

# ***Information/Discussion Paper***

## **Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 January 2007**

### **Developing the council's business plan 2007-2010**

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed.

#### **1. Why has this come to scrutiny?**

**1.1** On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2006, Cabinet endorsed a vision for Cheltenham and a set of underlying principles that will inform the way the council and its partners will go about delivering the vision. Cabinet also agreed a list of council priority areas which will form the basis of the council's business plan for the period 2007-2010. To ensure wide-spread ownership over the business plan, Cabinet also agreed to discuss this emerging policy framework with the current round of overview and scrutiny committees.

**1.2** Whilst no decisions are being sought from this committee, I hope that the committee will take the opportunity to reflect on the new priority areas for the council in section 6 and identify the key issues it feels that the council should be taking action over the next three years. These thoughts can then be incorporated in the council's business plan which will go to council for approval on March 26 for formal approval. The priority areas relevant to this committee are:

- **Housing choice;**
- **Crime and disorder; and**
- **Healthy communities.**

**1.3** In terms of these priority areas, I would like to ask the committee the following questions:

- Do the range of bullet points listed below each priority feel like the right issues for the council and partners to be focusing on?
- Are there any issues that are missing?
- How can the committee help the council and partners take forward these issues?

## **2. Where have the priorities come from?**

**2.1** Throughout 2006, the council undertook a comprehensive programme of consultation to inform the second version of the community strategy (2007-2010), the council's new business plan and the emerging Local Development Framework. The programme of consultation included the following activities:

- Six Qualitative workshops with representative samples of residents;
- A borough-wide household survey;
- 20 community events held at venues across Cheltenham;
- Consultation activities with six local schools and one youth club;
- Community fora meetings;
- Two Consultation sessions with all five parish councils;
- Two presentations to the LDF Project Management Board; and
- Member briefing sessions

**2.2** The consultation process provided a clear steer on which issues people felt were to be most important. A report to cabinet on 7 November linked these issues to those emerging from other policy frameworks such as the Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement and the recently published local government white paper together with the priorities for the organisation as set out by the new administration. These themes were pulled together in a list on ten emerging priorities that cabinet agreed to test at the feedback event on November 18<sup>th</sup>.

**2.3** A report on the results of the November 18<sup>th</sup> event was discussed by Cheltenham Strategic Partnership (CSP) at its meeting on 23 November. The discussion at the CSP informed the production of the vision for Cheltenham supported by four underlying principles that will cut-across all our activities.

**2.4** Seven priority issues have been identified where, over the next 20 years, partners will take concerted and coordinated action in order to turn the vision into a reality. From this list, a number of priority areas have been identified where action will be taken in the short-term led by either the CSP or by the council.

## **3. Link to emerging local development framework**

**3.1** The local government white paper stresses the need to integrate the development of community strategies and local development frameworks and in this regard Cheltenham is setting the pace. The Cheltenham 2020 consultation programme was designed as an integrated programme to provide the evidence base to support the preparation of the next community strategy as well as the local development framework.

- 3.2 However, we know that when asked, the community tend to reflect on their current situation and will prioritise those issues within their immediate scope of reference, rather than longer-term issues that maybe critical for their well-being. The high prominence given to community safety, crime and disorder and environmental quality rather than housing or employment issues is indicative of this. The challenge for policy-makers is to ensure that we respond effectively to the short-term concerns while still keeping our focus on the longer-term issues that are critical for Cheltenham's continued success.
- 3.3 As we move from the consultation phase to policy development we need to ensure that Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham Strategic Partnership continue to work collaboratively to strengthen the relationship between the community planning and spatial planning functions and develop a vision and objectives that are sound to support Cheltenham over the next 20 years.

## 4. Link to the Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement

- 4.1 The three year Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement will have a significant impact on partnership working at the local level; there is some expectation that district councils and district LSPs will be major players in the delivery of the agreement and that we should therefore be responding to the themes of the LAA in our policy documents and then in the way we are allocating resources.
- 4.2 The five blocks of the LAA are:
- Children and young people;
  - Economic development and enterprise;
  - Healthier communities and older people;
  - Natural and built environment; and
  - Safer and stronger communities
- 4.3 Clearly these themes reflect the principles and priorities identified in this report and we have also ensured that there is alignment between the tasks identified in the latest draft and the sub-issues identified below each priority area. For more information on the local area agreement, and to see a copy of the latest draft, please visit the LAA micro-site; [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/laa](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/laa)

## 5. Vision, principles and longer-term objectives

### 5.1 Vision

Our 20 year vision statement sets out our aspirational goal for the long-term future of Cheltenham.

***We want Cheltenham to stand for a sustainable quality of life, where people, families, their communities and businesses thrive; but in a way which cherishes***

***our cultural heritage and does not compromise the quality of life of future generations.***

## **5.2 Principles**

To deliver this vision, we have identified four underlying principles that will inform everything we do.

### **4.2.1 The principle of community engagement and participation**

We want Cheltenham to be a place where all our communities feel engaged and where there is participation by local people, groups and businesses across the borough in the long term stewardship of their community. The people of Cheltenham should be actively engaged in the democratic process and have a right to be kept informed and consulted on the major issues that face our town.

### **4.2.2 The principle of investing in children and young people**

We wish to foster the talent and energy of Cheltenham's young people so that they may play a full and active part in the cultural and economic life of the borough. They should be provided with the education and life skills to allow them to live healthy, prosperous and safe lives in this town.

### **4.2.3 The principle of tackling inequalities and promoting cohesion**

We want Cheltenham to be a place where everyone across the borough has similar life opportunities regardless of where they live or their background or circumstances. We will continue to tackle deprivation wherever it occurs in the town through a co-ordinated approach to physical, social and economic regeneration.

### **4.2.4 The principle of sustainability**

We will take action to ensure that Cheltenham's development needs now and in the future are met in ways which foster sustainable communities and provide the infrastructure, services and facilities that support Cheltenham's growing resident and business population. We will strive for Cheltenham to be a carbon-neutral borough where all our residents, businesses and community organisations do their bit to live within environmental limits. We will therefore make sure that all of our actions contribute to this ambitious goal.

## **5.3 Longer-term objectives**

Having consulted widely with the community, we have identified the following challenges where, over the next 20 years, the council and its partners will take concerted and coordinated action in order to turn our vision into a reality.

### **4.3.1 Crime and Disorder**

We will take action to ensure that our residents feel safe, that crime and disorder is kept to a minimum and where investment is made in preventative measures to deter people from committing crime, penalises antisocial behaviour and is backed up by a vigorous enforcement regime.

#### **4.3.2 Health and care**

We will take action to ensure that everyone, from cradle to grave has access to the locally-provided health and care services that they need and where there is investment in promoting active and healthy lifestyles.

#### **4.3.3 Environmental quality and sustainable consumption and production**

We will minimise our impact on the environment through the sustainable management of resources and delivery of services, where little waste is sent to landfill and most is re-used, recycled and composted and where goods produced locally are readily available. We will promote quality of design in the public realm, sustainable construction and energy conservation. We will invest in the cleanliness and maintenance of all of our streets and open spaces.

#### **4.3.4 Economic development and regeneration**

We will take action to ensure that Cheltenham has a vibrant and sustainable economy with a diverse employment base and a commitment to excellence and innovation in retail, creative industries, green industries. This will require a co-ordinated approach to physical, social and economic regeneration while also taking into account the development needs of the business community now and in the future. We will work to provide a first class education system, skills development and lifelong learning opportunities to ensure that all residents can enhance their economic prosperity and quality of life.

#### **4.3.5 Housing**

We will invest in the development of sustainable mixed tenure communities that offer a choice of quality, accessible and affordable homes that meet the needs of all the residents of the borough now and in the future.

#### **4.3.6 Travel and transport**

We will take action to ensure that everyone can get around easily, where cycling and walking is encouraged, where there is good public transport, and where car use is reduced.

#### **4.3.7 Arts and Culture**

We will take action to maintain our vibrant and stimulating cultural life and where everyone has access to a wide variety of social, sporting and cultural opportunities.

## **6. Cheltenham Borough Council priority areas**

Over the next three years, Cheltenham Borough Council will take the lead in the following areas;

### **6.1 Sustainable consumption and production - with a focus on:**

- Expanding Cheltenham's recycling services; including plastics and cardboard, commercial recycling, and communal recycling activities;
- Sustainable construction;
- Waste minimisation
- Sustainable transport
- Sustainable procurement
- Sustainable energy; saving energy and encouraging the use of renewable source of energy

## **6.2 Economic Development & regeneration - with a focus on:**

- Key sectors eg creative industries, green industries, retailing, leisure and tourism
- Arts and culture
- Community regeneration
- Skills development and lifelong learning opportunities

## **6.3 Housing Choice– with a focus on:**

- Improving the range and quality of affordable housing
- Choice-based lettings
- New opportunities in St. Pauls & Midwinter site
- Private sector renewal
- More affordable and eco-friendly homes
- Lifetime homes

## **6.4 Environmental Quality - with a focus on:**

- Quality design of the public realm and overall built environment
- Civic Pride
- Sustainable landscaping
- Tackling graffiti, litter and dog mess
- Promoting safe and responsible parking
- Improving roads and pavements
- Improving parks and gardens and informal open spaces and play areas
- Integrated transport
- Adapting to the impacts of climate change

## **6.5 A fifth priority around being an excellent council**

As part of the business plan, the council will need to set out its response to the many internal challenges it faces and an indicative list of issues that include;

- Responding to the new efficiency agenda both in terms of CSR07 but also the establishment of the county joint improvement board
- Managing capacity
- Implementing Single status
- Enhancing the democratic process

**6.6** In addition, there are two priority areas where the council will work in partnership through the CSP and respective thematic partnerships to take forward the following issues;

**6.7 Crime and Disorder with a focus on:**

- Anti-social behaviour
- Night-time economy
- Preventative work with young people
- Reducing alcohol and substance misuse
- Designing out crime

**6.8 Healthy Communities - with a focus on:**

- Improving the health of our communities
- Sport and active leisure opportunities
- Improved access to local health and care facilities
- Reducing smoking and drinking
- Improving mental health

## **7. Next steps**

**7.1** It is anticipated that the first draft of the community strategy will be agreed for consultation purposes by February 22 with the council's business plan being brought back to council on March 26 for approval.

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<b>Background Papers</b>	Emerging messages from the consultation programme. Report to: Group Leaders, Cheltenham Strategic Partnership, Local Development Framework Project Board.  Emerging messages from the Cheltenham 2020 consultation programme, report to Cabinet 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2006.  A vision, principles and priorities for Cheltenham, report to Cabinet 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2006.
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