

**DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2011 (071220/CAB003)**

**To:** Cabinet

20 December 2007

**Main Portfolio Area:** Leader of the Council

**Author of report:** Nazeya Hussain, Head of Community & Corporate Planning

**Classification:** Non-Exempt

**Ward:** All

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**Executive Summary**

The Strategic Plan 2008-2011 builds on the 2007-2010 Plan and sets out the Council's approach to delivering its corporate priorities. The Plan outlines a number of strategic objectives and key performance indicators, which, together, underpin the design, and delivery of council services, the prioritisation and allocation of resources and the achievement of value for money.

The priorities outlined in the attached draft Strategic Plan will provide the context in which the Council will seek to underpin the transition to the new National Performance Framework. In particular the Strategic Plan seeks to:

- Strengthen medium-term planning;
- Establish a clear vision for the Council to deliver its commitments in the new Community Plan;
- Inform and support the proposed Council-wide CPA re-assessment in 2008.

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**Corporate Priorities**

The draft Strategic Plan 2008-11 supports the Council in meeting all its corporate priorities and commitments.

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**Report status**

For recommendation to Overview and Scrutiny and, ultimately, full Council.

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**Route to Implementation/Timetable:**

The Strategic Plan is the key document, which sets out the Council's medium-term priorities. The draft plan will be made available for consultation and, in particular, will be referred to overview and scrutiny for consideration and comment. The results of the consultation and any recommendations from the select committees will be reported to Cabinet's February meeting. The final draft of the Strategic Plan will be submitted to full Council in February with a recommendation that it should be adopted. The Council has aligned its corporate and financial planning procedures which means that the Strategic Plan will be considered in parallel with the draft budget proposals and financial and performance reporting have also been aligned.

The recommendation will come into effect after the call-in period, which ends on Monday 7 January 2008.

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**Nazeya Hussain, Head of Community and Corporate Planning Continued**

**Background**

1. In February 2007, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council adopted the Strategic Plan 2007-2010. For the first time the Council moved away from an Annual Operating Plan and put in place a three year plan, which built on the Sustainable Community Plan and set out what the Council would seek to achieve over this period. In agreeing the Strategic Plan in February 2007, the Council agreed to undertake a major review of the Strategic Plan and to broaden its horizons to five years by February 2008.
2. Over the course of the past nine months, there have been significant changes to the way in which the Council, and its partners, deliver their services. The results of these changes are not yet clear and they will have a significant impact on the way in which the Council delivers its services over the next three years and beyond. We are therefore proposing not to undertake a five year Strategic Plan as originally anticipated at this stage.
3. This draft Strategic Plan for the period 2008-2011 therefore builds on last year's Plan. Whilst it refreshes targets and includes details of achievements over the past twelve months, a more comprehensive re-write will be postponed until a number of key issues are resolved. These issues are set out in more detail below.

**Kent Agreement Two (KA2)**

At present, the Kent Partnership is commencing negotiations with central government for KA2, which will underpin government's expectations for delivery from all public sector partners in Kent for 2008-2011. The KA2 will set out the county-wide outcomes that we wish to deliver and will direct government resources accordingly. It is likely that the KA2 will place a significant focus on local delivery through local partnerships and district councils and we will therefore need to take this into consideration as we prepare our plans for the future. The KA2 is expected to be finalised some time between April and June 2008. Tunbridge Wells officers form part of the Kent negotiation team and have been providing input into the development of the KA2 to ensure it reflects our local priorities.

**Comprehensive Area Agreement (CAA)**

The Government has recently announced that it will phase out the current Comprehensive Performance Assessment inspection regime and replace this with a 'Comprehensive Area Assessment', which will place a significant focus on what is being achieved through partnership working rather than in isolation by particular organisations. This places a new onus on the Council to provide leadership and vision for the redirection of all public sector resources and services. The new regime will take account of service user and citizen satisfaction information. Further guidance on CAA is expected shortly.

## **New National Performance Framework**

As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, a new national indicator set has been published, which seeks to rationalise the plethora of reporting requirements that currently exists across the range of individual government departments. As part of this process, government has cut the number of performance indicators the local authorities are required to report against from 1,200 to 198. These 198 indicators will underpin both the KA2 and the CAA and all future inspections.

### Development of a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

Local Strategic Partnerships are cross agency umbrella partnerships, which include representation from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. The LSP remit is working together to improve the quality of life locally. The Government sees them as the main mechanism for the co-ordination and delivery of better services and increasingly as the means through which to channel funding for local priorities and to ensure delivery.

Following a Peer review of the existing LSP arrangements (in the form of the West Kent Partnership), it has been agreed that Tunbridge Wells should develop a new enhanced partnership at the District level, which builds on the existing Community Plan Partnership. The new LSP will seek to ensure delivery of the existing Sustainable Community Strategy, but also to underpin the development of a new Community Strategy given the changes highlighted above.

### Peer Review

In October 2007, the Council commissioned an I&DeA peer review of its activities. A further 'mini peer review' is planned in April 2008. The results of these reviews will feed into the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan but may require some higher-level objectives to feed into the Strategic Plan.

Until the final details and the likely impact of the above drivers is fully confirmed, the Council is refreshing the Strategic Plan to reflect the changes that have taken place to date. A more comprehensive review of the Strategic Plan will be made in due course.

## **The Draft Strategic Plan 2008-2011**

4. The Plan sets out the broader context, within which the council operates, including Government priorities, the Vision for Kent, the Kent Agreement and links with the new Sustainable Community Plan. It also takes into account the outcomes of recent inspection and review activity including the Culture Block Assessment, the Planning Review and the Council's Peer Review.
5. The Council is currently operating in a relatively low cost, high satisfaction and high performance environment. This has been achieved through delivering the previous Strategic Plan 2007-2010 in a framework of value-for-money services.
6. The Strategic Plan also reflects the recent changes in the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny structures and highlights key new projects and initiatives including the Gateway and Ward Walks.

7. The Strategic Plan also sets out the key challenges that the Council is facing over the coming period, and outlines the structural changes that have already taken place, to take the authority forward.

### **Corporate Priorities and Objectives**

8. As set out in last year's Strategic Plan, under each of our four priorities, a number of Corporate Objectives have been developed which set out the Council's focus for delivery over the next three years. These have been updated to reflect targets for 2010. The same format has been adopted for the three cross cutting commitments, which reflect our core principles in service development and delivery to our customers.
9. The Corporate Objectives have been agreed following consultation with Cabinet and Heads of Service and build on a wide range of public consultation (including that undertaken as part of the Community Plan process).

### **Prioritisation**

10. Clearly, in a time of rising expectations and limited resources, it will not be possible to fund the full range of services and projects that may be asked of us. The Council therefore has to make choices. The draft Strategic Plan sets out an approach to prioritising key services for investment over the next three years. Services are categorised as: priority services, important services and non-priority services and provide a clear framework for resource allocation. These priorities are reflected in budget savings for the forthcoming year but are also reflected within individual service budgets as resources are redirected and re-aligned to support new emerging strategic projects such as the Gateway.
11. This is crucial in setting the path for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and budget for 2008/09. It takes account of the most recent demographic and customer data available in each service. For example, recent statistics and data acquired through the Council's Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).

### **Delivery & Performance Management Framework**

12. Given the new performance framework, the Council will need to make a transition from performance management against a wide range of nationally set Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs) and locally-set, Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) to concentrate on its Key Performance Indicators and a comprehensive suite of as a measure of performance against its priorities.
13. Revised KPIs are being developed with each service and will be revised within the document following the service planning process due to be completed in March 2007.

### **Cross cutting issues**

#### *Legal*

13. No issues.

#### *Finance and other resources*

14. The Strategic Plan sets out the Council's priorities for delivery and improvement between 2008-2011 and is developed in conjunction with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

*Staffing*

15. No additional staffing is required to deliver the draft Strategic Plan. Any specific requests of additional resources would be brought forward as separate reports.

*Value for money*

16. Delivering Value for Money is a key customer service commitment and underpins the draft Strategic Plan.

*Risk Management*

17. Any proposals and initiatives proposed within the draft Strategic Plan would be subject to the Council's risk management procedures. These are operated at two levels, strategic risks and operational risks.

*Equalities*

18. The draft Strategic Plan seeks to set out a Vision for 'Enhancing the Quality of Life for All'. An initial Equality Impact Assessment on the draft Strategic Plan has been undertaken and will be further informed by the consultation process.

*Safer & Stronger Communities*

19. The draft Strategic Plan contributes to achieving our Corporate Priority of Developing Safer and Stronger Communities and sets out key objectives for delivering against this.

*Environment / Sustainability*

20. The draft Strategic Plan contributes to achieving our Corporate Priority of 'Care for Our Environment' and seeks to ensure all the Council's activities are sustainable as required by our resident.

*Human Rights Act*

21. No human rights implications.

*Communication and Consultation*

22. The draft Strategic Plan is based on a wide range of communication and engagement activities that have been undertaken with communities including:
  - The Sustainable Community Strategy consultation,
  - Housing Strategy consultation
  - Simultaneous Multiple Attribute Trade-Off' modelling (SIMALTO) exercise as part of the budget consultation process;
  - The results of the triennial BVPI Customer Satisfaction survey
  - Ward Walks pilot information
  - Borough-wide survey due to take place in January 2007 will also inform revisions prior to final adoption.

The draft Strategic Plan will be subject to wider consultation including the following:

- Key Partners including the Police, West Kent Primary Care Trust, Kent County Council
- Local communities and community organisations

**Conclusion**

23. The draft Strategic Plan sets out the Council's priorities over the next three years. It also sets out clear criteria for success and will allow us to demonstrate progress against our objectives. It will provide a context informing options for investment and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. A significant number of drivers as set out above will shape service delivery and resources for Tunbridge Wells over the next three years. A comprehensive Strategic Plan will be developed in due course reflecting the outcomes of these changes.

**Recommendation(s):**

1. That Cabinet agree the draft Strategic Plan for wider consultation and for consideration by the Council's Corporate Services Select Committee; and
2. That Cabinet agree to 'roll over' last year's Strategic Plan and to develop a more comprehensive, longer-term Strategic Plan once further information is available on the Kent Agreement and the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

**Contact Officer:** Nazeya Hussain, Head of Community and Corporate Planning.

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**Appendices:** [Draft Strategic Plan 2008-2011](#) – To follow and being sent under separate cover

**Background Papers:** None