

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 March 2012

Report of the Leader and Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet

1 COUNCIL'S KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2012/15

This report proposes a revised set of key priorities for 2012/15, taking account of reduced resources for the foreseeable future in the context of the national budget strategy and pressures on public finances.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 On 10 January 2012, Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the following seven key improvement priorities for the next three years of the current Administration:

Prioritise, develop and implement new approaches to service delivery to achieve affordable and sustainable levels of expenditure in the context of reduced resources.

Promote and support sustainable development, economic development and regeneration.

Promote a continuing supply of homes in the Borough, including affordable housing across all tenures, and work to prevent homelessness.

Involve, safeguard and meet the needs of children and young people.

Achieve a cleaner, smarter, better maintained and more sustainable environment.

Reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime.

Promote and provide opportunities to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

1.1.2 At that meeting Members endorsed the scope of the seven key improvement priorities and requested that a revised version be presented at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1.2 Updating our Key Priorities for 2012/15

1.2.1 In line with Members' request the Council's Management Team has revisited and updated the key priorities as follows:

"During 2012/15 we will work with a range of partners and our local communities towards achieving the following key priorities:

- A clean, smart, well maintained and sustainable Borough.
- Healthy living opportunities and community well-being.
- Children and young people who are safe, involved, with access to positive activities.
- Low levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.
- A continuing supply of homes, including affordable housing to buy and rent, and prevention of homelessness.
- Continued delivery of priority services and a financially viable Council.
- Sustainable regeneration of Tonbridge town centre and economic development in communities across the Borough."

1.2.2 Compared with the earlier draft Members will see that the revised wording:

- explicitly recognises that much of what we do involves working closely with partners, and also with our communities
- refers to "key priorities" rather than "key improvement priorities"
- sustains the focus on regeneration of Tonbridge, where the Council is able to use its own assets to this end
- is more straightforward and easier to understand.

while remaining within the scope of the earlier draft.

1.2.3 The reference to "key priorities" rather than "key improvement priorities" reflects the need for realism in the light of the very difficult financial situation for the foreseeable future. In particular, the first priority listed above is essentially about safeguarding what matters most rather than improvement. Its achievement is designed to help preserve the resources needed for the other key priorities.

1.2.4 At this stage the focus is on updating the key priorities rather than how we will work towards achieving them over the next three years. This will be set out more clearly in the Council's next performance plan, which will be presented to Members for approval in the summer cycle of meetings.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 There is no direct statutory requirement to specify a set of key priorities, although many of them are underpinned by statutory requirements.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 Establishing, and subsequently achieving, the Council's key priorities are central to effective performance management and delivering value for money.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 There would be a material risk to the Council's reputation and standing were it not to specify and subsequently deliver a set of key priorities.

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

1.6.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report.

1.7 Recommendations

1.7.1 We recommend that the revised set of seven key priorities be endorsed.

Background papers:

contact: Julie Beilby
Bruce Hill

Nil

Mark Worrall
Leader of the Council

David Hughes
Chief Executive

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	Equalities issues may need to be addressed in identifying and implementing improvement actions or other changes, not at this approval of priorities stage.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	As above
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?	N/A	

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.