

DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN – RESPONSES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION O&S COMMITTEE – 16 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 39. CORPORATE PLAN 2012/13

In accordance with Council minutes 77 and 78 (12 December, 2011), the Committee considered those parts of the Corporate Plan within its remit. The Committee had also had sight of a motion which had been referred to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees by the Council at its meeting on 12 December, 2011 (minute 76 refers) and which was considered in connection with the Corporate Plan.

The Draft Corporate Plan and report of the Chief Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December were considered by the Committee and the Chair invited comments from the Committee.

Responding to comments from Members, the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning stated that the Corporate Plan would have targets and these would be expanded on in more detail in the Departmental Plan. There would be measures in place for ongoing monitoring.

Members made the following suggestions for inclusion in the Corporate Plan:

- Addressing child poverty needs to be one of the main priorities. The Chair confirmed that the Working Group on Child Poverty would report to this Committee as well as to the Children and Young People O&S Committee.
- Housing – Make one of the targets around the issue of affordable housing and mortgage support schemes for first time buyers.
- ‘Improve access to employment and skills....’ - there was a need to be more specific with an emphasis on level 3 attainment in apprenticeship schemes and at least a level 2 in functional skills regarding employment readiness.
- ‘Position Wirral as a leading, vibrant global location....’ – need to refer to being committed to the Liverpool City Region and Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- Wirral Waters – there was a need to plan for the effects on existing retail and industrial areas of activity in the peripheral parts of Birkenhead which could suffer rather than just rely on a ‘trickle down’ effect from the Wirral Waters developments and make sure these areas benefit too.
- Retail – some centres are under stress and there was a need to plan ahead for interventions.
- The current draft plan gave no indication of the targets reached from the previous years’ plan and there was a need for headline priorities with start and end dates through a three year cycle with budgeting year on year.
- Looking at the phraseology used such as, ‘Ensuring that our young people have excellent skills and opportunities into employment,’ this could be phrased, ‘Ensuring that our young people have the best qualifications for whatever employment they want to go into...’

- ‘Continuing to improve our relationships with the private sector....’ – could these sectors be listed?
- Need for a measure of those co-ordinated resources for all business support services through Invest Wirral.
- ‘An increasing role for social enterprises in Wirral’s economy’ should be shown as a percentage.
- Wirral was over-dependent on the public sector for employment opportunities and there was a need for a re-balancing of this.
- There was a need to refer to the growth in the elderly population and the impact of this on every sector.
- Too many units of a certain type of housing stock.
- No sense of which priority was the driving force for the Council.
- No mention of the Council’s public health role, where it would sit within the Council structure and how it would be scrutinised.

The Chair suggested that it was also difficult to view the document in isolation without seeing any budget proposals or the Departmental Plan.

Resolved – That the comments of the Committee be referred to the Cabinet.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING O & S COMMITTEE – 19 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 44. CORPORATE PLAN 2012/13

In accordance with Council minutes 77 and 78 (12 December, 2011), the Committee considered those parts of the Corporate Plan within its remit. The Committee had also had sight of a motion which had been referred to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees by the Council at its meeting on 12 December, 2011 (minute 76 refers) and which was considered in connection with the Corporate Plan.

The Draft Corporate Plan and report of the Chief Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December were considered by the Committee and the Chair invited comments from the Committee.

Responding to comments from Members the Director of Adult Social Services stated that more detail would be provided in a Departmental Plan which would include targets and indicators along with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The Corporate Plan’s aim was to provide a holistic picture of how the Council would meet the needs of its residents in a strategic manner. With regard to criticism of poor quality reports, the Director assured the Committee that this would be addressed and there would be adequate opportunity for the Committee to drill down into issues at whatever level of detail was required.

A Member suggested that if the Plan provided too much detail it would become unwieldy and would be less likely to engage the public.

Members made the following suggestions for inclusion in the Corporate Plan:

- In the goal, 'Enhance the quality of life of the people of Wirral who have care and support needs', the sentence, 'Providing integrated, high quality services.....' should state how this would be measured and therefore how it could be scrutinised.
- Need to mention work carried out with Carers' Associations.
- In the goal on 'safeguarding' there was no mention of the AKA Report, this could be incorporated as an addendum with the actions arising from it.
- There was a need to see where the Department was currently and how it was going to move on.
- There was a need to refer to the Alcohol Scrutiny Review as a reduction in alcohol harm needed to be a target.
- There was a need to refer to the duties that the Council would have under Public Health.
- There was no mention of:
 - Affordability of social care
 - An increasing elderly population
 - Personal Budgets
 - Empowerment
 - Continuing public consultation
- One reference to regaining independence but no reference to retaining independence.

Resolved – That the comments of the Committee be referred to the Cabinet.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 49. CORPORATE PLAN 2012/13

In accordance with Council minutes 77 and 78 (12 December, 2011), the Committee considered those parts of the Corporate Plan within its remit. The Committee had also had sight of a motion which had been referred to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees by the Council at its meeting on 12 December, 2011 (minute 76 refers) and which was considered in connection with the Corporate Plan.

The Draft Corporate Plan and report of the Chief Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December were considered by the Committee and the Chair invited comments from the Committee.

Responding to comments from Members the Acting Director stated that a full draft of the Children and Young People's Departmental Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan for the Children's Trust Board was also being developed and the Corporate Plan was to a template which had been issued across the Council from the Corporate Policy team. Referring to the section, 'Provide early intervention and support for vulnerable children and families', he said he had requested that the sentence, 'Ensuring every child is school ready', should read, 'Working towards ensuring....'

The Chair suggested that there needed to be a section after 'goals' showing measurable targets. One of the strengths of the Corporate Plan was that Child Poverty had its own section to highlight the importance of addressing this issue.

Members made the following comments on the Corporate Plan:

- There needed to be references to foster care and adoption.
- There was no reference to deprivation.
- There was a need to know how things would be measured.
- No reference to further education or higher education.
- There was a vague reference to Sure Start but no mention of enhancement as there had been in the previous year.

It was then moved by Councillor Hayes, seconded by Councillor Povall that –

“This Committee believes that the draft Corporate Plan contains many well meaning sentiments but few tangible targets by which the people of Wirral can scrutinise the progress of their council.”

It was then moved as an amendment by Councillor Dodd, seconded by Councillor W Smith that –

“Cabinet be asked to provide and identify some measurable targets within the Corporate Plan.”

Councillor Hayes agreed to accept this as a friendly amendment and it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – This Committee believes that the draft Corporate Plan contains many well meaning sentiments but few tangible targets by which the people of Wirral can scrutinise the progress of their council. Cabinet be asked to provide and identify some measurable targets within the Corporate Plan.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES O&S COMMITTEE – 30 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 62 CORPORATE PLAN 2012/2013

In accordance with Council minutes 77 and 78 (12 December, 2011), the Committee considered those parts of the Corporate Plan within its remit. The Committee had also had sight of a motion which had been referred to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees by the Council at its meeting on 12 December, 2011 (minute 76 refers) and which was considered in connection with the Corporate Plan.

The Draft Corporate Plan and report of the Chief Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December were considered by the Committee and the Chair sought comments from Members.

A Member made a number of general points in relation to the Corporate Plan and some specific issues that were relevant to the work of the Sustainable Communities

O&S Committee. The Chair also commented that the Corporate Plan lacked detail in relation to specific targets.

On a Motion by Councillor Wilkins and seconded by Councillor Hale, it was –

Resolved (10:0) – That the following comments form the basis of this Committees response to the Corporate Plan –

A. General Points

- (1) There are dozens of priorities that have been either omitted from the current corporate plan or so severely watered down as to be meaningless.
- (2) It shows a loss of commitment to engagement, consultation and involvement – these are scarcely mentioned.
- (3) In particular there is no mention of any annual budget consultation.
- (4) There is no mention of the Strategic Change Programme, or of the need for the Council to change.
- (5) There is no reference to reducing the costs of running the council / bureaucracy.
- (6) There is no reference to delegation or devolved decision making or budgets.
- (7) There is no mention of Area Forums.
- (8) There is no mention of the Voluntary and Community Sector, or of grants.

B. Some Key Issues Relevant to this Committee

- (9) There is no mention of Libraries
- (10) There is no mention of 20mph zones
- (11) There is no mention of Alcohol Harm, despite recent public health reports saying how bad Wirral is for alcohol related hospital admissions and conditions. (Cabinet agreed on 17 March that the recommendation of the Alcohol Scrutiny Review (*Tackling Alcohol Harm*) be picked up in the Corporate Plan).
- (12) There is no mention of Green Technology / Solar Energy. The pledge in the current plan “we will make sure all future Council projects incorporate green technology and sustainable products and urge private developers to do the same” has been deleted.
- (13) There is no mention of Community Justice.

That the Plan contains no detail in relation to targets

COUNCIL EXCELLENCE O&S COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 76 CORPORATE PLAN 2012/2013

In accordance with Council minutes 77 and 78 (12 December, 2011), the Committee considered those parts of the Corporate Plan within its remit. The Committee had also had sight of a motion which had been referred to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees by the Council at its meeting on 12 December, 2011 (minute 76 refers) and which was considered in connection with the Corporate Plan.

The Draft Corporate Plan and report of the Chief Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December were considered by the Committee and the Chair sought the views of Members. He commented also that the Council Excellence O&S Committee had a coordinating role in relation to the overall production of the Corporate Plan and he had requested that the views of the other themed O&S Committees were presented for Members' consideration. The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted the following minutes –

- Minute 39 – Economy and Regeneration O&S (16 January 2012)
- Minute 44 – Health and Well Being O&S (19 January 2012)
- Minute 49 – Children and Young People O&S (26 January 2012)
- Minute 62 – Sustainable Communities O&S (30 January 2012)

The Chair referred to an email he had circulated to Members of the Committee, which contained extracts of the Audit Commission's Corporate Assessments of Wirral from December 2002 and from December 2005, both of which contained comments in relation to the development of the Corporate Plan.

Members expressed a diverse range of views in relation to the Corporate Plan, including –

- That although it is a very important document, it should be more concise.
- That if it does not contain clear and quantifiable targets, it will do nothing to improve performance.
- That the Plan is aspirational and lacks clear targets.
- That the Plan contains no reference to the Strategic Change Programme.

Members commented also –

- That the Corporate Plan is all-encompassing and detailed enough for members of the public to engage with and that there is clear indication of where to access specific more detailed information.
- The Plan should not contain specific targets or high levels of detail, but should give an indication as to the general direction of the Council.
- That, being a 3 Year Plan, it should contain goals for the life of the Plan, rather than targets. Future reports from officers will then include specific targets for the achievement of the goals set out in the Plan.
- That the need for change is clearly set out in the introduction to the Plan

On a motion by Councillor Gilchrist and seconded by Councillor Brighthouse, it was –

Resolved –

- (1) That the comments of the Committee be referred to the Cabinet.**
- (2) That the Council Excellence O&S Committee welcomes the principal of the Corporate Plan as a Statement of the Council's Priorities.**
- (3) That Committee looks forward to the Plan being produced in a more accessible format.**
- (4) That Committee looks forward to targets being provided, in order for the Plan to become a more meaningful document and to allow progress to be measured.**
- (5) That the Committee welcomes the comments contained within the Corporate Plan in relation to poverty.**