

COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 14 th June 2016
Report Subject	Improvement Plan 2016-17
Cabinet Member	Corporate Management
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Improvement Plan for 2016-17 has been refreshed and updated to reflect the key priorities of the Council for next year.

The structure of the plan is retained with the eight priorities and the sub priorities. Five of the eight priorities continue with a refresh of longer term projects or ambitions, whereas the remaining three have been reviewed to reflect local circumstances and priorities.

There is also a new section within each sub priority which references national issues which have the potential to impact upon achievement of the priorities. These issues will also be referenced, where relevant, in the next refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2016-2020.

This final draft of the Improvement Plan is the result of considerations by Overview and Scrutiny Committees within their respective terms of reference. A positive endorsement of the Plan has been received from these committees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To adopt the Improvement Plan 2016-17 prior to final publication by the end of June.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-17
1.01	It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan. It is a statutory requirement for the County Council to adopt the Improvement Plan.
1.02	The name 'Improvement' Plan could be taken as a misnomer in a climate of reducing financial resources where 'improvement' itself could be as much as maintaining or even reducing performance in order to continue to provide priority public services. Therefore the next iteration plan for 2017-18 onwards may be more appropriately named.
1.03	Improvement Objectives and an accompanying Improvement Plan were first set and adopted by the Council in 2011. For 2013/14 the Council thoroughly reviewed the priorities to streamline them and reset them with clearer outcome based aims. A revised set of eight priorities supported by a structure of sub-priorities was adopted.
1.04	<p>The Plan presentation remains unchanged, as it has been well received and commented upon favourably. The only main change has been an additional section of 'National Policy' issues listed within each relevant sub-priority. These are issues over which we have little control and which may restrict successful and or timely delivery of our priorities.</p> <p>They are issues of national interest and have the potential to impact upon achievement of the priorities. These issues will also be referenced, where relevant, in the next refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2016-2020.</p>
1.05	<p>For 2016-17 a review of the current priorities and sub-priorities has been undertaken to set: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • priorities that continue into 2016-17 for sustained attention; • priorities that can now be removed as completion of a time-limited piece of work and are now embedded e.g. Universal Credit preparation, use of the National Procurement Service • priorities which could be broadened into more strategic issues e.g. 'Creating jobs and growing the local economy', the care home market; • priorities which could be merged e.g. Maximising Income and Fuel Poverty; • emerging priorities for 2016-17 e.g. Improving chances for Looked after Children, mental health. <p>Sub-priorities have also been set to take into account Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny priorities, priorities of partners, public views and service demands and national policy and legislation.</p>

1.06	<p>For each sub-priority which continues to be high profile for 2016-17 there has been a review based on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reasoning for the priority status; • what we will do and how we will measure achievement; and • the risks that will need to be managed.
1.07	<p>The Improvement Plan in totality is presented as 2 documents that are inter-related; firstly the 'public' version of our statements of intent around the 8 priorities (Appendix 1) and secondly the document that describes the targets and milestones on which achievement will be measured (Appendix 2). This is the document that is used by Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees to monitor progress during the year.</p> <p>There are a number of measures and milestones which have yet to be confirmed; these will be finalised in the published documents.</p>
1.08	<p>The final Improvement Plan will be available as a web-based document published on the website before the end of June.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Resource implications have been considered during preparation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and will continue to be monitored during the regular budget monitoring and financial planning arrangements.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>All Overview and Scrutiny Committees have had the opportunity to consider and review the content of the draft Plan priorities including the opportunity to scrutinise targets set for 2016/17.</p> <p>Comments and actioned responses are outlined in Appendix 3.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>Delivery of the plan objectives is risk managed within each of the sub priorities of the Improvement Plan and is monitored and reported against quarterly by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>The risks to the statutory requirements of the Plan include: not publishing the plan within statutory timescales (30 June) and not adhering to the prerequisite content.</p> <p>Both these risks are managed through adherence to well established procedures for i) publishing the Plan and ii) ensuring that the content of the plan reflects the requirements of the Measure.</p> <p>An additional risk is that the Plan is not endorsed by Members; consultation with Members both individually and as part of the Scrutiny process allows for full engagement.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1: Improvement Plan 2016-17.</p> <p>Appendix 2: 'How we Measure' document</p> <p>Appendix 3: Overview and Scrutiny consultation</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None</p> <p>Contact Officer: Karen Armstrong, Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer Telephone: 01352 702740 E-mail: Karen.armstrong@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Improvement Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.
7.02	Medium Term Financial Strategy: a written strategy which gives a forecast of the financial resources which will be available to a Council for a given period, and sets out plans for how best to deploy those resources to meet its priorities, duties and obligations.