

CORPORATE POLICY FRAMEWORK

Accountable Officer and Author: Laura McGillivray (Head of Policy and Communications)
MK 252665

1. **Purpose**

- 1.1 To propose new objectives and priorities for the Council to act as the basis for the Council's performance plan 2000/1.

2. **Summary**

- 2.1 The Council's 5 strategic aims adopted as part of the Local Government reorganisation process proved a useful guide to HOW the Council does things but not WHAT it should do. On the basis of the 2020 Community planning process and a recent public opinion survey, new objectives and priorities are proposed for adoption and incorporation into the Council's performance plan 2000/1.

3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council adopts the objectives and priorities set out in **Annex B** to this report and incorporates them into the Council's performance plan 2000/1.

4. **Background**

4.1 As part of the process for preparing for the new unitary council and the transfer of county council services, a large scale public consultation exercise was carried out to find out what sort of Council people wanted. They said they wanted a Council that was:

- (a) Open
- (b) Accessible
- (c) Integrated

4.2 Five strategic aims were adopted, to underpin the way that the Council worked which acted as a foundation for the Quality Management Framework, corporate, directorate and service planning. These were:

- (a) To work in partnership for the benefit of all the people of Milton Keynes
- (b) To be an open, accessible and consultative organisation
- (c) To tackle disadvantage and promote equality
- (d) To promote a healthy and sustainable environment
- (e) To develop excellence, efficiency and effectiveness across all services

4.3 These aims have been in place for over two years. Although they are a useful guide to HOW the Council should work, they do not say specifically WHAT the Council will do. They have proved to be insufficiently focussed to assist in prioritising the Council's work and in making strategic choices about the Council's future service and financial planning.

4.4 The Local Government Act 1999 required Councils to prepare and publish performance plans by 31st March 2000. Section 6 of the act lays down the matters which must be included in the Performance Plan. These amount to a clear statement about:

- (a) What services an authority will deliver to local people
- (b) How it will deliver them
- (c) To what levels services are currently delivered
- (d) What levels of service the public should expect in the future
- (e) What action it will take to deliver those standards and over what timescale

4.5 Paragraph 45 of the Draft Guidance on Implementing Best Value sets out that plans should include a summary of the authority's objectives in respect of its functions. These will derive from the authority's overall vision and community strategy, and from any corporate planning

processes which give effect to that vision. It will also reflect nationally set objectives, any medium term financial strategy, and identify service priorities

5. **Issues and Choices**

5.1 The Council's objectives and priorities must therefore stem from the needs and wishes of local people and the services that the Council is able or expected to provide, assist or enable on its own or in partnership with other local organisations or individuals.

5.2 **2020 Partnership in Action and Community Planning**

Prior to re-organisation a number of 'key issue' seminars were held. Since then three 2020 Partnership in Action seminars have been held which built upon these themes and local partnership working. These have broadly centred round the following areas:

- (a) Training and support
- (b) Anti-poverty
- (c) Arts and Culture
- (d) City Status
- (e) Crime and Community Safety
- (f) Health Improvement
- (g) Involving Young People
- (h) Lifelong Learning
- (i) Sustainability
- (j) Health and Regeneration
- (k) Transport and its impact
- (l) Regional Government
- (m) Social Cities

These topics broadly reflect the concerns of local organisations, the seminars are well supported and have been the catalyst for a range of local activities.

5.3 **Public Opinion**

The Council has recently commissioned a public opinion poll from NOP to identify the key issues which the Council should regard as priorities. Annex A shows the results. 5 top priorities emerged:

- (a) Reducing Youth Crime
- (b) Improving care and support for older people in their own homes
- (c) Improving standards in schools
- (d) Reducing poverty and discrimination
- (e) Improving public transport

5.4 **District Audit**

A District Audit review of the Council's service and financial planning arrangements noted that "since it became a Unitary Authority, Milton Keynes Council has introduced explicit planning processes, leading to the introduction of:

- (a) the quality management framework
- (b) community plans
- (c) strategic committee plans
- (d) service plans
- (e) a programme of service reviews of major service areas

These features are still developing, notably in the current review of the Council's strategic priorities and the development of multi-year budgeting, and they provided the main focus of our review. " The review concluded that "service and financial planning arrangements are well thought out, soundly based and developing in the right direction to become good practice best value arrangements. However, there is room to improve the relationship between the content of the planning process and what the Council is, in practice, trying to achieve. The Council recognises this issue and is addressing it.

5.5 **Proposed Objectives and Priorities**

Work has been underway to develop new objectives based on the 2020 Community Planning experience and the full range of existing Council services and activities. The objectives should be significant and able to endure for a 10 year period. Priorities should be reviewed from year to year in the light of public opinion, service achievements and political priorities.

Annex B shows the proposed list of objectives and the services, which fall, within the scope of each set against the priorities identified by the public or as part of the political process. If these are agreed, they would drive and shape the Council's Performance Plan, Directorate and Service Plans. The Council's performance in achieving its priorities would be reflected in the 2001/2 Performance Plan.

The draft Performance Plan will be submitted to the Council's Policy & Resources Committee on 1 February 2000. It will then be circulated for consultation and final approval at the Policy & Resources Committee on 29 March 2000. District Audit have agreed to assist the Council by checking the draft Plan prior to final agreement and publication to ensure that it complies with the Act's requirements.

5.6 **Recommendations**

The revised objectives and priorities offer a much sounder basis for future service and financial planning and it is recommended that the Council adopts them and incorporates them into the Performance Plan. As part of the process of preparing the Plan, the aims and values of the Council as set out in the Quality Management Framework will be reviewed and revised.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Environmental

Environmental and equalities implications are contained within the objectives.

6.2 Equalities

None.

6.3 Financial

Financial and service planning must be linked to be effective.

6.4 Legal

The proposals comply with the Local Government Act 1999.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

Staff and accommodation implications are identified as part of the service planning process.

7. **Conclusions**

7.1 The Council's 5 strategic aims adopted prior to the transfer of services to the Unitary Council have proved a useful basis to guide HOW the Council does things but not WHAT it does. On the basis of the 2020 Community Planning process and a recent public opinion survey new objectives and priorities are proposed for adoption and incorporation into the Council's Performance Plan 2000/1.

Background Papers: NOP Survey 1999
Local Government Act 1999
2020 Partnership in Action Conference Report 1999
Quality Management Framework 1998
Service and Financial Planning Audit 1998/99 District Audit