



PORTFOLIO AREA: POLICY, PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND RESOURCES

Date of Meeting: 1st June

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

Inside Policy Framework

Title: CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN
Report of: Strategic and Performance Services
Report reference: SP22/04

Summary:

This is the final draft Corporate Plan, which will include performance information, when available (from 30th May 2004). The Council's statutory requirements for this year's Performance Plan have been incorporated into the draft Corporate Plan. The Plan contains the Council's revised priorities, which address a key recommendation of our CPA inspection.

Recommendations:

That Members

- Endorse the final draft Corporate Plan 2004 -2007

Contact Officer: Jennifer Williams
7163

Ext:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: CPA self assessment, CPA inspection report and a report on Performance Management Framework to Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14th August 2003.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 The Council has carried out a prioritisation exercise, following this the Corporate Plan needed to be revised to cover the next three years. The Local Government Act 1999 requires all best value authorities to prepare an annual performance plan, these requirements have been incorporated into the Corporate Plan, although a performance update will need to be published annually (including a review of performance and performance indicators).
- 1.2 The final draft Corporate Plan does not include any performance indicator information, as this will not be available until the end of May 2004. The design and lay out of the document is not available for comment, as it will not be available until June 2004.
- 1.3 The Plan contains the Council's revised priorities, which address a key recommendation of our CPA inspection.
- 1.4 Comments from Corporate Management Team and Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been incorporated into the Plan. The excerpts from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are attached. Executive comments will be posted a.s.a.p. after the Executive meeting on 24th May 2004.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Consultation to Date.
Corporate Management Team; Overview & Scrutiny Committees; Executive

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members:

- Endorse the final draft Corporate Plan 2004 - 2007

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Government Act 1999 requires all best value authorities to prepare an annual performance plan and following the prioritisation exercise the Council needed to revise its Corporate Plan to cover the next few years.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: CPA self assessment, CPA inspection report and a report on Performance Management Framework to Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14th August 2003.

- Staffing/Resources –
- Financial – Funding for the Corporate/Performance Plan will be committed from this years (2003/04) best value budget (subject to agreed carry forward).
- Legal – Requested that reporting dates to Executive were aligned with constitution (4 weeks consultation period with Executive). Therefore today's special Executive meeting was requested.
- Corporate – The Corporate/Performance Plan covers corporate issues.
- Risk Management – If the Corporate Plan is not published by 30th June 2004 the Council will of defaulted on its statutory obligations for the Performance Plan and may be subject to action from Audit Commission.
- Equality Issues – The Corporate Plan will be made available in other formats, if requested.
- Environmental – The Corporate Plan will be available in CD format.
- Crime and Disorder – N/A
- Impact on Customers – N/A

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Carlisle City Council Corporate Plan 2004 - 2007

Foreword – Leader of the Council

Welcome to Carlisle City Council's Corporate Plan for 2004 – 2007, which sets out what we plan to achieve over the next three years. It establishes what our priorities are and explains how we plan to improve services to achieve those priorities.

Our mission is: -

'To ensure a high quality of life for all in both our urban and rural communities'

Local Government is currently subject to a great deal of radical reform, arguably at a faster pace of change than any other sector in Britain today. Throughout that change, the Council must provide an excellent level of service to the local community and maintain focus on improving quality of life. The Council has undertaken a significant amount of research, at a national, regional and local level, into the issues that contribute to a positive quality of life, the findings which have been translated into the Council's priorities, or 'promises' for Carlisle.

These promises are: -

- To ensure Carlisle is a safe and attractive place to live where people feel they belong and are included
- To develop a sustainable economy
- To manage our environment responsibly
- To improve local people's housing, health and wellbeing
- To provide sound Council management

(Signature)

Councillor Mike Mitchelson

Leader - Carlisle City Council

June 2004

Introduction

Recent Government legislation designed to modernise local government has provided a collection of more than 20 policy initiatives including Best Value (see page...), the development of alternative ways of providing services through electronic government and, arguably most importantly, the principle of community leadership. Community leadership dictates that councils should review and take steps to strengthen relationships with key public, private and voluntary sector organisations in their area. With them, and in consultation with local people, they should develop a strategy for promoting the long-term economic, social and environmental well being of their area setting out the strategic priorities for the area and the contribution of each of the key contributors. Information on how Carlisle City Council is carrying out its community leadership responsibilities is set out on page xx.

Another important policy development for local government was the introduction of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), an Ofsted-style inspection of the quality of council services. Carlisle City Council's inspection was carried out in June 2003 and, as a result, the Council has been judged as:

'A good authority that is making progress on improving the quality of life for local people'.

More information on the outcome of the CPA inspection is set out on page xx of this plan.

Carlisle City Council's Corporate Plan is an over arching strategic document, which sets out the Council's priorities for 2004 to 2007. It outlines our mission, our underpinning values and how the Council will work towards achieving excellence in core services.

The plan demonstrates how the Council will continue to improve its services in order to keep its promises to the people of Carlisle.

Context

Carlisle District Profile

Carlisle is the most northerly of Cumbria's six districts, covering over 400 square miles of outstanding natural environment. It stretches from the Scottish and Northumbrian borders in the north and east, to Allerdale and the Solway Firth in the west and the Lake District in the south. Carlisle is remote from other main centres of population, being 300 miles from London, over 90 miles from Glasgow and Edinburgh over 50 from Newcastle-upon-Tyne and 119 from Manchester.

Carlisle is the second most populous district in Cumbria but density is low at 98 persons per square kilometre, and the City has a large rural hinterland. It is the regional commercial, administrative and retail centre serving a catchment population of around 450,000 who live within an hours travelling time. It is a significant transport hub for rail services and the national road network. There is the prospect of scheduled air services to London from Carlisle Airport.

The economy has been built on traditional industries. The modern economy is characterised by food processing, agricultural support, automotive component manufacturing and engineering. The dominant sectors are primarily branch plant operations in wholesaling and retailing, manufacturing, public administration and health services. Carlisle is a sub-regional retail centre and tourism is important and growing. Its regional role is greatly enhanced by the Lanes Shopping Centre, the Sands Leisure Centre and Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery.

Carlisle in Figures

The following link will take you to Carlisle's profile (2001 census). The profile covers population, people, places and families, ethnicity, health, work and housing. For ward information click on the neighbourhood link and type in the postcode or ward name.

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/16ud.asp>

Carlisle City Vision

The Local Government Act 2000 defined a new role for local authorities – that of a community leader. Carlisle City Council takes its role as a community leader seriously and, together with a diverse range of local partners from the private, public, education and voluntary sectors, has set out an ambitious agenda for change in the Community Plan for the district, entitled City Vision. The City Vision document articulates partners' aspirations for Carlisle for the period until

2012. Carlisle City Council has undertaken to contribute towards their achievement wherever possible.

Those aspirations were categorised into five themes, listed below, and this corporate plan reflects those and shows how Carlisle City Council will continue to assist in achieving the long-term aspirations established in the Vision

- communities
- economic prosperity
- health and well being
- infrastructure, environment and transport
- celebrating Carlisle

The Corporate Plan identifies Carlisle City Council's contribution to these aspirations.

The Learning City

There has been strong growth in the Higher Education sector in Carlisle over the last three-years and the City's full-time equivalent student population numbers some 3,000. There are continuing skill shortages, with skill gaps reported most frequently by local businesses being information technology, essential skills (literacy and numeracy), engineering and technical skills and personal skills.

To influence these issues the key current priority for the City Vision Partnership is the achievement of Learning City status for Carlisle. This will enhance the City's reputation for further and higher education provision but will also further develop Carlisle as a dynamic sub-regional centre. Positive outcomes emerging from Learning City status will include:

- Encouragement of lifelong learning in all sections of the Community
- Increasing and retaining skills in the area
- Strengthening the educational infrastructure and the intake of local students
- The introduction of a knowledge based economy
- Meeting the needs of renewal and regeneration. Engaging with hard to reach groups to promote learning opportunities
- The celebration of diversity

This concept links together many local strategies and learning schemes currently being developed by individual organisations. Partnership working will achieve greater results than the Council could achieve on its own and provide infrastructure that enables learning, promotes participation and assists regeneration and social development.

Local Strategic Partnership with Eden

Carlisle City Council has a long history of successful partnership working and well-established links with neighbouring councils, in particular through the emerging Local Strategic Partnership with Eden District Council.

The principles underpinning this partnership are to be formalised in a local strategic partnership agreement focusing on those areas where joint working can bring mutual community benefits. For example, the Green Box Recycling Scheme supports strategic aims identified in both Carlisle City Vision and Eden Futures (Eden District's Community Plan). Action arising from this agreement will be implemented through the Carlisle City Vision Partnership to ensure that the interests of Carlisle are met.

Devolution to the English Regions

Responsibility for issues such as jobs, housing and transport in the north-west is split between many Government departments and organisations which make decisions which affect the lives of people in the region, but which are answerable to the Government in Westminster. In addition, these organisations spend about £780 million each year.

The Government believes that these organisations should be accountable to and democratically elected by the people who are affected by their decisions. This is why the in Northwest region, along with the Northeast, Yorkshire and Humberside, that there is to be a referendum on whether there should be an elected regional assembly. John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, has described the exercise as "(...) handing power to the regions".¹

An elected regional assembly for the Northwest is a real prospect. Preparations are now being made for a referendum on an elected regional assembly and the ODPM has embarked on a consultation exercise to determine the powers of these assemblies.

The announcement of the Government's intention to hold the referendums triggered a review of local government in those areas of these regions where there are two tiers of local authority. The aim of these reviews is to simplify local

¹ Transcript from a presentation to the Kendal Regional Hearing, 15th April 2004.

government in those areas where there were to be a regional assembly. If the people of the Northwest vote 'yes' to a directly elected regional assembly in October 2004, Carlisle will form part of a larger unitary local authority.

A key priority for the Council is to manage the local implications of Regional Government and ensure that any adverse impact on local service delivery in the event of any change is minimised as well as support Council staff through the change. Local authorities will need to develop capacity to work within the new regional framework to be able to effectively influence other areas of public provision in their areas.

Council Values

The Council's core values underpin everything Carlisle City Council does and are based upon consultation, Members' aspirations and good practice within Local Government.

Putting Customers First

We will ensure that the needs of our customers are at the heart of everything we do

Valuing Staff

We will support, praise and invest in our workforce

Achieving Equality

We will provide equal access for all to goods, services, facilities and opportunities

Being an Open and Accountable Organisation

We will give our public comprehensive information wherever possible and accept responsibility for our actions

Being Sustainable

We will make best use as an Organisation of the earth's limited resources and encourage sustainable practices amongst our partners and communities

Working in Partnership

We will avoid duplication of effort and maintain our focus through the effective use of partnership resources

Striving for Improvement

We will foster a 'can do' culture in which we strive for improvement and positive change

Managing Effectively

Our Organisation will be characterised by clear leadership, informed decision making, robust scrutiny and an honest appraisal of risk

Council Priorities

A number of aims have been identified which will have impact on the achievement of the Council promises over the life of the Corporate Plan. Detailed actions to achieve those aims will be set out in individual strategies (e.g. the Crime & Disorder Strategy) and within each Business service plan.

In addition, objectives have been identified for each aim (set out in bullet-point form below each aim). These are SMART wherever possible and are intended to enable the Council to measure its progress towards the achievement of the aims and, therefore, the promises.

The aims and objectives set out below provide a broad agenda for the Council, with significant workload attached.

The five promises and the priority aims within them are set out below.

To ensure Carlisle is a safe and attractive place to live where people feel they belong and are included

Priority Aim: Reduce crime and the fear of crime

- To increase the percentage of the population of Carlisle who consider themselves safe in their area (to be measured by a three-year user survey from a baseline)

Priority Aim: Develop Carlisle's regional status

- In partnership, increase investment in student facilities
- Position Carlisle as a sub-regional centre for local government service provision
- Increase the number of visitors / repeat visitors to Carlisle by x% annually
- Increase visitor spend by x% annually

Priority Aim: Improve the perception of Carlisle as a place to live

- Increase percentage of population satisfied with their area as a place to live by 5% in three years. Baseline survey with three-year follow up. (Initial focus on Carlisle South and ethnic minority residents)

Priority Aim: Increase community engagement and access to local services

- Increase the perception of local people who consider they influence local decision making by 5% per year. (Annual Survey).
- Increase voter turnout by at least 5% in June 2004 elections and thereafter to national average.

Priority Aim: Improve cultural, leisure and sporting facilities

- To use culture, leisure and sport activities and opportunities to enable change in the community
- To publish a sustainable development plan for Tullie House by 2005
- To increase the numbers and scope of users at the Sheepmount by extending the athletics and recreational facilities

To develop a sustainable economy

Priority Aim: Develop Carlisle's infrastructure

- Assist in securing transport infrastructure improvements to and from Carlisle
- Ensure a ten-year supply of industrial land and supporting infrastructure

Priority Aim: Broaden and enhance the economic base

- Increase the proportion of high value knowledge based industries in Carlisle
- Increase the number of new businesses and the survival rate of new businesses
- Support the growth of indigenous businesses
- Increase inward and local investment in Carlisle

Priority Aim: Develop and retain skills in the area

- In partnership with institutions, to increase HE/FE student numbers to 10,000 in ten-years
- In partnership raise the overall level of skills in the local workforce
- Provide a suitable range of housing for employment purposes

To manage our environment responsibly

Priority Aim: Promote good, sustainable access and transportation in and around the City

- Support the practical delivery of the Local Transport Plan 2005

Priority Aim: Encourage waste minimisation and recycling

- Government recycling targets by 2006/07

Priority Aim: Conserve and develop our built heritage and natural environment for local people and visitors

- Improve energy efficiency practices in Council buildings to meet Government targets and achieve cost savings on 1% per year
- To ensure local air quality does not breach government air quality limits

Priority Aim: Utilise planning regulations to ensure sustainable development

- To maximise the development of commercial housing and development on brownfield sites to x% in y years
- To apply Section 106 wherever possible to maintain and enhance the environmental infrastructure

To improve local people's housing, health and wellbeing

Priority Aim: In partnership, alleviate deprivation and social exclusion

- In partnership remove all Wards from the top 20% of the index of multiple deprivation by 2010
- Increase the percentage of benefit take-up by those entitled to it in Carlisle by x% in y years
- Increase £ delivered via area forums annually
- Increase the scale and impact of young people's activities in target areas

Priority Aim: In partnership, promote healthy living and lifestyles

- In partnership contribute to the delivery of Primary Care Trust health targets
- Develop corporate Child Protection Procedures by December 2004, which comply with Cumbria County Councils own procedures
- Increase by x% the number of people taking regular moderate exercise in Carlisle
- Contribute towards the Health priorities in Carlisle, especially in relation to obesity and high mortality rates of women

Priority Aim: Ensure the provision of suitable housing

- In consultation, produce detailed, SMART Housing Strategy by October 2004 for the period 2004 to 2009
- Achieve upper quartile performance for private sector dwellings made fit/returned to occupation/demolished per annum
- Ensure all housing in multiple occupation meets the requirements of the Council's registration scheme by December 2004, in preparation for the introduction of the new Housing Act in 2005
- By December 2004 produce an empty homes strategy to ensure that the number of empty properties being brought back into use achieves upper quartile performance in 2005/06

Priority Aim: Provide support and housing to people who are, or are potentially, homeless and/or vulnerable

- To avoid use of bed and breakfast accommodation except in emergency cases
- Undertake a fundamental review of the Council's homelessness stock provision by 2005

To provide sound Council management

Priority Aim: Put customers first

- Increase customer satisfaction by 2% per year
- To increase to 80% the number of customers dealt with at first point of contact
- To meet Government targets for electronic delivery of all relevant services by 2005

Priority Aim: Improve the health and development of staff and Members

- To increase the percentage of Members who feel they have sufficient skills and knowledge to perform their role effectively
- To increase the percentage of staff who feel they have sufficient skills/knowledge to fulfil their role effectively
- Reduce the incidents of sickness of Council Staff to National targets by X

Priority Aim: Improve decision making through the provision of information

and the management of risk

- To develop the use of robust, SMART, business cases to improve the quality of decision making

Priority Aim: Provide sound Council management

- Adequately match resources to priorities
- To produce a Procurement Strategy in line with the National Strategy and to generate 2% cost savings year on year through procurement
- Identify 2% efficiency savings year on year and reinvest in priority areas
- Improve collection rates of Council Tax and NNDR by x% by y

Priority Aim: *Strengthen performance management*

- Achieve 100% PI collection accuracy and timeliness
- Achieve top quartile performance in nationally prescribed performance indicators
- Further develop Overview and Scrutiny implementing the learning from an Annual Overview and Scrutiny Workshop

In order for the Council to focus its resources where they are likely to achieve the greatest impact, the Council has identified the following as high Council priorities for the next three years.

- **Develop Carlisle's regional status**
- **Develop Carlisle's infrastructure**
- **In partnership, alleviate deprivation and social exclusion**
- **Achieve excellence in core Council services**

Key Achievements

Carlisle City Council has had many achievements over the last few years, as reflected in a CPA 'good' score given by the Audit Commission on an inspection.

Examples of improvements under our promise areas are given briefly below.

To ensure Carlisle is a safe and attractive place to live where people are included

The Council has an effective working relationship with the partners through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, established in 1999. The Chamber of Commerce plays an active role in the Leadership Group and a community partnership, targeted at crime hotspots in the south of the urban area, tackles issues of high priority for residents in those areas.

Carlisle City Council has a total of 75 Cameras, which are monitored 24 hours a day, 365 days a year from within the Council's Control Room. Of these, 65 are located in public open space, and include 7 from the Lanes Shopping Centre, which are owned by the Lanes. The remaining 10 Cameras are located within the Civic Centre building. CCTV is involved in approximately 2000 incidents a year, which result in approximately 900 arrests, and is most effective where monitoring is co-ordinated with the Shopwatch and Pubwatch schemes. The effectiveness of this co-ordination was recognised in 2003 with a Safer Shopper award from the British Retail Consortium. The Council has received awards for Secured Car Parks in recognition of Community Safety.

In 2003 we were awarded the Green Flag Award for Bitts Park. In 2004 Bitts Park retained the Green Flag award and Hammonds Pond and Kingmoor Nature Reserve South also achieved the distinction of the award. Carlisle also achieved the distinction of a Silver Award at the 2003 Britain in Bloom awards.

The Carlisle Rural Strategy 'Listening to the Rural Voice' was published in 2003. It was developed in close partnership with the Carlisle Parish Councils Association and sets out a vision and action plan that will create the best opportunities for prosperity and an improved quality of life for the rural areas of Carlisle. Further support is given to the Parish Councils through the Rural Support Officer and the annual Parish Council and Village Hall Capital Grant Schemes.

The Council follows national guidelines on 'rural proofing' when making decisions. Rural proofing means to assess the impact of policies and programmes on rural areas and rural communities.

To improve local people's housing, health and well being

Carlisle City Council is the accountable body for the Carlisle South Sure Start scheme which funds a £10 million programme of projects and activities to support parents and children under 4.

The Council's Benefits Advice Centre was awarded the Community Legal Service Quality Mark in May 2002.

The Council transferred all of its 11 community centres to charitable trust status between 2000 and 2003 to provide them with sustainability, managerial independence and financial freedom.

The GP referral scheme 'Exercise on Prescription' operated in conjunction with the local Primary Care Trust and GPs, provides 12 weeks of carefully supervised exercise for individuals identified by their GPs as being likely to benefit from an exercise regime.

The Council's Sport & Recreation Unit has recently achieved Quest accreditation, the UK quality scheme for sport and leisure. The Council supports many activities and initiatives for children and young people including the development of the Skateboard Park, the Face2Face mobile play unit project, free pilot holiday scheme 'Go 4 it' aimed at 10 to 18 years olds and summer holiday coaching for 8 to 15 years old.

In 2003 Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery was awarded the Tourism website of the year and a gold award for its large visitor attraction by the Cumbria Tourism Board.

Managing our Environment Responsibly

Carlisle City Council and Eden District Councils have expanded their kerbside-recycling scheme. Refuse in green boxes across Carlisle and Eden is now collected from 38,000 households in Carlisle and 15,000 households in Eden. A survey of participants has found that 80% now recycle refuse, compared to 50% prior to the introduction of the scheme. Garden waste is now collected from 30,000 households in Carlisle and 15,000 households in Eden.

Both Carlisle City Council's cemetery and crematorium have been recognised as the best in the Country for 2004 by the Natural Death Centre. This is one of the leading organisations providing information on funerals and pays particular attention to services offering sustainable alternatives.

In 2002 the Council was awarded the APSE Gold Award in recognition of achieving excellence in environmental practices.

In 2003 we were awarded the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 'Team of the Year' for the Northwest region.

The Audit Commission judged the Council's waste management and public conveniences as a 'good' service in June 2002.

In 2003 the Council led a partnership including Stagecoach, County Council, Chamber of Commerce and the Lanes Shopping Centre to implement a pilot seasonal park and ride scheme. The scheme aimed to reduce traffic congestion and encourage visitors to visit Carlisle during the busy Christmas period and ran from the school half term in October through to the first weekend in January. Nearly 3,000 passengers used the scheme and traffic congestion on the A7 into the City was noticeably reduced.

Developing a Sustainable Economy

The Council provides a range of business development services including business premises on Council owned industrial estates, managed workspace at the Carlisle Enterprise Centre Brampton Business Centre and information on land and premises availability. Carlisle Enterprise Centre comprises of 32 offices, 18 workshops and two training rooms and is available to business start-ups, the current occupancy rate is over 80% and the survival rate of the 320 businesses, which have occupied the space, is over 90%.

In February 2004 the British Standards Institution granted the Council its registration mark for its 'Quality Management System', which looks at how Building Regulation applications and inspections are dealt with.

In Botchergate some 11,900 square metres of new leisure related floor space is currently being developed by the private sector in a previously run-down area of the City Centre.

The Council has three strategic property partnerships, which it has contributed to. The Lanes, a city retailing development, providing space for over 90 shops and the main library; the Market Hall, providing space for over 40 small businesses and adding to retailing diversity; and Kingmoor Park strategic employment site, providing a ten-year supply of industrial, office and warehousing space, now home to over 100 tenants and 1,200 jobs, including a site for 350 businesses and 12,000 jobs – about 20% of Carlisle’s workforce.

The Kingmoor Park scheme added £500,000 value to major junction improvements at the A7 with the Council’s Kingstown Industrial Estate, in partnership with the private sector and County Council through Section 106 and 278 Agreements.

Promoting Carlisle

The Council organises high-profile events, which contribute significantly to raising the City’s profile as a regional centre including the Spring Show, Cumberland Weekend, Carnival, Pop2thePark, Fireshow, Festival of the Nations, Continental and Farmers Market. The City Centre Marketing Initiative, in partnership with key City Centre businesses, develops and promotes an attractive events and activities programme. Membership of the Great British Cities Marketing Consortium is assisting in raising the national profile of the City. Carlisle promotes itself as a special destination for Christmas shopping and seasonal entertainment and in 2003, with the additional support of the NWDA and private sector sponsors, further established the City as the sub-region’s leading Christmas shopping experience and a significant force in the Northwest region.

As part of our commitment to increasing citizens’ participation in democracy the Council has taken part in Local Democracy Week since 2001, this includes the election of a Young Mayor. To encourage young people to exercise their democratic rights, we launched an innovative ‘First time voter’ marketing campaign 'Don't Vote, Don't Moan' in advance of the May 2003 elections, using graphic design students from Carlisle Institute of the Arts. We have consulted with education specialists to explore a pilot Citizenship pack in local schools. A first time voter event was held in April 2004 and information packs were sent to all first time voters.

Provide Sound Council Management

Our 2002 user satisfaction poll demonstrates the very high level of customer satisfaction with our services, with an increase in satisfaction with the Council of 19% to 80% within two-years. We aim to continue that increase in satisfaction.

In the period from 2000 to 2003 our performance has been in the top quartile of our benchmark family group for environmental management, planning, culture, leisure and sport and in aspects of community safety, Council Tax collection and corporate health. There has been a general upward trend in performance indicators over the past year. During this time, Carlisle City Council has improved its overall performance.

In April 2004 the Council successfully re-achieved the Lexcel accreditation, this is the Law Society's Quality Assurance, in 2001 Carlisle City Council was the first authority in Cumbria to be awarded the Standard.

Carlisle City Council was awarded the highest possible rating from Government Office Northwest for both its Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan for the years 2001/02 and 2002/03 and consequently formal approval by the Government is no longer required. These strategies are part of the Council's overall Medium Term Financial Planning process which link priorities and performance to the budget allocation process. The Strategic Financial Planning Group monitor this process.

In 2003 the Connected Cumbria Partnership, comprising all local authorities in Cumbria, attracted significant investment towards its joint e-government agenda and has since established and staffed a County office. The City Council led the joint procurement of a local content management system, resulting in cost savings of £15,000 per authority.

In 2003 the CPA inspectors found the Council's Housing and Council Tax Benefits Services to be providing a 'fair to good' performance with 'good' proven capacity to improve. The report identifies comprehensive strengths and we have developed an action plan to make further improvements over the next 12 months to this important public service.

Monitoring the Corporate Plan

Performance Management

The Council has adopted a Performance Management Framework which aims to help everyone in the Council understand how they fit into the authority and how they contribute towards achieving the priorities identified in the Corporate Plan.

Performance Management involves managing and monitoring performance against plans and will assist the Council to continuously improve services and achieve excellence in service delivery.

There are three elements to a Performance Management system:

Plan - What you are trying to achieve and how to achieve it

Carlisle City Council has adopted the **Carlisle City Vision** (the community plan) as the framework for its Corporate Plan. The **Corporate Plan** sets out the priorities for 2004 to 2007 and identifies the Council's contribution to Carlisle City Vision. The Corporate Plan provides an important focus for members, officers and partners of the Council around the Council's priority areas.

Councils have a statutory duty to produce an annual Performance Plan and as a 'Good Council', Carlisle City Council can incorporate this year's performance plan requirements into the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan will cover the next few years; therefore a performance update will need to be published annually.

Do - Develop and undertake tasks to achieve your plans

Each business unit produces a **business plan** before the start of the financial year (April). The business plans focus on unit improvement and create a link between Council priorities and a unit's day to day activities. A business plan does not list all the activities a unit engages in, but focuses on those which are priorities or which have the greatest scope for improvement.

Each team within business unit produce a **team plan**, which is more, detailed than the business plans and describes day-to-day activities. Team Plans are used as a management tool to help teams prioritise and achieve their objectives in the business plan.

Review - Review progress against your plan and amend 'do' if necessary to ensure achievement

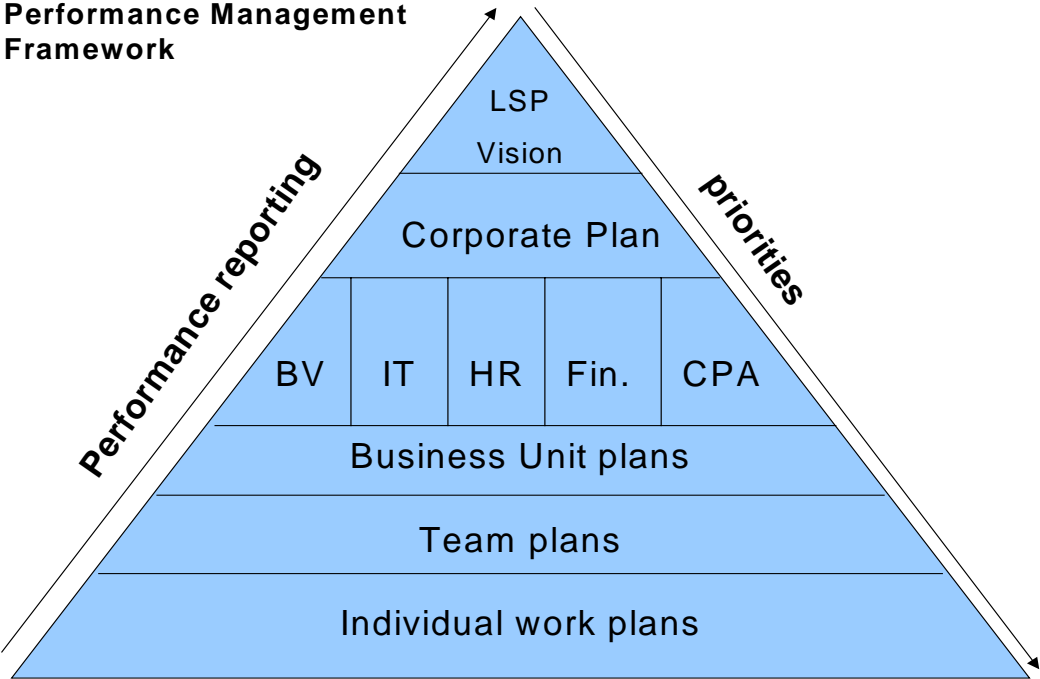
Each individual has an **appraisal** to review their performance over the past year, set objectives and identify training needs for coming year.

Performance indicators (PIs) are measures of performance, which are used to monitor plans. The Council has a statutory duty to annually publish its performance on best value performance indicators, which are set by the Audit Commission. Also local indicators that each business unit has developed which reflect the work that they do. The Council also compares its performance against others where possible. Selected performance indicators have been aligned with the Councils priorities on pages ... For all other performance indicators see appendix ...

Performance monitoring reports are provided for the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

Best Value Improvement Plan progress is reported to the most appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six-monthly basis.

Business plan monitoring reports and performance against them are provided on a twelve-weekly basis to Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the most appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.



Financial Planning

Financial and Performance Management are reviewed concurrently. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides the corporate financial planning framework to provide strategic direction to the Council for the forward three years and to ensure that the financial resources of the Council are directed to achieving the Council's key corporate objectives. The MTFP supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan and is directed by its stated aims and objectives.

An improved Carlisle Performance & Council Tax Summary 2004/2005 was distributed along with the Council Tax letters to every household in March 2004. The leaflet details where Carlisle City Council's money comes from, what areas it is spent on and includes an explanation of changes in budget requirement.

The Carlisle Performance & Council Tax Summary 2004/05 leaflet is available at:
<http://www.carlisle.gov.uk/council/publications/index.html>

Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Best Value

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) aims to help Councils improve their services to local communities. It is an overall review of how Councils are performing and their ability to perform well in the future.

The Council had to produce a self-assessment on its achievements, learning and future plans. The Audit Commission assessed the Council against its self-assessment in June 2003.

The Audit Commission judged our Council as 'good' from a scale of poor to excellent. We were the only council in Cumbria to be judged as 'good'.

'Carlisle City Council is a good authority that is making progress on improving the quality of life for local people'

Carlisle City Council's Comprehensive Assessment Inspection Report September 2003.

Following CPA, the Council has reviewed its activities to establish clear, measurable priorities based on what the local community has told us is important to them and these are reflected in this Corporate Plan.

Carlisle City Council's self-assessment and Audit Commission report are available on the Council's website: www.carlisle.gov.uk. Other Council CPA reports are available at: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/>

CPA Improvement Planning

Since April 2003, the ODPM and LGA have been working in partnership to develop a capacity building programme that will support long term sustainable improvement for English local authorities. To support the development of the programme, ODPM/LGA have undertaken a programme of pilots that trial innovative ways of working and 'pave the way' for other authorities. Each pilot includes some clear outputs that can be disseminated to other authorities and their partner organisations. The analysis and effectiveness of the pilots will be used in future programme development.

Carlisle City Council is working with the IDeA/Audit Commission and the other six Cumbrian Councils as a pilot to on a countywide capacity building programme.

The programme is called Achieving Cumbrian Excellence (ACE) and will supplement the Council's own CPA improvement plan and address common issues based on the CPA findings across all seven Cumbrian Councils to increase capacity.

The broad areas covered by the programme include member development, action learning sets for accelerated improvement, learning from best practice – sharing experience and expertise with councils outside Cumbria and local delivery of national capacity building programmes.

Carlisle City Council, in particular will concentrate on:

- The development of a HR strategy
- Address needs of all community groups
- Embed performance management internal and external services
- Develop a corporate approach to project management including risk management and procurement
- Adopt a consistent approach to benchmarking
- Develop Housing Strategy role

The actions to improve these areas will be incorporated into Business, Team and individual plans.

Best Value

Best Value is a challenging framework used by the Council to improve local services. The Council targets the review of service performance to ensure that service delivery is:

- High in quality
- Meets the needs of communities and Carlisle City Council priorities
- Provided at a price people are willing and able to pay
- Measures to secure continuous improvement

Reviews aim to identify weaknesses and key opportunities for improvement and re-think the way we provide services through applying the 4 Cs which are:

Challenge why and how a service is being provided

Compare performance with others to see where improvements could be made

Compete wherever practical, fairly and openly to provide the best services

Consult with local taxpayers, customers and the wider business community

Once a review is complete an improvement plan is agreed which includes areas requiring improvement and actions identified by the review.

The Council's future Best Value Review Programme will be revised to reflect the Council's priorities in 2004.

Update on Best Value Reviews

A number of best value reviews are ongoing and will continue into 2004/05, these are detailed below:

Revenues and Benefits Best Value Review

The aim of the review is to assist Revenues and Benefits Business Services to achieve excellence therefore the review focuses on the unit's weaknesses, which include telephone services to public, forms and publicity and delay in appeals in administration. The review will be completed by March 2005.

Democratic Engagement Best Value Review

This review has examined how Councillors and Officers of Carlisle City Council can better engage with the public.

Key outcomes of the review include a revised Consultation policy; an attainer's event for those newly entitled to vote, a plan to pilot web casting, promotion of different ways to vote and the development of a citizens pack for young people. The review will make a number of contributions to the member development programme including the development of a best Practice Guide for surgeries.

Planning Best Value Review

This review covers the whole of the Planning Services Business Unit including Building Control, Development Control, Local Plans and Conservation. The review has considered five themes including focussing on what matters to local people, assuring the quality development, enhancing customer care, reducing delay in service provision, reinforcing management systems to ensure quality. The review improvement plan will be produced in 2004.

Supporting Communities Best Value Review

The aim of the review was to assess the effectiveness of the role of Carlisle City Council in its work with partnerships. The review was focused on Carlisle City Council role in the SureStart Carlisle South partnership. The improvement plan includes actions to enable the council to use the review outcomes to inform and influence the Council's role in other partnerships.

A key outcome of the review was the need to develop a Partnership Policy for Carlisle City Council using the information from the review. The Partnership Policy will identify the Council's role and the monitoring of the council's performance in partnerships. A set of performance indicators will be developed alongside the Partnership Policy, which will measure the effectiveness of the Council's partnership role. The Partnership Policy will be developed by September 2004.

Glossary

ACE – Achieving Cumbria Excellence

APSE – Association for Public Service Excellence

CCTV – Close Circuit Television

CMT – Corporate Management Team

CPA – Comprehensive Performance Assessment

E-Government – Electronic Government

Fin - Finance

GONW – Government Office North West

HB/CTB – Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit

HE/FE – Higher Education/Further Education

HR – Human Resources

IT – Information Technology

LGA – Local Government Association

NNDR – National Non Domestic Rates

NWDA – North West Development Agency

ODPM – Officer of Deputy Prime Minister

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education

SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-framed

Appendices

Appendix 1 Details of Performance

- Out turn performance over past year on all BVPIs
- Targets for current year and subsequent two years for all BVPIs

Appendix 2 Brief statement of contracts

The second phase of transfer of staff to Carlisle Housing Association at the end of September 2003 and complied with best value requirements including workforce requirements in the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.

Appendix 3 How Carlisle City Council is organised

Carlisle City Council is one of six district councils in Cumbria. It has 52 councillors (Conservative 24, Labour 22, Liberal Democrat 5 and Independent 1), with elections held in thirds every three-years in four. Six councillors from the majority group make up the Council's Executive and are responsible for the following cross cutting portfolios:

- Health and community activities
- Economic prosperity
- Environment, infrastructure and transport
- Corporate resources
- Policy, performance and finance
- Promoting Carlisle

The Executive provides the leadership for the authority and is the body charged with the day to day decisions of the Council. Three Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Corporate Resources, Community and Infrastructure, support the work of the Council and the Executive as a whole by:

- Advising the Council and the Executive on policy, budget and service delivery
- Monitoring the decisions of the Executive

- Holding the Executive to account about decisions made by the Executive but not yet implemented

There are 35 Parishes within Carlisle district covering approximately 95% of the land area of Carlisle City Council. The CPA inspection report recognised that Carlisle City Council has enjoyed a long, strong and active relationship with the Parish Councils. The urban area of Carlisle is not parished. A Parish Charter was developed in 1998, which formally sets out the relationship between the City Council and the Parish Councils. The Charter is due to be renewed in light of the Government's Quality Parish Scheme.

Parishes are kept in touch with developments in the Council, informally and through joint bi-annual meetings. Over 90% of the Carlisle parishes are members of the Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC). The Carlisle Parish Councils Association (CPCA) and the district committee of CALC, hold quarterly meetings to which all members are invited.

Appendix 4 Plans and Strategies supporting Carlisle City Council's Corporate Strategy

Cross cutting strategies

Community Strategy (City Vision)

Rural Strategy (Listening to the Rural Voice)

To ensure Carlisle is a safe and attractive place to live where people feel they belong and are included:

Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy

Consultation Strategy

Equality Plan

Develop a sustainable economy

Marketing Strategy

Tourism Priority Plan

Economic Development Strategy

Public Relations Strategy

Partnerships Strategy

Manage our environment responsibly

Plans and alterations which together comprise the Development Plan

Local Transport Plan

Local Agenda 21 Strategy

Waste Management Strategy

Parks and Countryside Strategy

Emergency Planning

Improve local people's housing, health and wellbeing

Food Law Enforcement Service Plan

The plan and strategy which comprise the Housing Investment Programme

Partnership for Health Strategy

Supporting People Strategy

Recreation Strategy

Environmental Protection Plan

Environmental Health Strategy

Sports Development/Provision Plan

Provide sound Council management

Best Value Performance Plan

Council's Corporate Plan

Quality Protects Management Action Plan

Corporate Communications Strategy

Risk Management Plan

Human Resources Strategy

Health and Safety Strategy

Corporate Charging Policy

Performance Management Plan

Customer Care Strategy

IT Strategy

Investment Strategy

Asset Management Plan

Medium Term Financial Plan
Treasury Policy Statement
Capital Strategy
Strategic Audit Plan
Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
E-Government Strategy
Procurement Strategy

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