

Meeting	THE COUNCIL
Date	5 December 2013
Subject	Revised Strategic Plan
Purpose of the Report	To present specific suggestions for revising the Strategic Plan for 2013 - 14 in light of new challenges facing the Council.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 19 September 2013, the Full Council received a report from Councillor Peredur Jenkins on the new financial challenge facing the Council. Obviously, the details of the Council's exact settlement are becoming clearer and there will be some more concrete information available at the Full Council meeting on 5 December 2013. Among other things, the Council agreed to re-visit the Strategic Plan to identify which projects are absolutely necessary to achieve and which ones can be reconsidered.
- 1.2 This is important for several reasons. Firstly, with the enormous challenges that face us in finding savings in the coming years, a large proportion of the time of Council Members and Officers must be dedicated to identifying those savings. Therefore, it is necessary to weigh up the time required to do so against the time to work on more developmental matters. Also, all this is happening at a time of uncertainty following from the expected Sir Paul Williams Commission report on the future of public services in Wales. Obviously, if a clear message about reorganisation emerges from the report, then that brings another element to the picture, and one that will take considerable time and attention over the next few years. Therefore, it was necessary to take a fresh look at the Council's capacity to address some of the commitments in the Plan.

- 1.3 Secondly, financial resources are associated with some projects. Obviously, there will be huge pressure on resources in the coming years and there will be a need to weigh the Council's ability to invest in certain areas while seeking to find savings. It is important to remember that there will be a need to invest in some cases to find the savings necessary and it will be necessary to ensure that the Council has sufficient resources to be able to invest in order to save.
- 1.4 The Cabinet has been discussing these two elements and the discussions have considered the projects that should continue, come what may, and projects that can not be given any additional resources (in terms of capacity or money) at the moment. The Scrutiny Forum has also discussed the matter and expressed concern that this could lead to a failure to tackle key issues, such as responding to Climate Change, Fuel Poverty and Engagement. The comments of the Forum have been reported to the Cabinet.
- 1.5 In addition to the fact that the Council is reviewing its Strategic Plan, as has been reported previously, the Council will need to look, with its partners, at different ways of supporting and providing services and new preventive approaches to minimise or manage the demand for services. In this context, there needs to be a 'discussion' with the citizens of Gwynedd citizens about the future direction of public services.
- 1.6 This report sets out specific suggestions for revising the Plan's commitments for what remains of 2013 - 14. Having undertaken further assessment and analysis, it is important to note that the vast majority of the proposals of the original plan remains in place. In addition, the Cabinet has been able to free up financial resources in order to realise some of those proposals, even at a time when the Council is facing a financial crisis. For example, a sum of £1.983m of one-off resources has been released to support work in the field of Economy and £400,000 for work on the Welfare Reform agenda. The work of preparing proposals for 2014 - 15 onwards is in progress. One focus of the review is further prioritisation and also being far more disciplined and focused in terms of achieving clear outcomes for residents out of our work.

2. Revising the Strategic Plan - Specific Suggestions:

- 2.1 Presented below are specific suggestions for revising the Strategic Plan for 2013 - 14 in response to the challenges noted above. These suggestions are focused on making significant changes to the content of the Strategic Plan for 2013 - 14 in terms of deleting or substantially modifying some of the priorities, outcomes and proposals.

Priority	GOF3 - PROTECTING CHILDREN AND ADULTS
Change	Delete the delivery proposal: <i>We will also develop proposals in order to establish the nature of Adult Protection in Gwynedd through a review.</i>
Reason For The Change	Because of the challenging financial situation this project did not reach the high category in the Cabinet's re-prioritisation list. Overview of adult protection work is greeted in the Safeguarding Children and Adults Strategic Panel.

Priority	ECON1 - STRENGTHENING BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND RETAINING THE ECONOMIC BENEFIT LOCALLY
Change	Delete the 'Growing Indigenous Businesses Project' and its associated Measures.
Reason For The Change	Because of the challenging financial situation this project did not reach the high category in the Cabinet's re-prioritisation list. Work for 2013/14 is close to being completed and to achieving the proposals noted in the Strategic Plan for the year, but the funds and capacity are not sufficient for the project to continue in 2014-17.

Priority	ECON1 - STRENGTHENING BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND RETAINING THE ECONOMIC BENEFIT LOCALLY
Change	Delete the work of developing proposals for town centres and in the field of business succession.
Reason For The Change	The financial situation did not allow for extending resources to develop these activities. The work of developing proposals for supporting traditional businesses through difficult times will continue through the attention to e.business and e.commerce, the Gwynedd Buy Local Card and the This is Where Things Happen project.

Priority	AMG1 - PROMOTING AN APPROPRIATE SUPPLY OF HOUSING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE
Change	Change the ambition of the 'Vacant Properties Back Into Use Project' in relation to the number of empty properties bought back into use during 2013-14 from 95 to 54. An additional phrase has been included stating that money will be allocated to bring 10 additional vacant housing units back into use in the first quarter of 2014-15.

Reason For The Change	The ambition has been modified to reflect the level of resources allocated to the project. The additional clause has been included as the preparatory work will happen during the next few months but the units can not be brought back into use during 2013-14 due to the conditions of the grant that allow owners up to 6 months to make improvements and the grant is paid on completion of the work.
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Priority	AMG3 - RESPONDING TO THE THREAT OF CLIMATE CHANGE
Change	Delete the priority and 3 associated projects.
Reason For The Change	<p>The Delivery Panel has determined that it is not a priority following the process of re- prioritizing the Strategic Plan.</p> <p><i>Responding to Threats of Climate Change in the Long Term Project:</i> Elements of the work will be addressed as part of the development of the LDP but for a shorter term. Longer term elements can be picked up in future Strategic Plans.</p> <p><i>Responding to Threats of Climate Change Project (Increase in the number of residents living in areas with a high risk of flooding with a 'plan' to respond to instances of flooding):</i> Project to take place outside of the Strategic Plan and Service to do what it can within available resources. Project Leader to highlight any risks that arise or if we are likely to be operating outside of the law to the Delivery Panel for attention if necessary.</p> <p><i>Responding to Threats of Climate Change Project (Improving the Council's ability to respond to assist residents to deal with the side effects of flooding events):</i> Omit project from Strategic Plan and let the service do what it can as part of the Council's emergency planning work.</p>

Priority	CC2 - Reducing The Effects Of Poverty And Deprivation
Change	Delete the result: <i>More vulnerable individuals and communities receiving appropriate support to move forward.</i> Delete the delivery proposal: <i>Set the foundations for establishing a coordinated system to provide support for vulnerable individuals and communities, along with appropriate social plans to help people make ends meet.</i>
Reason For The Change	Reducing the effects of poverty and deprivation remains a priority. However, there is a need to place more emphasis this year on responding to the welfare reform agenda due to the immediate impact of these changes on some of the county's residents.

Priority	CC4 - PROMOTING COMMUNITY PRIDE AND RESPONSIBILITY
Change	Delete the following delivery proposal: <i>Pilot community pride in areas in order to learn what works.</i>
Reason For The Change	The Delivery Panel decided that the delivery proposal should be deleted from the Strategic Plan. As the emphasis of the project now is to identify methods to reduce demand and public dependency on the Council's services by promoting social activities rather than the environmental component within the community pride pilot.

- 2.2 A copy of the revised Strategic Plan is presented as an appendix to this report, for information only. Members will see that the Strategic Plan includes other minor changes and amendments. However, they are not listed above because they do not have a substantial or significant impact on the content and commitments for 2013 - 14.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council is asked to agree to the suggestions presented above with regards to revising the Strategic Plan for 2013 - 14 and adopt the revised Strategic Plan.
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