

**STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS 2010/2011
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: ALL

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES: ALL

1.0 WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO COMMITTEE

- 1.1 To apprise Committee of the proposals for the Strategic Planning Process 2010/2011 and the role of the Committee in the Process.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The council undertakes an annual Strategic Planning Process to identify service improvement actions that will contribute to the delivery of its improvement priorities, to achieve improved outcomes for Sunderland residents.

- 2.1 The Process is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it is fit for purpose and:

- Focuses on priorities, improving performance, value for money and meeting local needs
- Communicates improvement objectives and priorities
- Focuses on budget planning and service planning activities – supporting the alignment of resources to priorities
- Ensures outcomes are customer focused.

- 2.2 The Process is of particular importance in respect of:

- The integration of the Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP) with the Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025
- Linking the Sunderland Strategy to work plans
- Supporting the council's response to the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)
- Sunderland Way of Working
 - Community Leadership Programme
 - Economic Development and Regeneration
 - Business Improvement Programme
 - Directorate Improvement Programmes

3.0 CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 Council improvement planning is based on the identification of improvement actions in respect of the Corporate Improvement Priorities:

- CIP1: Prosperous City
- CIP 2: Healthy City
- CIP 3: Learning City
- CIP 4: Safe City
- CIP 5: Attractive and Inclusive City
- CIP 6: Customer Focused Services
- CIP 7: One Council

- CIP 8: Efficient and Effective Council
 - CIP 9: Partnership Working
- 3.2 In the past, the Strategic Planning Process commenced in September with completion in March of the following year with the publication of the CIP.
- 3.3 Services identify contributions to the achievement of the Corporate Improvement Priorities in the form of “Actions for Service Improvement”. These are included within the relevant Service Plan, with those of the greatest importance included in the service’s content for the CIP as “Key Actions For Service Improvement”.
- 3.4 During the course of the year Service Plans should be monitored and updated to ensure the achievement of the “Actions For Improvement” and re-prioritise actions based on service requests and changing resources.
- 3.5 The “Key Actions for Service Improvement” also form the basis of “Key Actions for Portfolio Improvement” for each Portfolio. These identify “Areas For Improvement” each Portfolio will address to contribute towards achieving the Corporate Improvement Priorities. Progress towards the achievement of the “Key Actions for Portfolio Improvement” should be monitored during the course of the financial year by the relevant Director and Portfolio Holder, in line with the monitoring of the “Key Actions for Service Improvement”.
- 3.6 In addition to the publication of Service Plans and the CIP the 2009/2010 Strategic Planning Process required each directorate to produce a Directorate Improvement Plan.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 The Strategic Planning Process has a number of strengths including:
- A consistent approach, with all services considering the same factors in their service improvement planning
 - All services undertaking improvement planning at the same time
 - A cyclical approach using each year’s process and outputs to inform the next
 - The alignment of policy and budgetary planning to ensure improvement actions are financially appropriate and that provision is made for them
 - Mapping objectives and actions in support of priorities.
- 4.2 Shortcomings with this approach have proven to be:
- A lack of commitment to and understanding of the Corporate Improvement Priorities
 - A lack of engagement with the Process amongst some Heads of Service and Team Managers
 - The use of the Corporate Improvement Priorities too strategically, resulting in a “bottom-up” approach to improvement planning

- A lack of understanding of the difference between service improvement activity and “business as usual” activity
- The questionable value of the CIP in its current format.

5.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS 2010/2011

5.1 In the light of the above the Strategic Planning Process has been developed to ensure:

- The council identifies a clear set of Corporate Improvement Priorities for 2010/2011
- The Corporate Improvement Priorities reflect the council’s new phase of improvement activity
- The Corporate Improvement Priorities are articulated to better enables services to focus their improvement planning activity
- Improved ownership of and responsibility for the Corporate Improvement Priorities
- Heads of Service are supported to be empowered and accountable for the delivery of improvement activity
- Improvement planning reflects service delivery
- Improvement planning, performance management and improvement programme delivery are more closely aligned
- Improvement planning is understood as an annual process responding and adapting to circumstances during the year
- Improvement planning reflects and links to the council’s area arrangements via Local Area Plans
- Improvement planning takes account of the contents of the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 Thematic Delivery Plans and can influence the council’s contribution to the Delivery Plans via the annual refresh process

5.2 Based on the above, the developments comprise:

- Reconsideration of the Corporate Improvement Priorities to ensure they support the council’s improvement agenda
- The identification of priority themes for each Corporate Improvement Priority to provide greater focus on the issues that the council needs to address,
- The allocation of each Corporate Improvement Priority to a lead officer, to promote ownership and establish accountability
- The development and publication of a Corporate Improvement Planning Framework to describe the council’s key improvement and change actions for each Corporate Improvement Priority
- The publication of a new form of CIP, to achieve greater understanding, strategic corporate ownership of and direction to the council’s improvement priorities
- Service improvement planning will take place on the basis of Head of Service designations, to promote understanding, ownership, and accountability in respect of the delivery of improvement actions
- Service planning by Heads of Service will be informed by a self-assessment to determine the key issues affecting service improvement and the issues for service redesign

- The establishment of an ongoing process of reviewing and updating improvement activity to ensure it remains responsive to needs and challenges, and informs the production of future Service Plans
- The engagement of Portfolio Holders and Scrutiny Committees throughout the Process to ensure their participation in the development and monitoring of the council's improvement priorities
- The production of Portfolio Improvement Programmes to detail how the actions identified in the Service Plans will be delivered and to support existing budgetary and improvement planning links.

6.0 ROLE OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

6.1 It is proposed that the Scrutiny Committees are engaged as part of the preparation of Service Improvement Plans during the Strategic Planning Process 2010/2011 and in their monitoring and review during the course of 2010/2011. This report (and those to the other Scrutiny Committees) forms the first stage in that process:

February/March 2010

Reports to each Scrutiny Committee, detailing:

- Service specific improvement planning details of relevance to each Scrutiny Committee
- Next steps in respect of reporting completed Service Improvement Plans to Scrutiny Committees

April 2010

Reports to each Scrutiny Committee detailing relevant Service Improvement Plans.

June, September, December 2010, March 2011

Reports to each Scrutiny Committee reporting progress and performance (on an exception basis) in respect of service improvement actions of relevance.

7.0 SELF ASSESSMENTS

7.1 As the first stage of the Strategic Planning Process 2010/2011, all Heads of Service have undertaken a self assessment of their service to determine the key issues affecting service improvement and the issues for service redesign.

7.2 Details of the key issues arising from the self assessments of relevance to the Committee will be reported to the meeting.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The new approach in respect of the council's improvement planning process will be adopted for the 2010/2011 Strategic Planning Process, with the view to its refinement and adaptation in due course.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report and the key issues identified by the self-assessments undertaken in respect of services of relevance to the committee.