

**STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**EXECUTIVE MEETING**

**Subject: Council Plan Priorities – Consideration for Refresh**

**Report of: Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy & Democracy)**

**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

**1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To agree to a new set of council priorities, which are in alignment with those set out in Stockport's Sustainable Community Strategy (Stockport 20:20);
- 1.2 To seek Executive Members approval of options for the outcomes supporting these priorities, so that they best represent the needs of our communities; and
- 1.3 To consider options with regards to a review of organisational values.

**2.0 Background**

2.1 Agreed in late 2006, the Council's priorities, outcomes and values (appendix A) have become well embedded. They are supported by a commonly understood performance framework, which has in turn enabled decision makers to drive significant improvements in Council services. Since these priorities were agreed, however, the operating landscape for local authorities has dramatically changed. We are expecting to facing significant financial challenges in the next 4 years and will need to plan accordingly. Additionally The Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities* (2007), and subsequent legislation, repositioned local authorities as democratically elected strategic leaders, with a specific responsibility to coordinate and tailor action to meet the distinctive needs of their locality in order to improve opportunities for the whole local community. Specifically, the white paper requires local authorities to:

- ✓ Establish and take a lead in a Local Strategic Partnership consisting of local stakeholders;
- ✓ Agree the long term vision for the area and set this out in a Sustainable Community Strategy (Stockport 20:20);
- ✓ Agree medium term targets with partners and central government, designed to directly contribute to the achievement of that vision (Local Area Agreement) to enable the release of funding (including Performance Reward Grant); and
- ✓ Investigate opportunities for partnership working to achieve positive outcomes, particularly through commissioning to ensure that best value is secured for citizens and communities.

2.2 To complement the development of formalised partnerships, the White Paper also introduced a new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

inspection arrangement to enable assessment of how well local public services work together to meet the needs of the people they serve.

- 2.3 Stockport is progressing in the development of its partnership arrangements; most recently with the approval, by both the Council and the Stockport Board, of Stockport 20:20 (Stockport's Sustainable Community Strategy)

### **3.0 Proposed Council Priorities**

- 3.1 Stockport 20:20 contains four strategic priorities of:

- A **Thriving** Stockport
- A **Safer, Stronger** Stockport
- A **Healthy** Stockport
- A **Greener** Stockport

These priorities were developed after extensive citizen consultation and the analysis of a broad evidence base incorporating population and service data.

- 3.2 To support this decision making process a mapping exercise is being undertaken to provide an information base and source of evidence. To date this includes:

National drivers – for example: the implications of the economic downturn, proposed and forthcoming legislation, judicial reviews and reports, requirements of inspection regimes, national strategies and policy initiatives;

Regional drivers – for example: the impact of the development of AGMA Strategic Commissions and the development of GM wide strategic agreements;

Local drivers – for example: the aspirations for the Borough set out in Stockport 20:20 and measures included in the Local Area Agreement (LAA), performance reporting, findings from the CAA , local strategy priorities and project developments; and

Consultation information – for example: headline messages from the Young People's Lifestyle Survey 2007/08, the Sustainable Community Strategy consultation (2008), the Place Survey (2008), Stockport Business Survey 2008/09 and Stockport Partnership Forum (2009).

- 3.3 The evidence gathered to date has highlighted a number of key issues. These will need to be taken into consideration when considering specific priorities and outcomes for inclusion in the Council Plan:

Economic Downturn: the Council has used its strategic leadership role to coordinate a response to the first wave of the economic downturn.

The major impacts of the recession on Stockport to date are:

- youth unemployment;
- town centre vacancies; and
- demand for advice and guidance.

Of these, only youth unemployment is included as an LAA target. In the priority 1 areas, increased concern was expressed amongst residents for the need to improve job opportunities. This is consistent with the levels of unemployment in these areas of the borough, where the workforce is vulnerable due to the high proportion of workers in exposed industries. The Audit Commission has identified that as well as managing the current impacts, Councils should begin to prepare for a predicted upturn, following the slow down in unemployment levels. In the model proposed by the Audit Commission, it cautions about the need to plan to avoid unequal recovery in known areas of deprivation.

*Links to the following Stockport 20:20 priorities & outcomes:*

- ✓ *A thriving Stockport - a competitive economy, a vibrant Town Centre, an educated population and an enterprising culture.*

Inequalities: the recent CAA process highlighted concerns and warned of a likely red flag for inequalities in relation to Priority One areas. There is a recognised need to consider how the council will work with partners to address these inequalities particularly in relation to education outcomes, skills and employment over the next three years.

*Links to the following Stockport 20:20 priorities & outcomes:*

- ✓ *A thriving Stockport - a competitive economy and an educated population.*
- ✓ *A safer, stronger Stockport - cohesive communities.*

Sustainability & Climate Change: the council has made good progress in reducing the amount of waste to landfill and increasing levels of recycling. As the pace has increased we have broadened the agenda from focusing exclusively on waste, taking in sustainable development issues in the round. Current and future legislation, such as the Climate Change Act (2008) and the EU White Paper 'Adapting to Climate Change' (2009) will require the council to ensure closer linkages between diverse policy areas such as waste management, transport, planning and the management of greenspace. The coordination of these interlinking issues (in order to ensure that they promote sustainability) is vital both to attract the financial incentives proposed by the Climate Change Act for reducing the council's carbon footprint, as well as avoiding the penalties associated with non-compliance. This issue is also gaining momentum at AGMA level where rapid transition to a low carbon economy is a key strategic driver; currently the Environment Commission is developing proposals that will enable an integrated strategic approach to sustainability across Greater Manchester.

*Links to the following Stockport 20:20 priorities & outcomes:*

- ✓ *A greener Stockport - a unique built environment, excellent parks and open spaces, a sustainable approach to the natural environment and good connections.*

Affordable Housing: the recent Housing Needs Study has highlighted the urgent need for more affordable housing of every type in Stockport, and noted a specific shortage of accommodation options for:

- families; and
- older people with mobility problems.

There are significant challenges for Stockport in addressing this issue, particularly as there is a balance to be struck between sub-regional housing strategy and sustainable development priorities locally. The forthcoming Local Development Framework (due to be adopted in March 2011) will set out the long term spatial plans for Stockport and the emerging intelligence from this project must be taken into account.

*Links to the following Stockport 20:20 priorities & outcomes*

- ✓ *A greener Stockport - a unique built environment.*

Transport links & congestion: the award of the funding to initiate the building of the SEMMMS relief road will have an impact upon congestion and air quality. It will also improve connectivity for the borough. The 2008 Place Survey, which coincided with the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) debate, reported an increase in the number of people who pinpoint public transport as being important in making somewhere a good place to live (including in the priority areas), along with an increase in those stating that public transport is the number one priority for improvement.

*Links to the following Stockport 20:20 priorities & outcomes:*

- ✓ *A greener Stockport – good connections.*

Culture & Leisure facilities: the recent Place Survey revealed that residents now place increasing importance on the contribution of cultural and leisure facilities to making somewhere a nice place to live. Although satisfaction with the most widely used elements of the offer (parks and libraries) has remained consistent since the 2006 BVPI survey, there has been a 20% decline in satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities amongst users of these services. The recent Stockport Partnership Forum sought to investigate this issue, and although further investigation is clearly required, initial feedback will be considered by the relevant thematic partnership.

*Links to the following Stockport 20:20 priorities & outcomes:*

- ✓ *A healthy Stockport – active people.*

Crime and disorder: Stockport has achieved all of the LAA targets relating to reducing fear of crime, alcohol related violence and drug related acquisitive crime. The Place Survey also reports good performance in this area with Stockport as the highest performer on measures relating to perceptions of anti-social behaviour. In addition we have a low perception that drug dealing and use is a problem. Stockport is also in the top 5 metropolitan authorities for proxy

measures relating to community cohesion, although the relative position had dropped since 2006. Despite the positive progress made to date, serious acquisitive crime and serious violent crime rates continue to be adrift from our aspirations, and respondents to the Place Survey also considered a reduction in crime to be a high priority for improvement - 39% of respondents in the general sample and 55% in the priority 1 areas. The Place Survey results also indicated an increased level of dissatisfaction with opportunities for local people to influence how crime and disorder issues are dealt with.

*Links to the following Stockport 20:20 priorities & outcomes:*

- ✓ *A safer stronger Stockport – low crime rates and engaged communities.*

*Children and Young People:* the impact of the Laming Report to increase the priority of safeguarding, is an issue for all Children's Trust Partners. As the democratically elected strategic leader in the partnership arrangement, the council needs to take an active lead in responding to the requirements of the report by driving the improvements to services and raising of standards in practice that are required. The council is already working on a profile of those children subject to a Child Protection Plan to better understand the needs of this group of children and young people and the support that they need.

Young People have been particularly adversely affected by the economic downturn, with increased levels of youth unemployment being one of the major impacts of the recession on the borough. Planning for the upturn and ensuring that young people are kept motivated, engaged and equipped with the right skills is extremely important.

*Links to the following Stockport 20:20 priorities & outcomes:*

- ✓ *A healthy Stockport – independent people.*
- ✓ *A thriving Stockport – an educated population and a competitive economy.*
- ✓ *A safer, Stronger Stockport – cohesive communities.*

*Health and Well-Being:* there has been an expansion of the council's role from the traditional focus on statutory services (supporting and safeguarding vulnerable people) to one where the council plays an important role in tackling broader health and well-being issues for Stockport's residents. These developments have occurred due to the creation of a 'Section 75' health and well-being partnership (April 2009), and are likely to evolve further through the agreement for the Chief Executive of NHS Stockport to integrate into the Corporate Leadership Team. The scope of the partnership has been clearly defined and there are 6 overarching outcomes, of which the council has a significant role to play in:

- promoting independence in older people;

- improving services for adults of working age with a disability to promote independence and employment;
- recognition of the needs of carers;
- promotion of independence and well being as appropriate to choice and preference; and
- ensuring that children's services are appropriately designed to meet the needs of future demographic and birth rate changes.

*Links to the following Stockport 20:20 priorities & outcomes:*

- ✓ *A healthy Stockport – independent people and people with good emotional and mental health.*

3.4 Currently, whilst it is possible to align the council's stated priorities and those articulated in Stockport 20:20 (as articulated in the Council Plan, 2009-12) there is scope to refresh and strengthen this significantly. Within the current climate for Public Services and Local Government this is increasingly important to strengthen the Council's role as strategic leader. It is therefore recommended that the Council's priorities be fully aligned with those strategic priorities set out in Stockport 20:20.

#### **4.0 Determining Outcomes**

4.1 The priorities and outcomes set out in Stockport 20:20 (appendix B) are designed to contribute to the achievement of a long term vision for the borough. By contrast, the Council Plan is a shorter term document. Whilst it is entirely appropriate for the Council Plan to reflect the four strategic priorities set out in Stockport 20:20, it is necessary to determine whether to:

- a) Adopt the priorities of Stockport 20:20;
- b) Adopt the 16 outcomes that support the priorities of Stockport 20:20; and
- c) Prioritise within these outcomes into those which need to have most focus first.

4.2 The decision to opt for any of the proposed combinations should be considered in the context of the significant financial pressures the council will face in the future, particularly from 2011/12 onwards, as outlined in the accompanying report of the Corporate Director, Business Services. In this regard, the Executive could seek the views of scrutiny committees.

#### **5.0 Organisational Values**

5.1 The Council has identified values that reflect a commitment to:

- value for money,
- modernisation
- diversity and equality.

Whilst these underpin the delivery of the council's priorities they are not always reflected in the setting of specific outcomes and targets. The

council has however identified a number of key strategies and committed resources through, for example, the BITE, Information Management, Neighbourhood Renewal and Customer Strategies. This review of the Council's priorities therefore provides an opportunity to strengthen the profile of the values within the Council Plan.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

### **6.1 Members are requested to:**

- Agree the proposal to adopt a revised set of council priorities, which are in alignment with those set out in Stockport's Sustainable Community Strategy (Stockport 20:20);
- Indicate their preferred option in relation to the selection of outcomes explained at 4.1;
- Consider whether the council's organisational values (explained at 5.0) are sufficient
- Agree to further work being undertaken with regard to priorities and outcomes through:
  - (i) Consultation with Scrutiny committees; and
  - (ii) Further development of the evidence, performance and directorate strategic planning.

## **7.0 Officer Contact**

Annalie Burns, Corporate Policy Officer

T. 474-3021

E. [annalie.burns@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:annalie.burns@stockport.gov.uk)

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Current Stockport Council Plan: priorities, outcomes and values**

An **Attractive and Thriving** Stockport:

- Cleaner Stockport
- Creating higher quality roads and pavements
- Regenerating and investing throughout Stockport
- Decent quality housing

A **Leading 'Green' Borough**

- Limiting Stockport's impact on the environment
- Reducing the environmental impact of traffic
- Protecting greenspace

**Safe and Strong Communities**

- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
- Increasing public involvement in local democracy
- Improving life chances for all, especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable people

In delivering these priorities we will continue to:

- ✓ **Be a responsive council** – listening to what local people say
- ✓ **Support vulnerable people** – those who are most disadvantaged
- ✓ **Tackle inequalities** – Stockport is a borough of stark contrasts in terms of deprivation and wealth and health inequalities in particular
- ✓ **Ensure value for money** – making the most effective and efficient use of all the resources at our disposal including people, property, information technology and management and finances
- ✓ **Work with partners** – to achieve more than we can working alone



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Stockport Strategy 20:20: priorities and outcomes**

A **thriving Stockport** should have:

- A **competitive economy** with a diverse and expanding business base which attracts high earning sectors and supports high employment across sectors and skills levels;
- A **vibrant Town Centre** complemented by individual District Centres which are well used by residents and well served by retail, leisure and cultural facilities;
- An **educated population** benefiting from high quality educational facilities;
- An **enterprising culture** with a high level of innovative business start-ups and social enterprises by local people and partners.

A **safer, stronger Stockport** should have:

- **Cohesive communities** – where people respect each other, and everyone has similar life opportunities;
- **Engaged communities** – who are empowered to engage and make a positive contribution to local well-being;
- **Low crime rates** – making all our streets safer at any time of day; and
- **Community pride** – working together to ensure everyone feels safe and satisfied with their local area.

A **healthy Stockport** should have:

- **Active people** – with levels of obesity which maintain current rates rather than continuing to rise to the extent seen in past decades;
- **Empowered people** – who are supported to make positive lifestyle choices, ultimately leading to better health outcomes for all Stockport residents;
- **Independent people** – who benefit from high quality and accessible facilities and services which are tailored to their needs and preferences and prevent the deterioration of health and well-being;
- **People with good emotional and mental health** – who are confident, resilient and are well-supported by family, friends and services to face life's challenges.

A **greener Stockport** should have:

- A **unique built environment** which preserves our heritage and has high quality new developments;
- **Excellent parks and open spaces**
- A **sustainable approach to the natural environment**, improving air quality, minimising our use of natural resources, and maximising recycling; and
- **Good connections** with excellent public transport resulting in less congestion.