

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Head of Finance

REPORT NUMBER G48

**TO: Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship)
Committee and Overview and Scrutiny
(Community Services) Committee**

**DATE OF MEETING 17 July 2007
24 July 2007**

SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING PROCESS AND THE CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2008 ONWARDS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council will develop a 10-year Corporate Plan for 2008 onwards over the course of the 2007/08 financial year. As last year, it is proposed that a Member working group is set up to oversee the development of the Plan. Effective and complementary arrangements for the service and financial planning process are also needed and agreed by the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 The Strategy Committee has proposed that the Service and Financial Planning (SFP) Group includes two Strategy Committee Members this year (in addition to two Members from each Overview and Scrutiny Committee) to achieve a better integrated approach to developing the Corporate Plan and the Council's service and financial planning process.
- 1.3 In addition, it is proposed that one of the Members from each Overview and Scrutiny Committee that serve on the SFP Group be invited to join the Corporate Plan Working Group.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That two Members of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee be appointed to serve on the SFP Group.
- 2.2 That one Member from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees serving on the SFP Group be invited to join the Corporate Plan Working Group.
- 2.3 That the Committees endorse the Strategy Committee's proposal that two Strategy Committee Members serve on the SFP Group,
- 2.4 That the Committees approve the role and activities of the SFP Group in relation to setting the 2008/09 Budget set out in paragraphs 4.10 & 4.11 of the report.

The Committee is able to resolve these matters.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None directly.

4. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

4.1 This report is linked to Significant Business Risk Nos. 7 and 8 – Financial, Performance and Risk Management and the Comprehensive Spending Review:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Seriousness or Impact	Mitigation Measures
A fully financed and resourced Corporate Plan for 2008 onwards is not produced.	Low	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member working groups to be established to develop an integrated Plan and Budget. • A detailed process and timetable for the development of the Plan will be produced and monitored. • Links between the plan and the service and financial planning process will be strengthened.

4. **KEY INFORMATION**

4.1 The Council has a Corporate Plan for 2007/08 to assist the new Council in maintaining momentum on agreed priorities in its first year, whilst at the same time it develops a 10 year Corporate Plan for 2008 onwards, and determines medium and longer-term targets in respect of agreed priorities. This Plan will be drafted within the context of a 20-year vision and the Suffolk Community Strategy currently being developed within the Suffolk Strategic Partnership, of which Babergh is a member.

4.2 Last year a politically represented Member working group was set up by the Strategy Committee to produce the Corporate Plan for 2007/08. This group comprised the Chairman (Conservative) and Vice Chairman (Liberal Democrat) together with an Independent and a Labour Member of the Committee, in addition to the Chairmen of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees. It is proposed that a similar approach be adopted to develop the Council’s 10 year Corporate Plan for 2008-18.

4.3 In tandem with last year’s Corporate Plan arrangements, an SFP Group, consisting of six Members from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, considered the Council’s Corporate Plan, priorities and financial strategy during the formulation of the 2007/08 budget.

4.4 Whilst both groups satisfied their terms of reference, it is felt that integration between the Corporate Plan and Service and Financial Planning Group would improve the overall business planning process. It is suggested that this can be achieved this year by:

- Linking the membership of both groups;
- Both groups jointly giving careful consideration to the process, timetable and key issues in producing the Corporate Plan and budget, both for 2008/09 and for future years.

4.5 Consideration has been given to whether there should be a single Member group responsible for both the development of the Plan and the SFP process. However, given the amount of work

involved in developing a completely new Corporate Plan, and the desire to ensure wide Member involvement and ownership, it is proposed that for 2007/08 the Council continues with two groups, albeit working together to achieve a better integrated approach. It is suggested however, that for future years, we should seek to work through a single Corporate Plan/SFP Group.

4.6 The Strategy Committee agreed at its last meeting that:

- A Corporate Plan Working Group be set up consisting of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Strategy Committee and, in order to give political representation, one Liberal Democrat and one Independent Member of the Strategy Committee.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committees be asked to consider that, instead of three Members from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees forming the SFP Group, it should consist of two Members from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees nominated as far as practicable to give political representation.
- In addition, it is suggested that two of the Strategy Committee Members serving on the Corporate Plan Working Group be invited to join the SFP Group.
- One Member from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees serving on the SFP Group, is invited to join the Corporate Plan Working Group.

4.7 Based on the above, the following nominations to the SFP Group are proposed for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Committee needs to determine which of these Members should serve on the Corporate Plan Group:

Stewardship	Community Services
Jennie Jenkins and John Brand (serving Members last year)	Bryn Hurren (also served last year) One Conservative Member

4.8 The above would ensure continuity but the Committees could, of course, nominate different Members. This should be done to ensure political balance on the following basis;

- 3 Conservative (1 from Strategy Committee already appointed)
- 2 Liberal Democrats (1 from Strategy Committee already appointed)
- 1 Independent

4.9 The Corporate Plan Working Group will be asked to:

- Develop a long-term vision for the Council for the same period (2008-2028) as the Suffolk Community Strategy and complementary to that Strategy;
- Agree a process and timetable to produce a 10 year Corporate Plan for approval by Council in February 2008;
- Consider the suitability of the current corporate priorities, building on the work undertaken at the Members' Seminar on 11 June, and taking into account demographic data, user satisfaction rates and current performance;
- Develop links between the corporate priorities and the Suffolk Community Strategy;
- Agree and deliver appropriate public and other stakeholder consultation during the preparation of the Corporate Plan and throughout the Plan period;
- Ensure that the Council's State of the District Debate on 30 October 2007 is well informed by the work of the Group, including any consultation that has taken place before that date;

- Develop specific actions within the corporate priorities that are financed, resourced and have a timescale;
- Work jointly with the SFP Group to recommend proposals for the creation of a single Corporate Plan/SFP Working Group from 2008/09 onwards.

4.10 Strategy Committee were advised that the role of the SFP Group would be to consider the items listed below. The detailed approach will be determined by the group in line with an overall integrated consultation, Corporate Plan and service and financial planning process.

- Resource allocation to corporate priorities (both revenue and capital);
- Reviewing the Strategic Charging Policy;
- Proposing savings and efficiencies that are required;
- Recommending the proposed Council Tax for 2008/09.

4.11 In addition, the group should consider key issues relating to the production of a new Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan.

4.12 The Group will be heavily involved in the formulation of the 2008/09 Budget at the following stages:-

2007

- August: Review the Medium-Term Financial Strategy including strategic charging policy issues and consider the financial position for 2008/09
- September/October: Start work on the 2008/09 Budget and resource allocation in the light of Corporate Plan priorities. Consider savings, efficiencies and redirection of resources from lower priorities where appropriate
- November/December: Deliver a Budget for 2008/09 with officers that reflects any proposed Corporate Plan changes. Joint meeting of the two O&S Committees on 11 December 2007

4.12 Then, early in 2008, there is the following Member approval process:

- January – Strategy Committee consider Financial Strategy and draft Corporate Plan/Budget for 2008/09
- January/February - Overview and Scrutiny Committees scrutinise proposals
- February – Strategy Committee and Council approve the Corporate Plan and Budget

5. **APPENDICES**

None.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:**

None.

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