



Meeting **CABINET**

Date **Wednesday 3 May 2006** agenda item number

Report of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Resources

STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE TARGETS

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for a set of targets for the new Strategic Plan 2006-2010.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Council approved the new Strategic Plan "All together better" on 6 April 2006. The Plan contains twenty nine commitments arranged into five themes. These are:

Safer Stronger
Healthier
Learning Earning
Cleaner Greener
Travel and Access

- 2.2 The Plan also set out three Principles and Values for "Improving the way we work". These are:

Putting our customers at the heart of everything we do
Being a civic leader, helping to develop strong communities across the County
Delivering excellent but affordable public services

- 2.3 In order to measure the County Council's progress in relation to these commitments, principles and values it is proposed that the Council adopt a set of targets for the end of the Strategic Plan period March 2010.

- 2.4 The County Council's previous Strategic Plan "Building a Future" 2001-2005 contained 40 targets. At the end of the period twenty three targets were fully achieved and a further five were within 10%. Overall this meant that 70% of the targets were achieved fully or within 10%.

3.0 Strategic Plan targets setting

3.1 The targets will perform a number of functions

- a) They convert the commitments of the Strategic Plan into measurable form making clear the Council's intentions and ambition
- b) They enable progress throughout the four year period of the plan to be measured and monitored
- c) They enable the effectiveness of developments to be assessed and for changes to be made if these developments are not having the desired effect

3.2 It is important to stress that targets are not predictions of what will be achieved. Rather they express in specific form the aims and intentions of the organisation. In this way they help to direct effort and resources to those issues that are most important. For this reason they need to be aspirational and stretching as well as achievable. While every effort will go toward achievement it is unlikely that this will be accomplished in all cases. It is therefore important to appreciate the value of working towards a target even when it is not fully achieved.

3.3 The broad aspirations of the Council in the Strategic Plan mean that many of the outcomes the Council seeks to achieve involve contributions from other partners and some are well outside the Council's direct influence. This situation is consistent with the Council's commitment to the Community Strategy. The Local Area Agreement and Community Strategy Delivery Plan will support the joint approach to working with partners towards these targets.

3.4 In setting targets the following considerations have been taken into account:

- a) Each target should reflect as strongly as possible the Strategic Plan commitment they relate to.
- b) As far as possible targets will measure the impact and outcome of the Council's action on the community and customers and not just the inputs that the Council makes.
- c) Each target should be measurable at a reasonable frequency. In some circumstances this will be only on an annual basis but where possible measurement will be quarterly
- d) Information on targets will be timely and be available reasonably soon after the period to which it relates.
- e) Targets should be stretching but achievable.

- f) Care has been taken to avoid perverse incentives; circumstances where efforts to achieve the target might run counter to the broader intention of the Plan.

3.5 It is recognised, however, that targets can have limitations.

- a) Targets can only be set where there is something to measure. It is often much easier to measure inputs than to assess the outcome of a particular service. So the choice of the measure and target may involve some compromise.
- b) The Council is seeking extensive improvements for the county through the plan and its commitments. Targets, however, are by their nature more precise and specific so they may not fully reflect the breadth of the commitment they relate to.
- c) Predicting four years ahead is difficult at any time and currently the Council faces major uncertainties. Target setting cannot therefore be a precise activity. Changes outside the control of the Council can significantly alter the possibility of achieving a target. For this reason it is intended to review the targets on an annual basis.

4.0 Strategic Plan Performance Management

4.1 The targets will provide the basis for performance management of the Strategic Plan. Information on each of the targets will be gathered as frequently as possible and the information kept on the PRIDE Performance Management System. This information can be consulted at any time through the County Council's intranet. Information on PRIDE will be accompanied by a commentary which should comment on remedial action being taken where performance is falling behind target.

4.2 Wherever possible, information will be gathered quarterly and a report will be given to Executive Briefing. Every six months a progress report will go to Cabinet and Council and a full report will be produced for Cabinet and Council annually. The performance against the Strategic Plan targets will also be reported through the Annual Performance Plan published at the end of June each year.

4.3 Part of the annual report will include a review of the targets to assess:

- a) whether achievement of the target is still realistic in the light of current circumstances
- b) whether the targets are still a good reflection of the Council's priorities.

5.0 Proposed Targets

5.1 The proposed targets together with the commitments to which they relate are contained in appendix 1 which is to follow.

6.0 Statutory and Policy Implications

6.1 This report has been compiled after consideration of the implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, crime and disorder and those using council services. The County Council's Strategic Plan expresses its commitments in relation to these matters and its targets will assist in achieving demonstrable improvement.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that Cabinet

- a) approve the Strategic Plan targets as proposed
- b) approve the arrangements for reporting, monitoring and review.

Director of Resources' Financial Comments (MB)

The cost of producing the Annual Performance Plan can be met from the budget for Performance within the Chief Executives Department.

Head of Legal Services Comments

The decision to approve the Strategic Plan taken by the council on 6th April 2006 provided that the consideration and approval of targets relating to the Strategic Plan would be delegated to the Cabinet. Accordingly, the Cabinet has the power, if it is so minded, to approve these recommendations. (PTW 10/04/2006).

Councillor David Kirkham
Leader of the Council

Councillor John Stocks
Cabinet Member for Resources

Background Papers available for inspection

Nil

Electoral Divisions Affected

All

