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Council Objectives and Policy Framework 2011/12

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- This report proposes changes to the Council's vision, objectives and corporate priorities for 2011/12.
- It proposes appropriate changes to the constitution to reflect the above changes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Elected Members are recommended to endorse: -

- Changing the Council's vision, objectives and corporate priorities for 2011/12 in line with Appendix 1, to ensure appropriate strategic focus in the challenging new context. These changes will provide the backdrop to financial decisions over coming months and Finance Council in 2011.
- Reviewing the appropriate sections of the Constitution which, pending Policy Council's views relating to proposed changes in the recommendation above, would rework the Policy Framework in line with Vision 2030 themes and revised corporate priorities.
- Mandate the Chief Executive to take forward appropriate revisions to the scheme of delegation prior to Finance Council in 2011, and review and develop the range of strategies and plans outlined in Appendix 2 to ensure delivery against objectives and priorities.

3. BACKGROUND

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)

The Comprehensive Spending Review poses unprecedented challenges for the Council's financial position, with: -

- Savings of 25 – 35% required across Council service areas during the life of the Parliament;
- 'Front-loading' of these anticipated reductions in Revenue Support Grant resulting in pressure to reduce Council spending drastically in 2011/12 and 2012/13; and

- Reductions in grant, discretionary and partner funding streams resulting in an overall reduction for the Local Strategic Partnership's ability to invest in priorities; with notable challenges for the voluntary and community sector in Blackburn with Darwen.

Clearly, the Council is operating within a rapidly changing and uncertain context, and the Council will need to be agile in responding over the coming months. As such, the detailed implications of the CSR will be managed by subsequent Finance Council meetings, and any perspectives or initiatives adopted by Policy Council need to be framed within, and contribute to mitigating the effects of, this challenging context.

Changes to Regulatory Regimes

In parallel with this challenging Comprehensive Spending Review settlement, the Government have also acted to fundamentally change the assessment and regulation regime around Local Government: -

- Abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) framework and the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) regime in adult social care, to be replaced by greater transparency in reporting performance and financial data to local citizens;
- An expectation that councils will deliver more for less and local partnerships will continue to improve outcomes;
- Abolition of the means by which the data for a number of national indicators can be collected and thus responsibility for reporting on these indicators has been removed; and
- Abolition of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), the Audit Commission and a vast array of regional and national quasi-autonomous agencies involved in reviewing local interventions and outcomes.

Such changes do not lessen the accountability of Councils and other public bodies to deliver improved outcomes, act with financial probity or engage residents in service priorities and delivery. Rather, they strengthen the need for local bodies to account directly to local people, work with a widening array of partners to deliver improved services and develop local performance management arrangements to manage and sustain levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

Whilst Policy Council is encouraged to endorse these longer term goals, we must also acknowledge, however, that in these exceptionally uncertain times our focus must be on protecting frontline services and jobs in the short-term. This report therefore proposes broad and thematic changes to the Council's policy direction, to allow for more specific targets and measures to be determined once the future position is clear.

Strategic Objectives and Corporate Priorities

In 2008 Policy Council revised the Strategic Objectives for the Council and agreed on the following:

- 'Outcomes/performance' priorities:
 - *Improving public health and well-being – 'Living Better, Living Longer'*
 - *Improving your neighbourhood – (community engagement, community cohesion, environment, liveability/public realm, enforcement, community safety)*
 - *Improving the economy – (delivering regeneration to tackle poverty, skills and worklessness)*

- 'Organisational delivery' priorities
 - *Achieving first class services: influencing, enabling and commissioning*
 - *Deliver a 'fit for purpose' organisation*

The "outcome/performance" priorities were identified to reflect the Council's commitment and responsibilities in delivering the 2008-2011 Local Area Agreement. The "organisational delivery" priorities represented key areas where the Council sought to drive improvement within the organisation. These strategic objectives were endorsed again at Policy Council in 2009.

The vision statement for the Council endorsed at this time was: -

"Shaping a Better Blackburn with Darwen for Today's and Future Generations"

The operating context for the Council has clearly changed substantially since the Policy Council endorsed the objectives above. Notably, after extensive consultation with residents and partners, the 2030 Vision has been launched by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), with clarification around the long-term priorities for the LSP as follows: -

- Making BwD prosperous;
- Connecting communities;
- Clean neighbourhoods; and
- Feeling safer being healthier.

The implications of the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review pose a substantial challenge to the LSP's ability to deliver this Vision, with the Council's contribution to this Vision particularly restrained by radical financial contraction during this Parliament.

Policy Framework

The Policy Framework, set out in the Council's Constitution, consists of the key strategies, policies and plans that support the delivery of the strategic objectives agreed by the Policy Council, which the Executive Board is charged with delivering. The Policy Framework establishes the context for decision-making across the Council, and should therefore be balanced and comprehensive; broadly comprising:

- Strategies, policies and plans that remain a statutory or mandatory requirement; and
- Major strategies, policies and plans.

The 2009 Policy Council agreed to carry out a review of the Policy Framework in 2010. A comparative review of the policy frameworks of neighbouring local authorities has taken place.

4. RATIONALE

Despite the challenging context outlined above, which will be explored further in subsequent Council meetings, residents' needs and views are paramount, and therefore it is proposed that the Council continue to endorse the 2030 Vision as a statement of priorities for the borough.

It is also therefore proposed that the vision statement for the Council be changed to reflect this wider partnership vision, with a renewed statement as follows: -

'Creating a Connected, Prosperous, Clean, Safe and Healthy Blackburn with Darwen'.

Achievement of this Vision will, however, require a pragmatic refocusing of Council and partner efforts, with this report providing a framework for this transformational context and renewed impetus.

The Council and partners' contributions to the Vision 2030 will require extensive political oversight and local performance management, in light of the removal of many of the national performance frameworks and independent performance agencies. As such, this report seeks to clarify and simplify the Council's contribution to the Vision 2030 by re-aligning the Council's strategic objectives around the Vision 2030 themes. Pending Policy Council's endorsement, specific measures in support of these strategic objectives will be developed through the LSP delivery planning process in advance of Finance Council 2011.

A 'step-change' in the Council's corporate (internal) focus will also be required as we seek to ensure that the Council is well placed to provide first class services and continue to strive for improvements in an extremely challenging context. It is therefore proposed that the Council's corporate priorities be refocused around: -

- a) Delivering the necessary Transformation and Downsizing; and
- b) Mitigating the risks to service outcomes posed by this transformational and austere programme of change.

It is therefore proposed that Appendix 1 be endorsed as a new framework for Strategic Objectives and Corporate Priorities.

A number of the strategies included in the Constitution's Policy Framework are no longer statutorily required. As such, it is proposed that the Chief Executive take forward appropriate changes to the Constitution and Scheme of Delegation in advance of the 2011 Finance Council. Revision of the Constitution would be taken forward in line with Policy Council's views relating to proposed changes to strategic objectives and corporate priorities.

Appendix 2 provides a refreshed framework of strategies and plans that will support delivery of these new priorities, and it is proposed that the Chief Executive be mandated to review and develop the range of strategies and plans outlined in Appendix 2 to ensure delivery in 2011/12.

Hence, the following are suggested additions to a set of strategies and plans underpinning delivery of new strategic objectives and corporate priorities: -

<u>Themes & Organisational Priorities</u>		
<u>Vision / Council Objective</u>	<u>Plan/Policy/Strategy</u>	<u>Authorities who already have one in place</u>
Making BwD prosperous (<i>Vision 2030 theme</i>)	Employment and Skills Strategy	Liverpool
Clean Neighbourhoods (<i>Vision 2030 theme</i>)	Environmental Action Plan	Manchester; Stockport and Trafford
Managing Risk (<i>Subject to adoption as objective by Policy Council</i>)	IT Security and Privacy Policy	Salford
	Risk Management Strategy & Policy	Bury
	Health & Safety Plan	
	Civil Contingencies Plan	
	Older People's Strategy	Liverpool

	Procurement / Commissioning Strategy	Liverpool, Stockport (Procurement)
Delivering Transformation and Downsizing <i>(Subject to adoption as objective by Policy Council)</i>	People Strategy	Blackpool
	ICT Strategy	Manchester; Salford and Stockport
	Asset Management Plan	Bolton; Liverpool; Manchester; Oldham; Rochdale
	Council's Code of Conduct	Salford

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report proposes changes to the Council's strategic objectives and corporate priorities; in support of the 2030 Vision and in light of the challenging financial context.

The report also proposes appropriate changes to the Constitution which, pending Policy Council's views, would rework the Policy Framework in line with Vision 2030 themes and revised corporate priorities.

Appendix 2 provides a refreshed framework of strategies and plans that will support delivery of these new priorities, and it is proposed that the Chief Executive be mandated to review and develop the range of strategies and plans outlined in Appendix 2 to ensure delivery in 2011/12.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed revision to the corporate priorities would seek to ensure that the Council is well placed to provide first class services and continue to strive for improvements in an extremely challenging financial context.

This report therefore proposes broad and thematic changes to the Council's policy direction, to allow for more specific targets and measures to be determined once the future position is clear.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommended changes require revisions to be made to the Council's Constitution.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

N/A

9. CONSULTATIONS

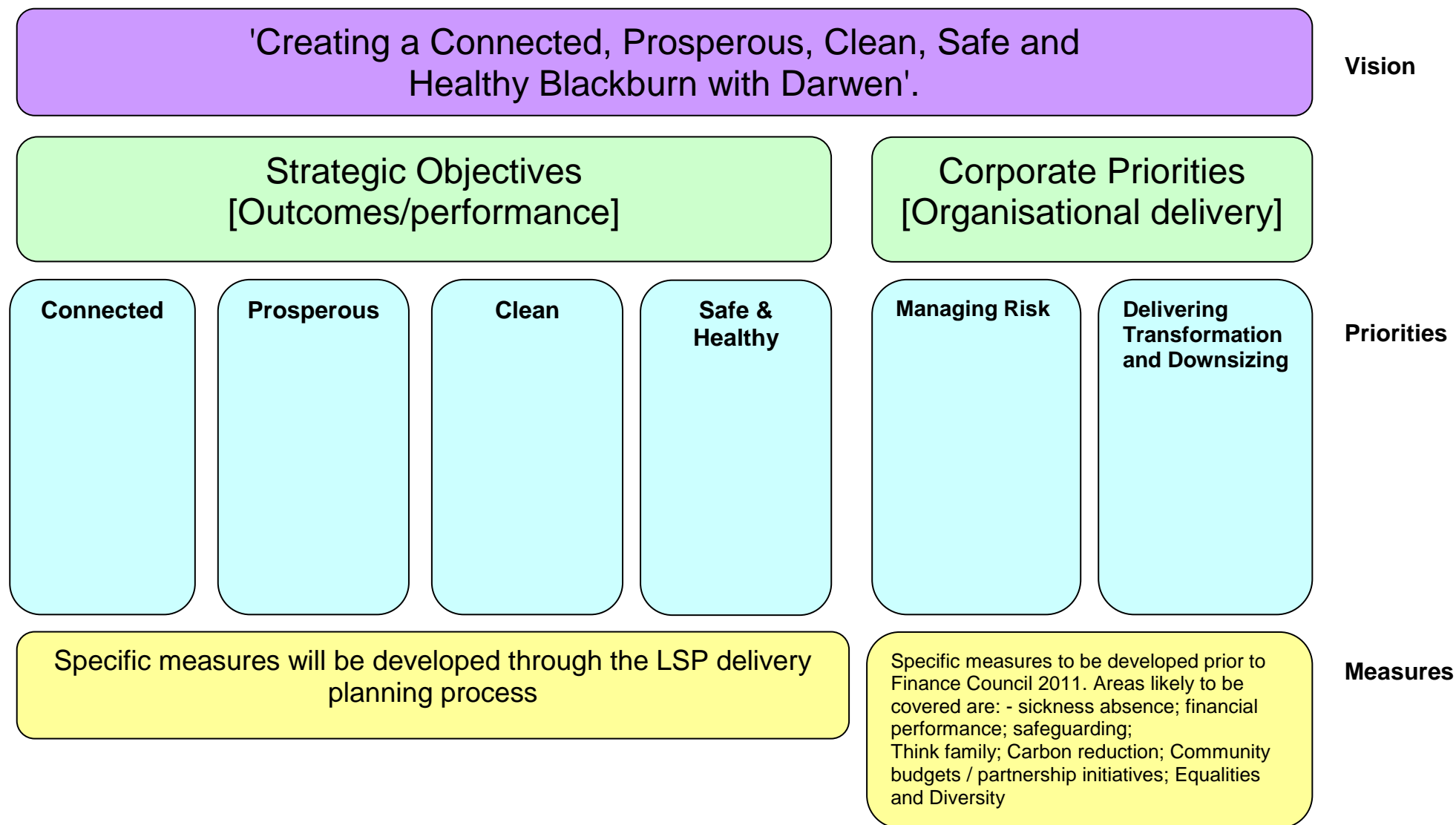
N/A

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officer: Tom Stannard, Director of Policy and Communications.
Date: 17.11.10
Background Papers: Council Constitution
Vision 2030

Background documents are any files, guidance or other materials that have been relied upon in producing the paper. Any background documents listed must be available for public inspection upon request.

Appendix 1 – Council Objectives and Corporate Priorities Framework (2011-12)



Appendix 2 – Revised Delivery Vehicle for Executive Board Oversight of New Strategic Objectives and Corporate Priorities

Vision 2030 themes & organisational priorities	Policy/Strategy/Plan currently included in the Policy Framework		Policy/Plan/Strategy to add to the Policy Framework	
<u>Making BwD prosperous</u> * 1 in 3 adults qualified to NVQ level 4 * More business investment & jobs in key sectors	Core Strategy	Adult Learning Plan	<i>Employment & Skills Strategy</i>	
<u>Connecting Communities</u> * Increase community cohesion * High speed broadband to all homes, business & community facilities * Integrated affordable public transport system	Local Transport Plan	Annual Library Plan		
	Community Care Plan	Community Plan <i>superseded by</i> Sustainable Community Strategy		
<u>Clean Neighbourhoods</u> * Reduce CO ₂ emissions for buildings & vehicles * Improve housing quality & choice	Housing Investment Programme <i>superseded by</i> Pennine Lancashire Housing Strategy		<i>Environmental Strategy & Action Plan</i>	
<u>Feeling safer being healthier</u> * Increase life expectancy and reduce inequality * Reduce crime and the fear of crime	Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy	Youth Justice Plan	<i>Health & Wellbeing Strategy (joint responsibility with CT+)</i>	
Delivering Transformation and Downsizing	Early Years Development Plan	Children's Services Plan * Adult Safeguarding * Children's Safeguarding * Education Development Plan	<i>IT Security & Privacy Policy</i>	<i>Older People's Strategy</i>
			<i>Risk Management Policy & Strategy</i>	<i>Procurement / Commissioning Strategy</i>
			<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>	
			<i>Civil Contingencies Policy</i>	
Managing Risk	Council's Performance Agreement	Medium Term Financial Strategy	<i>ICT Strategy</i>	<i>Council's Code of Conduct</i>
	The Council's Strategic Objectives	LAA	<i>Asset Management Plan</i>	<i>People Strategy</i>