

Annex 1.

Comments of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

The Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee met on 23rd February to consider the draft Corporate Plan. VAP's comments, organised into a note covering 14 points, were very useful and have helped to clarify several points in the plan.

The Corporate Plan has significantly reduced the number of measures attached to each of the priorities. Last year's plan had 53 measures; this year's plan has 20. While no measures have been lost, they have been allocated according to a hierarchy. Measures that reflect our corporate strategic ambitions appear in the Corporate Plan. Measures that are more obviously service-related appear in Service Plans.

General Comments

1. The CP lacks a concise view of how it fits within the strategic drive of the Council i.e. the "golden thread" or line of sight through frameworks, strategies, service plans and performance appraisals. The expectation is not of a long laboured description but a concise outline to the reader of its place, status and delivery

Response. The Corporate Plan sets out the strategic drive of the Council over the next four years. It is the Council's key strategic document and it is the source of the "golden thread" that flows through to service plans and individual performance appraisals. Additional copy has been inserted into the Foreword from Group Leaders to reflect this.

This plan explains that the external frameworks and partnership strategies that previous Corporate Plans have fitted within – although still very important to the Council – are being deprived of statutory force. A diagram to reflect these strategic arrangements has been inserted in the *Working with Others* section.

2. The CP year coming to an end outlined a number of delivery targets and promised ("we will") actions by 2013. Whilst accepting that this CP is about the future there should be either under each object or as a separate section:
 - Outcomes against each target for 10/11 with a link to a target for 11/12 if that is appropriate

- A look at forward promises made for March 2013 either linking these to a target in 11/12 or an explanation for the removal or changing of the target if this is the case

Response. Year-end results for 2010-2011 targets are not yet available. These will be reported in the usual way to City Executive Board in July. That report will include information on forward promises made for March as requested in the second bullet point above. The Council's annual report will also be published in July. This will be published in *Your Oxford* and on our website. In future we plan to publish six-monthly progress reports.

A vibrant, sustainable economy

3. In the introductory comments made to this section there is no mention of the significant difficulties in deprived communities around education and skills. These difficulties mean that residents in our deprived wards are economically excluded and as growth becomes more high tech and high brow this exclusion becomes deeper. This is recognised in the Regeneration Framework. In essence the economic drive missing here is for the City Council to use its influence and partnership working to lever support for up skilling and "work readiness" amongst pupils, from those high tech high brow companies wishing to make Oxford or Oxfordshire their base

Response. Agreed, and additional copy has been inserted into that section.

4. The measure reflecting visitor numbers does not reflect our corporate ambition. This is to improve the quality of the "tourism offer" and keep as many of the economic benefits of that within the City. This needs recasting

Response. As discussed in the scrutiny meeting, we agree that this measure does not fully reflect our corporate ambitions. Michael Crofton-Briggs and the tourism staff believe, however, that it is the best measure currently available.

5. The final measure needs to reflect in a more focused way our aim to support people from deprived communities. For example rather than apprenticeships and capital investment project generally we should be looking at positive action to support youngsters from deprived communities into apprenticeships and measuring how we achieve against this.

Response. Agreed. We will use our procurement processes to leverage the positive action set out above. We will do this by using the 'added value' questions in the tender, which can relate to apprenticeships and employment of people from deprived areas of the city. In future tenders we will add a clause to the contract referencing "a KPI agreed with the

supplier prior to contract execution" that will enable us to measure achievement.

Meeting Housing Need

6. Whilst the Core Strategy is mentioned the Housing Strategy and the changes in Housing Finance aren't. Both of these will be a focus for the coming year and beyond with the new Housing Strategy providing our policy response to change and housing finance changes having significant effect within our budgets and delivery potential. Some of these significant strategy responses need to be converted to performance measures

Response. The new Housing Strategy, which will provide our policy response to changes in housing finance is being developed over the coming year and will, in due course, result in performance measures. It is too early for these measures to appear in this Corporate Plan.

7. It is not clear why the number of affordable homes target has been dropped as a corporate drive

The number of affordable homes to be delivered over the next 2 years (2011/12 and 2012/13) is going to be low – around 250 - as a direct result of the impact of the recession in the construction industry in 2008/09. We have delivered against target for 2009/10 and 2010/11 for affordable homes as schemes were in development or plans well advanced and financed when the recession hit. The main focus of the council for delivery of new affordable homes in the short and medium term is going to be in the Barton development so this is being prioritised as an area for corporate focus.

Strong Active Communities

8. It is recognised that we must provide for better and broader engagement and influence by our communities. One of the main focuses for our Communities Development and Regeneration Team is to do exactly this. We need to have a measure that allows us to see how successful we are in this area through the mechanisms we put in place and the outcomes we achieve

Response: The Communities Development and Regeneration Team will be developing these measures, which will appear in their Service Plan.

9. Some of the key targets within the "breaking the cycle of deprivation" programme should be elevated to the corporate plan level to recognise their importance in bringing about sustainable change and allowing a broader public view of progress and achievement.

Response: Key targets within the “breaking the cycle of deprivation” programme are reported to CEB annually. Highlights from this report will be published in the Annual Report.

A cleaner, greener city

10. It is not clear why we do not have a corporate recycling target. This was 50% - in the last CP and our ambitions are beyond this. This target has a high public, corporate and partnership profile so should be here

Response. The Council’s recycling target – contained within the Direct Services service plan - is to maintain 50% in 2011/12 and to increase this to 53% by 2014/15. Tim Sadler feels strongly that, the amount of waste sent to landfill per household per annum is at the top of the waste hierarchy and is the measure that should be included in the Corporate Plan. However, the recycling target does have a high public priority and copy has been added to the relevant section in the Corporate plan stating what the target is. The Annual Report will report on this measure in addition to the new Corporate Plan measure.

11. Environmental targets such as “satisfaction with the cleanliness of our streets” and others are not best judged by a Panel. We would suggest that these are reworked within this objective and given to Area Forums to judge outcomes for their areas

Response: The Council’s consultation officer will be working with the Area Forums to agree a way of achieving this.

12. The Carbon management and reduction theme should be built through all areas of the plan

Response: Agreed, and the Corporate Plan has been amended to reflect this.

Efficient and effective Council

13. The main efficiency drive of the council is through our agreed budget and the effectiveness drive is detailed in service improvement outcomes in the Council 2012 programme and fundamental service reviews. These are mostly all mentioned in the preamble but not converted to measures. These are key service deliverables leading to the delivery of key corporate objectives so the measures here should be rethought to reflect these improved outcomes for service users

Response: The Corporate Plan has been amended to reflect this.

Working with others

14. It is agreed that the national, regional and county picture of partnership working is in flux. The CP is about our drive and priorities for our City

some of which is delivered by others or in partnership with others. Rather than have a section that simply says a group exists but we don't know what will happen, it would be more positive to detail from the City's point of view:

- If we believe the current partnership is fit for purpose
- What we would hope to achieve in the various areas from partnership working
- If there are areas where new or expanded partnership working is needed

In short what we aim to achieve for the City from the various partnerships that exist or maybe don't exist

Response: The Corporate Plan has been amended to reflect this.

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