

# REPORT TO COUNCIL

**REPORT OF: Chief Executive**

**REPORT NO. CEX378**

**DATE: 6 September 2007**

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

|                                                            |                                                                                                                                                          |                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:</b> | ALL                                                                                                                                                      |                                         |
| <b>CORPORATE PRIORITY:</b>                                 | ALL                                                                                                                                                      |                                         |
| <b>CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:</b>                    | YES                                                                                                                                                      |                                         |
| <b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:</b>            | THIS REPORT IS AVAILABLE VIA THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY LINK ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE<br><a href="http://WWW.SOUTHKESTEVEN.GOV.UK">WWW.SOUTHKESTEVEN.GOV.UK</a> |                                         |
| <b>INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>                  | <b>Carried out and appended to report?</b><br><br>Yes                                                                                                    | <b>Full impact assessment required?</b> |
| <b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>                                  | 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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:

| <b>Priority</b>            | <b>Progress Score</b> | <b>Future Category</b> | <b>Improvement Prospects</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 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

| <b>Priority</b>                  | <b>Definition</b>                                                                              | <b>Scope</b>                | <b>Lead Portfolio-holder</b> | <b>Proposed Targets</b>                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 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

| <b>Priority</b>      | <b>Definition</b>                                                                              | <b>Scope</b>                                                       | <b>Lead Portfolio-holder</b>     | <b>Proposed targets</b>                                                       |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Local Neighbourhoods | Developing welcoming, safe and self-reliant communities with a strong sense of local identity. | Housing solutions<br>Economic Development<br>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