

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Chief Executive

REPORT NO. CEX378

DATE: 6 September 2007

TITLE:	ANNUAL REVIEW OF PRIORITIES AND NON-PRIORITIES
FORWARD PLAN ITEM:	N/A
DATE WHEN FIRST APPEARED IN FORWARD PLAN:	N/A
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	YES

COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	ALL	
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	ALL	
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	YES	
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	THIS REPORT IS AVAILABLE VIA THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY LINK ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE WWW.SOUTHKESTEVEN.GOV.UK	
INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Carried out and appended to report? Yes	Full impact assessment required?
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	CEX326	

Recommendations

- 1. That the Council approve the proposed priorities as recommended by the Cabinet.**

Introduction

2. This report was placed before Cabinet on 6th August 2007 and the Cabinet approved the priorities proposed within it at that meeting.

Background

3. Although the Council's priorities are set for a four year period, they are reviewed annually. The Council's calendar makes provision for this review to be conducted over the summer so that the new priorities can drive the budget process for the following year.

This review is informed and influenced by the following:

- i) the outcome of the triennial residents' survey conducted over the winter.
- ii) a Gateway Review on progress on priorities by members of the Cabinet and PDG Chairs which was held on Monday the 11th of June.

To-date no public consultation has been conducted on the emerging issues. However there is an opportunity to seek the views of the public between this Cabinet meeting and the Council meeting on the 6 September which will conclude the review process.

Views from staff are currently being sought through the core briefing cascade system. The outcomes from this will be reported either orally to the Cabinet meeting or to the Council meeting as appropriate.

Proposed Categorisation of Priorities

4. Since 2004 the Council has tried to provide clarity to residents regarding its priorities by assigning all its major services to one of four categories. This approach has received favourable comment from auditors and greatly assisted the development of measure to align resources to priorities. For these reasons it is intended to continue to use this system.

The categories are as follows:

Category	Definition
A	A service where the Council commits to achieving a step-change in performance over the next four years.
B	A service where the Council commits to delivering annual incremental improvement over the next four years
M	A service where the Council seeks to maintain service standards and outcomes over the next four years
Z	A service where the Council will implement a programme of managed disinvestment to secure the resources required to implement improvement in its priorities

Current Priorities

5. The council last considered the categorisation of services in June 2006 when the following decisions were made:

Category A (Step-change):

- 1) Anti Social Behaviour
- 2) Recycling
- 3) Access
- 4) Town centre regeneration and the development of Grantham as a sub regional centre
- 5) Affordable housing
- 6) Communications
- 7) Use of Resources.

Category B (Incremental improvement priorities)

- 1) Street scene
- 2) Business Development
- 3) Diversity
- 4) Housing Management
- 5) LSP and Community Strategy
- 6) Maintenance of the Council's Assets

Category M (Maintain)

Asset Management
Business Rates
Financial Services
Licensing
Business Management

Category M (Maintain) Contd.

Markets
Arts
Housing Repairs
Leisure
Legal and Admin
Human Resources
Parks
Emergency Planning
Environmental Health
Public Transport
Building Control

Category Z (Managed Disinvestment)

Pest Control
Discretionary grants
Discretionary expenditure on public transport
Strategic tourism

Results of the Triennial Residents Survey

6. This survey was conducted in accordance with the methodology set-down by the DCLG. It was a postal survey with 4,000 forms being sent out and 2,610 returned a response rate of 65%.

The results from this survey were then weighted to ensure they were properly representative of the age and gender of the residents in the District.

The question within the survey that is most important in the determination of future priorities was question 2 which asks residents to identify the things that most need improving in their area.

In 2003 the “top five” areas for improvement were:

- The level of crime
- The level of traffic congestion
- Road and pavement repairs
- Activities for teenagers
- Clean streets

In this year’s survey there had been some significant changes, and the top five are now:

- The level of traffic congestion
- Activities for teenagers
- Road and pavement repairs
- Health services
- The level of crime/Public transport

Outcome from the Gateway Review

7. The gateway review focussed on the category A priorities. It assessed progress and reported this using a two point scale:
- 1) A number from 0 to 10 to indicate progress against targets. With 10 indicating that all targets had been met.
 - 2) A traffic-light colour (red, orange or green) to indicate the confidence that the members of the review team regarding the prospects for success in the light of achievements to-date.

Based on these two judgments the review team also made judgements regarding the future priority category of this service.

The results of this process were as follows:

Priority	Progress Score	Future Category	Improvement Prospects
RECYCLING	7	A	Amber
ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES	6	A	Amber
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	10	A or B	Green
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR	8	B	Green
COMMUNICATIONS	6	A	Amber
USE OF RESOURCES	4	A	Amber
TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION	4	A	Amber

Proposals

8. Taking account of the resident's survey and the outcome of the gateway review it is recommended that the following priorities are set:

Category A Priorities

Priority	Definition	Scope	Lead Portfolio-holder	Proposed Targets
Recycling	Improving the percentage of household waste recycled or composted.	Waste Management	Healthy Environment	% household waste composted or recycled
Customer Service	Improving how we listen, and respond, to the needs of our customers	All services of the Council	Access	Improving customer satisfaction rates
Communications	Improving how the Council informs, and engages, with residents, stakeholders and staff	All sections of the Council	Access	% of residents and staff feeling well informed
Bourne and Grantham town-centres	Improving the attractiveness, and economic vitality, of these town-centres.	Economic Development	Economic Development	Economic data on vitality
Use of Resources	Improving the efficiency of the Council and developing the capacity to make it fit for purpose	All sections of the Council	Resources	Auditor scored judgement and peer review
Grantham Growth point	Securing growth status for Grantham and delivering this in a sustainable way.	Sustainable Communities	Economic Development	Successful delivery

Category B Priorities

Priority	Definition	Scope	Lead Portfolio-holder	Proposed targets
Local Neighbourhoods	Developing welcoming, safe and self-reliant communities with a strong sense of local identity.	Housing solutions Economic Development Anti-social behaviour	Corporate Governance and Housing	Improved residents scores for “a good place to live” in the worst communities
Housing Management	Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the services we provide to Council tenants	Housing	Corporate Governance and Housing	2 star inspection
Public Assets	Ensuring all physical assets are fit for purpose and are managed efficiently	All	Resources	Audit of all assets
Climate Change	Providing local leadership in both preventing and responding to changes in the environment	Healthy Environment	Healthy Environment	Carbon plan and climate change strategy approved.

Category M Services – Service Minimums

Service	Operational minimum
Car parks	Maintain at least current number of spaces in each of the towns.
Public conveniences	Meantime current provision
Business rates	Achieve collection targets
Licensing	Meet statutory obligations
All internal services	Achieve customer satisfaction ratings of 80%
Leisure	Maintain compliance with specification.
Parks	Maintain current levels of resident satisfaction.
Emergency planning	Meet all statutory obligations
Development Control	Meet statutory on=obligations and government requirement regarding turn-around times.
Public Transport (Statutory)	Meet statutory requirements
Building Control	Meet statutory requirements and break-even
Markets	Break-even
Planning policy	Meet statutory timetable.
Enforcement services	Meet statutory obligations
Art centres	Achieve 85% satisfaction and subsidy per user below £1.72 per visit.
Care services	Maintain current service standards

Category Z - Non-priority areas for managed disinvestment

Service	Existing or new?
Strategic tourism	Existing
Pest control	Existing
Discretionary Grants	Existing
Discretionary assistance to public transport	Existing
Placing consultancy services onto a commercial basis	New

Comments of the Council's S151 Officer

9. The annual review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy will need to reflect the prioritisation proposals. Taking account of the likely outcome of the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 and the Formula Grant Settlement, it will be essential that the Council targets its resources at priority areas.
10. Also it will be necessary to keep the Category Z priorities under review to ensure that there is sufficient resource to deliver the Council's plans for its key priorities. During 2006/7 the Council achieved 76% of its target for Category Z savings, equivalent to

£347k which has been reinvested into priority services. A further £126k savings is due to be saved in 2008/9, based on the assumptions made in 2004/5 and the percentage savings achieved in 2006/7

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

11. The Monitoring Officer has no comments to make on this report"

Duncan Kerr
Chief Executive