

Appendices



Item No.

NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

Report Title

Draft Corporate Plan Priorities for Consultation

AGENDA STATUS:

PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	17 December 2007
Key Decision:	NO
Listed on Forward Plan:	NO
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	YES
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Directorate
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr A Woods
Ward(s)	All wards

1. Purpose

1.1 To agree the draft Corporate Plan and council's priorities for consultation.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To note the outcomes of the initial consultation work which has informed the development of priorities for 2008/ 11

2.2 To agree the draft corporate plan and priorities for consultation during December and January as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 The Council agreed the Corporate Plan for 2007/ 2011 at its meeting on the 28th June 2007. The plan is renewed on an annual basis. The plan identifies the council's priorities for 2007/ 2011 as:

- We will ensure that our communities are safer, greener and cleaner
- We will improve housing and health to enhance the wellbeing of our communities
- We will deliver quality services to our customers and communities
- We will promote economic development and growth in Northampton
- We will strengthen our commitment to partnership working and engaging with our communities to deliver better outcomes

3.1.2 In order to develop the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes to be achieved below each of the priorities, the Council has sought the views of local residents and stakeholders.

3.1.3 The following analysis draws together the key findings from the following consultation processes:

Best Value Performance Indicator User Satisfaction Survey 06/07- Mori
 Joint Northampton Borough Council/ Northamptonshire County Council
 consultation on community priorities and council tax as part of the citizens
 panel recruitment by SMSR

Focus Groups- Forums Reps

Youth Forum

Area Partnership Session

Voluntary Sector

Housing Tenants

Citizen Panel x 2 (Attendees provided by SMSR)

Council Website Survey Feedback

With the exception of the BVPI User Satisfaction Survey these consultations were carried out between September and November 2007 and represent current views of local people.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 Analysis of the feedback from the consultation sessions indicates that people's concerns have not changed since the last Corporate Plan was developed.

3.2.2 The consultation did not identify any major gaps. However a number of priorities for local people were related to activities that the council does not directly provide but contributes to through partnership working and priorities could be amended to more explicitly incorporate some of those areas.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 The results of the focus group research have established that local people's needs and wants for the town have remained largely the same as last year. The above priorities represent what the council set out to achieve last year as well as our priorities for the year ahead.

3.3.2 A number of the priorities for local people included outcomes which the council does not directly provide but can influence through partnership activity. Whilst

the council does not have primary responsibility for delivering some of the key outcomes identified in the consultation it does contribute to key activities through partnerships which deliver them and these should be identified and reflected in service plans.

- 3.3.3 It is proposed that the draft corporate plan, revised following initial consultation, should be subject to further consultation during December and January to inform the development of specific outcomes to be developed through detailed service planning to ensure that the services we deliver against priorities meet the needs of local communities.
- 3.3.4 The draft corporate plan priorities for consultation are outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

The corporate plan sets the policy framework which will inform the development of the council's medium term priorities and inform the service planning process for 2008/ 09.

4.2 Resources and Risk

Financial resources are aligned through the development of the 2008/ 09 budget to identified priorities.

4.3 Legal

It is not a statutory requirement for the council to produce a corporate plan but is recognised best practice to communicate the council's priorities to the communities it represents. There are no specific legal implications within the plan, however, legal implications associated with any decisions which result as a consequence of implementing actions within the plan will be considered in accordance with legal and statutory requirements.

4.4 Equality

Equality and Diversity is a key strand of the council's corporate plan and the council committed to being as inclusive as possible in consulting on our corporate plan and priorities and will comply with the commitment to conduct an impact assessment on the plan as the policy framework for council policies.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

Consultation on the council's priorities and the outcome from that activity is detailed in the body of the report. Appendix 2 identifies the subsequent stages of consultation for the draft corporate plan.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

The corporate plan identifies how the council will deliver against priorities within the strategic context of the improvement plan, community strategy and Local Area Agreement.

4.7 Other Implications

None

5. Background Papers

5.1 Corporate Plan 2007/ 2011

Nicci Marzec, Corporate Manager Ext 7431

CABINET REPORT

SIGNATORIES

Report Title	NAME OF REPORT AS IT IS TO APPEAR ON THE AGENDA
Date Of Call-Over	11/12/07

Following Call-Over and subsequent approval by Management Board, signatures are required for all Key Decisions before submitting final versions to Meetings Services.

Name	Signature	Date	Ext.
Monitoring Officer or Deputy			
Section 151 Officer or Deputy			

Real town, great people, fresh thinking

Introduction

Insert in here

Our vision for Northampton

We believe Northampton will be a successful and confident town where people feel they belong, feel they have a future, feel they have financial stability and, where appropriate, business opportunities. It will also be a place that has vibrant cultures and lifestyle opportunities and where everyone who chooses to live here, work here or visit the town feels at home.

The council's vision is part of a wider vision for the town. The starting point for this plan is to ensure that the Council is able to deliver its part of the community vision for the town. In January 2007 the Local Strategic Partnership agreed the community vision for Northampton.

The community vision was informed by consultation with the public, partner organisations and staff. The Council facilitated the development of the community vision. Its role in achieving its vision is supported by five corporate objectives. Each year a small number of improvement Priorities are identified under each corporate objective.

By 2011 Northampton will be

- Safer
- Cleaner
- Healthier
- Recognised for good quality, environmentally friendly housing
- Well served by modern and efficient public services

By 2021 it will be a city and a place made up from caring communities
By 2031 it will be a place of PRIDE, RESPECT, EXCITEMENT, VITALITY, FUN, and PASSION. It will be defined by its excellent transport system and will be a major regional cultural and economic centre.

Context

The Council works through a number of strategic partnerships with other service providers in the area. These include the Local Strategic Partnership, Safer Stronger Partnership and Children and Young People's Partnership to develop shared priorities and deliver them in the most effective way for the people of Northampton. Many of the activities which form part of that partnership working framework are delivering shared priorities agreed through the Local Area Agreement for Northamptonshire which focuses on delivering services and improvements to communities against four key themes.

These themes are

- Children and young people
- Safer and stronger communities
- Healthier communities and older people
- Economic development and enterprise

The Sustainable Community Strategy, developed with partners, incorporates these principles and focuses on key strategic objectives for all partners to contribute to. In particular a focus on the growth and regeneration planned for the town to ensure that new developments are integrated with existing communities and that employment, leisure opportunities and community facilities meet the needs of the town.

2. What do local people want from the town?

Our consultation with local people confirmed the following themes.

People want to feel safe

Safety is most people's number one priority. There are few merits in aspiring toward being a vibrant and exciting place unless we feel safe and secure.

But the sense of safety is not something in the gift of the council. It is something we all experience when the conditions around us are right. Northampton Borough Council is working with a number of other public sector organisations as well as local communities and voluntary organisations to help foster a climate of personal safety.

People want to feel well

Health and well-being is a product of a number of key influences. The Primary Care Trust can have a significant impact on the health of local people. It both provides health services to local people and commissions services through a variety of providers including general practices.

Personal health is not simply a function of disease and medical conditions. Our well-being can be significantly affected by the way we feel living in an area. Poverty will have an impact on our health, as will crime and the fear of crime.

Northampton Borough Council is working with a number of other public sector organisations as well as local communities and voluntary organisations to help engender a sense of well-being.

People want a town that is thriving

No town can stand still. A vibrant economy must be at the core of all successful places. Our whole economy is built upon the assumption that people will continue to purchase goods and services. Most of this activity, in spite of the recent growth in the Internet market, will still take place in town and city centres.

Northampton Borough Council is working with a number of other public sector organisations as well as private sector concerns to address town centre regeneration.

People want a job and a future

The Borough Council is the largest employer in the town. Some 1700 people work for us. There are a number of other major employers. We have a role...

People want to live in a pleasant environment

Before we can feel able to relax, we must feel that our town is clean. Even in the midst of major towns and cities, people need green space. We anticipate completing three further conservation area appraisals and management plans and the designation of a new conservation area.

People want their council to be high performing

Local people want their local council to be an efficient and effective deliverer of public services. They also want it to exercise community leadership on key issues and matters of local priority.

Northampton Borough Council is working with a number of other public sector organisations as well as local communities and voluntary organisations to help foster a climate of personal safety.

3. Prioritising our activity to meet local people's needs

On the basis of the above research we have distilled local people's expressed views into five main priorities. In this section we set out how we have delivered against those priorities and what we intend to do in the coming year to meet people's needs.

Our five priorities are:

- We will work to help our communities become safer, greener and cleaner
- We will improve housing and health to enhance the wellbeing of our communities
- We will be a well-managed organisation that puts our customers at the heart of what we do
- We will promote economic development and growth in Northampton
- We will strengthen our commitment to partnership working and engaging with our communities to deliver better outcomes

The results of the focus group research have established that local people's needs and wants for the town have remained largely the same as last year.

Here are our priorities.

Priority 1: We will help our communities become safer, greener and cleaner

We will:

- Work through the Safer Stronger Partnership to reduce crime in the town
- Improve recycling rates across the town
- Reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint
- Support improvements in air quality
- Maintain a high standard of refuse collection and street cleaning

Priority 2: We will improve housing and health to enhance the wellbeing of our communities

We will:

- Work towards achieving Decent Homes Standard at the earliest opportunity
- Deliver additional affordable housing through the requirements of housing strategy
- Reduce homelessness in the town
- Reduce fuel poverty
- Introduce choice based lettings
- Share best practice on improving health and safety in the business community
- Establish a prioritised programme for neighbourhood renewal working with partners and communities
- Improve participation and access to sport

Priority 3: We will be a well-managed organisation that puts our customers at the heart of what we do

We will:

- Ensure that all of our customers have access to our services
- Involve our customers in the design and delivery of our services
- Strengthen our system for learning and improving through customer feedback
- Improve customer care
- Organise the council to make it fit for purpose
- Support our staff so that they have all the key skills they need to do their jobs and develop their roles
- Improve the way we make decisions

- Improve our finances in order to optimise the use of our resources

Priority 4: We will promote economic development and growth in Northampton

We will:

- Work with external partners to improve the vitality of the town centre
- Work with local businesses to improve the operation of the town centre
- Promote the town centre as a destination for shopping, leisure and relaxation
- Provide events that put Northampton on the map to improve the reputation and profile of Northampton
- Implement the highest priority actions within the Economic Strategy
- Facilitate the delivery of a number of cultural events
- Work with partners to improve education and skills attainment to support the economic regeneration
- Optimising the use of inward investment

Priority 5: We will strengthen our commitment to partnership working and engaging with our communities to deliver better outcomes

We will:

- Deliver the community engagement strategy
- Regularly consult with local people on issues that affect their lives
- Develop and deliver services with a more local focus
- Work with partners to improve activities for young people
- Improve access to public services through joint working
- Take a leading role in the Local Strategic Partnership and the implementation of our Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Work with key partners on the planning and delivery of the government's growth agenda
- Engaging partners and communities in shaping Northampton as a place

4. Ensuring that Northampton Borough Council is able to deliver these priorities

A number of key features will underpin our work.

Equalities

The Council is committed to ensuring that we comply with the law in respect of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and religion/belief and that equality principles and practices are embedded in all our plans, policies and procedures. The Council will promote good race relations. The Council is also committed to eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity for everybody who lives in, works in or visits Northampton. These commitments are central to the corporate plan. The Council's priorities will impact on people's lives in different ways.

This is because we are bound to serve all people in our community in a non-discriminatory manner, recognising that 'one size fits all' may cause unfair advantage or disadvantage. Our duties go far beyond race equality and we have a duty to promote equality of opportunity in all areas and to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

To fulfil our aims in terms of equality we are working towards attaining all the levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government. Monitoring this consists of scrutinising, follow-up and evaluation of all of the principal plans and strategies to which it refers.

Use of Resources

To achieve value for money the Council must make the best use of its resources. Indeed, the Council is subject to an annual review by the Audit Commission of its use of resources. The Council's medium term financial strategy is an important component of how resources are utilised. It is used to manage both capital and revenue expenditure and to ensure that resources are directly linked to Council priorities. Levels of Council tax, investment plans, risk management and procurement are all key elements of the Council's financial strategy.

This brings together cost and quality aspects of providing goods and services. The Council will deliver its services within tight resources constraints. The Council will continue its journey of service improvements with a focus on achieving value for money measuring the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of services. The Council will measure the extent to which we achieve value for money by assessing our performance against the following criteria:

- Improving customer satisfaction ratings for services.
 - Achieving the Council's priorities and improvement targets.
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- Achieving a minimum of 3% efficiency savings per annum as required by government.
 - Assessment of service costs in comparison to other local authorities.
 - Working within the resource framework, achieving a level of reserves at or above the minimum acceptable level.
 - Implement a programme of value for money reviews that lead to service improvements.
 - Achieving positive feedback or improved scores from all external inspections and reviews, including an endorsement of how the Council has improved the way it manages its resources.

To maximise value for money the Council has to make the best use of scarce resources and has to deliver services within what the Council is able to afford by working to a medium term financial strategy. It also involves managing risk and procuring goods and services wisely. It seeks to deliver services in the most effective, economic and efficient manner as is possible. This invariably involves examining why services are provided at all and the quantity and quality of what is provided. Such examination may lead to ceasing to provide services, or reducing the level at which services are provided, or providing services in more innovative ways or differently. This could also lead to, where appropriate, in the development of new services.

The Council has a strong commitment to keep levels of Council tax as low as financially prudent. In order to deliver services within the overall financial envelope the Council will exercise strong control over performance, efficiency and value for money.

Reserves allow the Council to deal with unexpected financial costs in a planned way, ensuring that the risk of service failure is minimised. It is planned build up the level of reserves to a minimum level over time from of the next medium term strategy. This level will be determined by an annual robust risk assessment covering all services.

The Council will continue to develop its approach to risk management, with a clear framework for identifying and managing risks across all services. This will include assessing significant risks of any options before taking key decisions. Risk management contributes to the delivery of the Council's priorities and plays a key role in delivering effective services.

The Council is also working in partnership with other districts in Northampton to create a shared procurement service, delivering efficiencies and economies of scale. In addition to procurement the Council will continue to develop a programme of efficiency projects helping us to find savings across the organisation by improving our business processes, using new technology and smarter purchasing.

People Management

The Council's HR and OD strategies are designed to secure maximum employee engagement, a high performance culture, improve management and leadership capacity, embed performance management, improve job satisfaction and ensure that there is a clear line of sight between the Community Vision, the Corporate Plan and individual priorities. It will also seek to ensure we have a diverse, healthy workforce who are fairly remunerated for the jobs they do.

Improving Decision Making and Performance

Improving Data Quality

As a public body we are accountable for the public money we spend. The Council is responsible for making many, often complex, decisions about service priorities and how we use our resources. Service users, and members of the public need reliable information to make informed choices and to access services. Regulators and government departments need information to satisfy their responsibilities for making judgements about performance and governance.

The Council is aware that good quality data is essential for reliable performance and financial information to support decision-making. The Council is committed to ensuring the data we use to report on performance is fit for purpose and represents our activities in an accurate and timely manner.

We are working to ensure that Data Quality is an integral part of all the Council's processes, Data Quality and the risks associated with poor or unreliable data, is explicit throughout our performance management systems.

How the Council Manages Performances

Monitoring Our Performance

We monitor our performance against achieving our priorities in a variety of ways.

To ensure we deliver the actions needed to achieve improvement, our progress is monitored closely at both Cabinet and senior manager level. Lead officers – at Director and Corporate Manager level – are allocated responsibility for specific actions. We monitor our performance against statutory Performance Indicators and national targets, together with locally defined indicators specific to each service.

The Corporate Map detailed below, provides a high level overview of the linkages and elements, which support our performance management framework.

Our performance management framework has the following elements:

a) Team Meetings in Each Service Area

These are operational team meetings and are held to ensure service activities are planned for the week, resources and project responsibilities allocated and progress monitored. These are held either weekly or fortnightly depending on the service area requirements.

b) Monthly Reporting by Service Areas on Relevant Targets, Projects and Actions

Each Operational Manager provides a monthly report to a Corporate Manager outlining key service activity against corporate priorities, improvement plan projects and service priorities. Progress against relevant service performance indicators is also provided. These reports form the basis of a level two report provided by each Corporate Manager, bringing together an evaluation of progress for the whole service area. The level two reports are presented to each Director and used to provide an overall directorate performance report to the Chief Executive.

c) Monthly Performance Data

Our monthly performance reports set out progress we make against our monthly targets for all services. Indicators that are collected either quarterly or annually are reported at the appropriate time and therefore are not included on monthly reports. We evaluate our performance against the results of the previous month, the same period twelve months before and in relation to the performance of other councils. We use traffic light coding to clearly identify whether our progress is on track to meet our targets. This information is circulated widely across the Council, with printed graphs placed on specific 'performance notice boards' in key locations around our council buildings. We also publish our monthly performance data on our Internet for access by the public. This is supplemented by the publication of a range of other performance-related information, including Audit Commission published inspection reports and our improvement plans.

d) Analysis of Performance by Councillors

The Leader of the Council has lead responsibility for improvement, working closely with the Portfolio Holder for Performance. Cabinet regularly reviews and monitors our performance; Overview and Scrutiny Committees also receives regular performance information.

e) Corporate Performance Reviews

Corporate Performance Reviews commenced in April 2006. These panels, chaired by the Chief Executive and comprising senior councillors from Cabinet and Directors, provide high-level evaluation of performance in each service area every two months. The Chief Executive sets out specific actions to be delivered as a result of each review, allocating responsibility for this along with clear timescales for delivery. A balanced scorecard is used for each service area, setting out relevant national and local targets, financial performance, corporate and improvement priorities and organisational health factors (such as absence monitoring). In 2007 we have increased the frequency of these reviews to bi-monthly; as a result they will be named 'Bi-monthly performance reviews'.

f) Corporate Appraisal Scheme

In 2006 we implemented a corporate appraisal scheme. This sets out clear objectives and targets for each member of staff, linked to corporate priorities. The objectives are reviewed during the course of the year. The scheme is designed around a competency framework that sets out the skills, behaviours, attitudes and knowledge required to deliver our services in accordance with our values.

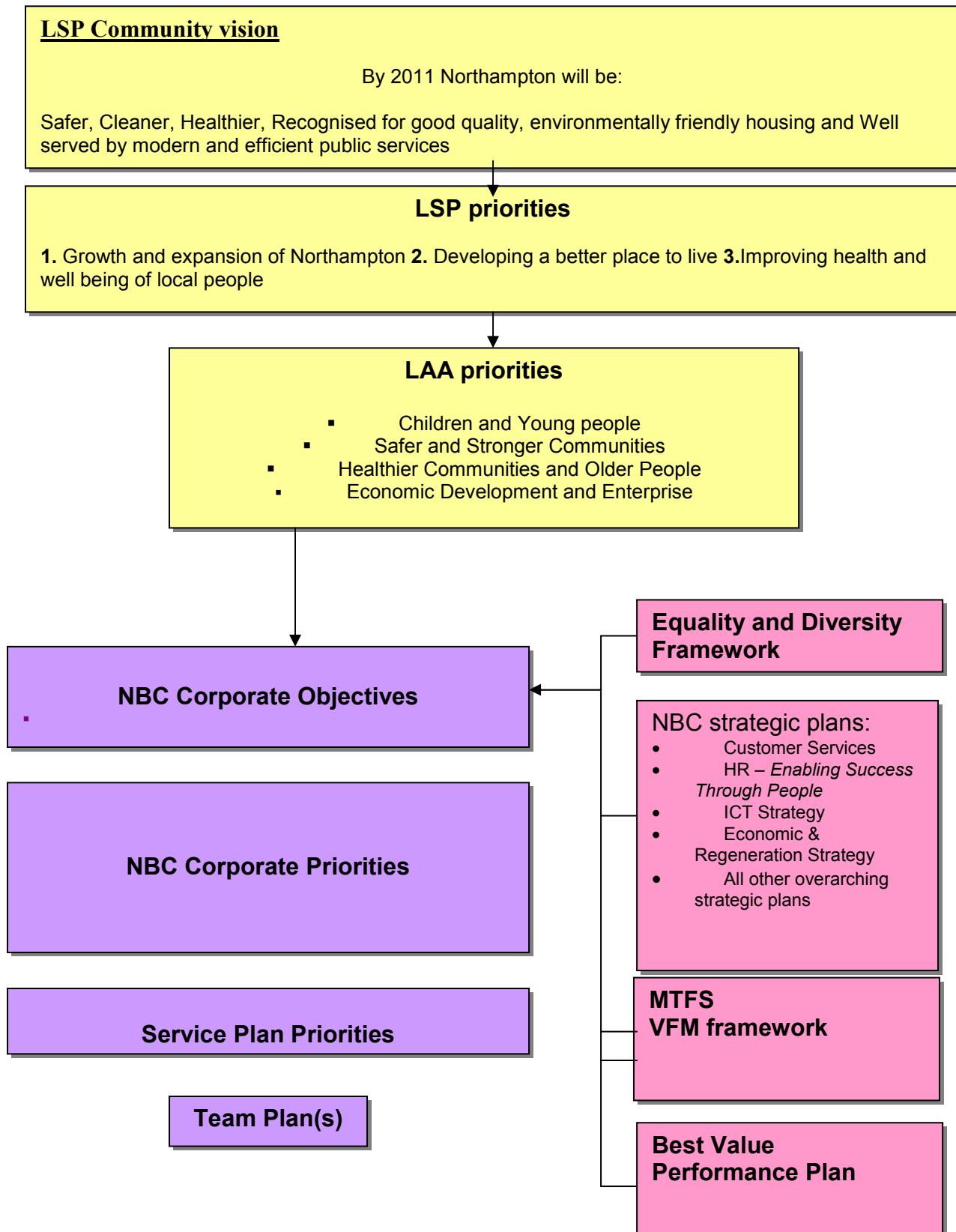
g) Service Planning

Our service plans set out strategic objectives and priorities, and illustrate how services contribute to their achievement. Financial information is also set out, including cost and performance analysis where this information is available.

h) Bi-monthly assessment by Government Monitoring Board (GMB)

As a Council rated as 'poor' in 2004, we are subject to close monitoring by Government, and specifically by the office for Communities and Local Government (formerly the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister). A Lead Official appointed by a Minister is responsible for continuous evaluation of our progress together with a range of other external monitors, including the Audit Commission, Government Office East Midlands, Department for Work and Pensions and external auditors. In February 2007 the structure of this engagement was revised to include eight service-specific sub-groups, each chaired by an external person appointed by the Lead Official.

Plan hierarchy



ROUND TWO

Stakeholder Group	Activity	Promotion	Budget/ Corporate Plan	Date	Venue	Cost
Focus Groups	1 hour meeting of reconvened focus groups to present the results of initial focus groups and the resulting draft Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary sector • Partnership • Youth Forum • Amalgamation of forums (1 rep from each) • Citizen's panel • Tenants & Resident's Associations 	CP	To be scheduled in early January. Some meetings may take place as part of round three discussions	TBC	
	On-line survey	Feedback details of the results of the survey and focus groups and send copy of the draft Corporate Plan for comment	CP	Launch post 17 Dec Cabinet	N/A	

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE PLAN & BUDGET CONSULTATION PROGRAMME 2007/2008**

ROUND THREE

Stakeholder Group	Activity	Promotion	Budget/ Corporate Plan	Date	Venue	Cost
General Public	Public meetings	Media releases, including radio coverage Advertisement of the meeting.	B & CP	Two open public meetings to be held between 7 th & 21 st January 2008	The Guildhall - TBA	TBC
	On Line Budget Consultation Leaflet	Questionnaire completed on line.	Budget	Launch post 17 Dec Cabinet	N/A	TBC
	On Line Corporate Plan Consultation Document	Questionnaire completed on line.	CP	Launch post 17 Dec Cabinet	N/A	TBC
	Citizen's Panel	Budget Consultation Leaflet on proposed Budget	B & CP	Launch post 17 Dec Cabinet	Post	TBC

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE PLAN & BUDGET CONSULTATION PROGRAMME 2007/2008**

ROUND THREE

Stakeholder Group	Activity	Promotion	Budget/ Corporate Plan	Date	Venue	Cost
	Consultation leaflets	Distributed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All residents associations • Tenants • Community Centres • Faith groups and known community leaders within managed areas • <u>Neighbourhood Partnerships: 1-13</u> • Race Equality Forum • Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual People's Forum • Disabled People's Forum • Pensioners Forum • Youth Forum • Tenants & Residents Associations • Voluntary Forum 		Launch post 17 Dec Cabinet		

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE PLAN & BUDGET CONSULTATION PROGRAMME 2007/2008**

ROUND THREE

Stakeholder Group	Activity	Promotion	Budget/ Corporate Plan	Date	Venue	Cost
Overview & Scrutiny	Overview & Scrutiny Committees 1,2 & 3	Meeting to scrutinise the draft Corporate Plan and draft budget proposals	B & CP	O&S 1 14 th Jan 2008 O&S 2 31 st Jan 2008 Special O&S 3 TBA	The Guildhall	N/A
Partners	Bronze, Silver & Gold Partners – including focus group members from rounds 1 & 2	Breakfast meeting	B & CP	7 th – 31 st January 2008 Consideration being given to a briefing ASAP after Cabinet on the 17 th of December fro Platinum and Gold partners.	The Guildhall	N/A
Community & Voluntary Sector	Invitation via NVC	Breakfast meeting	CP & B	7 th – 1 st January	TBC	
Business Community	Invitation via the Chamber of Commerce	Breakfast meeting	CP & B	7 th – 31 st January 2008	TBC	?