

**NEW COUNCIL PLAN
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social Well-Being, Economic Well-Being and Environmental Well-Being have considered a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships proposing a new Council Plan for 2011-2015.

2. COMMENTS

Social Well-Being

- 2.1 Having regard to the outcomes proposed for the “Keep the District clean, provide recycling services and collect rubbish” priority, the Panel has been informed that the target of 45% for the recycling outcome would be revised in advance of the Plan’s submission to the Council as it is regarded as being too low. The Panel also has discussed at length the proposed outcome for household waste and concern at the inferences that might be made from an outcome based on the level of waste generated by each household. In response, the Policy and Strategic Services Manager has informed the Panel that an attempt has been made to identify measures that are meaningful to local residents and that it is not the intention of the Council to measure the level of waste generated by each household. Other matters raised during the Panel’s deliberations on this priority that might merit further consideration include the means by which waste and recycling messages will be communicated to residents within the District, a suggestion that households should be given rewards for achieving recycling and waste targets and the extension of the current service to include recycling other grades of plastic.
- 2.2 Comment has been made on references to the words “providing advice”, “giving advice” and “supporting and encouraging community-led activity” under the activities sections for the priorities relating to “Prevent and deal with homelessness”, “Help vulnerable and disadvantaged people to live independently” and “Support strong communities”. It is felt that these references have implications for the recently approved Budget for 2011/12 and the Medium Term Plan.
- 2.3 In response to questions raised by a Member concerning the proposed measure for the priority relating to “help vulnerable and disadvantaged people to live independently” it has been confirmed that the figure of 240 relates to the number of individuals that will be assisted through the Disabled Facilities Grants scheme.
- 2.4 Having regard to the priority relating to “Encourage new jobs, homes and facilities to meet our needs” comment has been made by a Member on the need to ensure that new homes within the District are built to an acceptable standard. Members are however mindful that quality standards will be managed as part of the Development Management process. In addition, the

Panel has suggested that the means by which employment floor space is calculated should be clarified.

- 2.5 Finally, clarification has been received of the proposed measure relating to the number of homes to be built on land which has previously been developed on for the priority “Safeguard the environment and successfully manage the impacts of growth”. The figure of 29% relates to an existing performance measure for Planning Services.

Environmental Well-Being

- 2.6 The Environmental Well-Being Panel expressed similar views to the Social Well-Being Panel in questioning the targets which had been set with respect to the achievable outcomes for the priority objective to keep the District clean, provide recycling services and collect rubbish. The Panel were of the opinion that residents should be encouraged to generate less than the 550kg of residual waste per household which had been proposed. Members also commented on the acceptable levels of cleanliness and how these would be measured. Strong feelings were expressed about the volume of litter that was deposited by the general public and the need for an emphasis on public education in this respect. In questioning the 45% recycling rate, the Panel was advised that although the Council was already achieving a rate of 50%, recycling rates were falling and the Council would be moving away from aspirational targets. Nevertheless the target was likely to be reviewed before the plan was finalised.
- 2.7 Having regard to the priority relating to supporting strong communities, the Panel suggested that there should be greater clarification of the terminology used to describe the ‘less able’ in need of support in the District.

Economic Well-Being

- 2.8 The Economic Well-Being Panel is of the view that the Council Plan should not be adopted in its current form. Members have indicated that the Vision should be improved such that it recognises the position of the Council, in the terms of the Localism Bill, as a “competent authority”, it should be forward looking and should take account of the Council’s financial circumstances.
- 2.9 Following discussion on the outcomes specified in the Plan, the Panel has concluded that more work is required on them before they can be satisfied that they are appropriate. For example, Members have examined the priority to “Keep the district clean, provide recycling services and collect rubbish”. The Panel has established that currently the Council collects approximately 420kgs of waste on average from each household in the District. The Plan’s target is to encourage residents to create less than 550kgs of waste. Rather than being challenging or maintaining existing performance, this target represents a significant decrease on performance. The Panel has requested clarification of the rationale for the new target.
- 2.10 Further on the same priority, the Panel has commented on the recycling target. Members have recognised that recycling rates are declining but it is argued that if the Council is successful in encouraging residents to produce less waste, the amount of waste that is recycled as a proportion of the total waste produced should actually increase. Moreover, the introduction of glass recycling should have the effect of increasing recycling rates. Finally, on this

priority, the Panel has suggested that clarification is required of the current arrangements for street cleaning.

- 2.11 On the basis of this example and their consideration of the other outcomes, because further work needs to be carried out, the Panel has recommended that the Cabinet should not adopt the Plan. Members suggest that this work should take account of current performance levels, the rationale for the proposed targets, the degree of challenge that they represent, their budget implications (including the proportion of the budget they absorb and the recharges apportioned to them) and a comparison with the Council's other targets which do not appear in the list of priorities. Generally, it is suggested that the Plan should contain progressive targets for its intended four year life. Members have indicated that they are willing to assist with this work.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes and Reports of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on 1st March 2011, Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on 8th March 2011 and Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on 10th March 2011.

**Contact Officers: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
(01480) 388006**

**Mrs C Bulman, Democratic Services Officer
(01480) 388234**

**Mrs A Jerrom, Member Development Officer
(01480) 388009**