61%	34%	5%	-

A number of general issues were raised by respondents to this survey and a summary of these are as follows:

- Training people to be more environmentally friendly, i.e. recycling, taking responsibility.
- Maintaining environment in a sustainable way.

10. **Results of Website Consultation**

A questionnaire was put on the Council's website between September and October 2008. Feedback on the proposed Top Priorities has indicated that, there was general support for the Vision and Top Priorities. Overall, the results were similar to those received by the Residents' Panel.

11. **Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

A report was presented to the Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 October 2008 and the following comments were received:

- The Committee was not supportive of the terminology of 'customers' being used. It was suggested that 'residents' or 'community' may be a preferable term
- Include something under Value for Money about better Use of Resources
- Committing to our community statement should be supported by a statement of "putting our residents first while seeking (not including a reference to the Council Tax) VFM
- Should not have as a priority recruiting more volunteers. Consideration should be given to 'supporting volunteers' and 'facilitating volunteers'
- Value for Money is management speak should be something like a commitment to spending money wisely
- The reference to procurement should include something like "save money through better procurement". Procurement should also include improved services for the same money
- Change the priority of commitment to service delivery to: "Commitment to better services for our residents"
- Commitment to our staff should be changed to: "Commitment to quality staff"
- Overall general support for the four priorities
- Does ensuring 40% of our performance indicators are in the top quartile suggest that we are securing Value For Money

A number of these specific comments have been included in the revised version which is outlined below (**paragraphs 15 & 16**).

12. **Results of consultation with young people**

A questionnaire was placed on the IMPACT website and 20 responses have been received.

A summary of the findings are as follows:

Priorities	High Priority	Medium Priority	Not a priority	Don't Know
A commitment to Service – Putting you, our customers at the heart of everything we do	95%	5%	-	-
Commitment to Value For Money – Ensuring that we spend your money in ways that best improves local lives	90%	10%	-	-
A commitment to delivery – Ensuring that we deliver the things that we say we are going to do	74%	21%	5%	-
A commitment to our people – Ensuring that we have the right people to deliver excellent services to you	63%	37%	-	-

13. Results of consultation with the Staff Panel

A consultation workshop was held with Staff Panel Members in September 2008. Feedback from the Panel indicated broad support for the proposed Top Priorities 2009-11. The following comments were made:

- Commitment to our 'people' – this needs to be qualified as to whether this is referring to our residents or staff; and
- Four priorities was thought to be about right.

14. Results of consultation with the Member Employee Advisory Group

A paper outlining the Top Priorities for 2009-11 was also presented to the Member Employee Advisory Group. Members of the Advisory Body supported the aims of the Top Priorities, but had expressed some minor concerns with regard to some of the wording used within the categories. The feedback from the Member Employee Advisory Group was that:

- They were not supportive of the terminology of 'customers' being used. It was suggested that 'residents' or 'community' may be a preferable term.

15. How this information has been used

Following consideration of the responses received from the consultation the following Top Priorities 2009-11 have been developed (the bold sections below indicate the changes which have been suggested by the various consultees):

- Commitment to value for money
- Commitment to our community
- Commitment to staff
- Commitment to ~~service delivery~~ **better services for our residents**
- **Commitment to the environment**

16. Flagship Activities

Cabinet will recall that each year flagship activities are agreed. They provide a snapshot of the key activities we will undertake in 2009-10 to support our Top Priorities. They help to define what we mean by our Top Priorities. Their achievement will be an important measure in assessing our success. Outlined below are examples of activities which are proposed for 2009-10.

(The items that are in 'bold' or have been 'crossed out' below are suggestions which have come about as a result of the consultation which has taken place.)

Top priority	Flagship Activities
Commitment to value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make better use of our assets • Secure a top rating for our Use of Resources • Ensure 40% of our performance is in the top quartile • Save money through better procurement by getting more for less
Commitment to our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting our residents customers first but while keeping Council Tax as low as possible • Support the local economy by launching a Civic Improvement Fund • Protect our vulnerable people by recruiting more volunteers
Commitment to our staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement phase one of the outcome of the market pay review • Implement a talent management strategy to support key staff • Introduce a new HR and payroll IT system
Commitment to service delivery better services for our residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce "Enhanced Bin Collection" across the Borough • Take on the management of grass cutting across the Borough to improve the service • Improve housing opportunities through Choice Based Lettings • Improve leisure facilities by opening a new synthetic turf pitch in Walton
Commitment to the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Climate Change Action Plan • Implement an energy consumption monitoring system across all Elmbridge's property portfolio • Reduce energy consumption in the Civic Centre by 10% by April 2010

17. Next Steps

Following consideration by Cabinet and adoption by Council, the Vision and Top Priorities will be used by Officers to develop the Corporate Plan for 2009-10, which will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committees in January 2009 and considered by Cabinet and Council in February 2009.

Financial implications:

Any financial implications will be dealt with through the normal planning/budget setting process.

Environmental/Sustainability Implications:

The Vision outlines an aim which recognises the importance of the Council in providing a community leadership role in promoting environmental sustainability.

Legal implications:

None

Equality Implications:

The Vision and Top Priorities support the Council's role in promoting equalities issues. The Vision refers directly to the importance of being inclusive and promoting and looking after the needs of vulnerable groups.

Risk Implications:

It is essential that the Council has a vision and is clear about our priorities. It is essential that a high performing organisation is clear about its Direction of Travel over the coming years in order to continue with the success.

Community Safety Implications:

The Vision and Top Priorities demonstrate the Council's commitment to making Elmbridge a safe place in which to live and work.

Principal Consultees:

Corporate Management Board
Head of Legal
Head of Finance

Background papers:

Corporate Plan 2008-09

Enclosures/Appendices:

None

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