

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2008/2009

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Background Papers:- Direction of Travel Report
 Investors in People Report
Financial Implications:- None
Equalities Implications:- None
Legal Implications:- None
Options: N/A
Risks: None

1.0 Background

Braintree District Council produces four key corporate strategic documents each year as follows:

- **The Corporate Action Plan** which sets out our priorities for the coming financial year including details about how our day-to-day activities contribute to the achievement of the Council's priorities and details of the specific projects and actions which we will be carrying out that year in order to achieve our overall four-year strategic objectives.
- **The Corporate Performance Plan** which details our performance last year – how we performed compared with the previous year and the targets we have set ourselves for the next three years.
- **The Medium Term Financial Strategy** which sets out the financial implications of the objectives outlined in the Council's 'Direction and Ambition', outlines the Council's overall financial position and identifies a proposed financial strategy for the next three years.
- **The Corporate Improvement Plan** which sets out the actions which are going to be put in place internally within the organisation to ensure we are operating as efficiently as possible and are putting in place ongoing improvements.

This report presents the Corporate Improvement Plan 2008/2009. A copy is attached.

2.0 The Corporate Improvement Plan

The purpose of the Corporate Improvement Plan is to set a corporate framework and improvement plan for how we can 'shape up' collectively and achieve our goal of excellence in all aspects of our approach and delivery.

It focuses on four main themes for improvement which have been brought together this

year into a programme called 'Shaping up for Excellence' – details of which are set out in the Plan.

The four themes are:

- Customer Service
- People and Performance
- Communications and Engagement
- Innovation and Efficiency

Detailed Action Plans for improvement will be developed which are supplemental to the key documents referred to in Appendix 1 to the Plan. These will be brought together into a working version of the Improvement Plan which will be programme managed by Management Board and the Senior Manager's Group.

Progress against each of the actions will be reported to the Performance and Efficiency Group – by exception - on a quarterly basis.

DECISION:

That Members endorse the Corporate Improvement Plan

May 2008



‘Shaping Up For Excellence’

***Braintree District Council’s
Corporate Improvement Plan
2008/2009***

Shaping Up For Excellence

Corporate Improvement Plan

Introduction

As a service organisation, we have gone through many changes. We have reinvented ourselves to meet the changing needs of our customers, the external influences and the cost pressures over which we have limited control.

With the changes required, as a result of the housing transfer, there is an opportunity to refresh and invigorate what we are about as an organisation. To work towards aspirational goals that will make us proud of what we achieve. This paper sets out an approach on how we can continue our improvement journey in 'Shaping up for Excellence'.

It can be argued that the fine words in this paper, by themselves, do not improve anything. The key to change is in the culture of the organisation; how we deliver the services to our customers and the improvements that will come through ensuring the skills, experience, motivation and the tools to deliver an excellent service are developed and available.

The purpose of this document is to set a corporate framework and improvement plan for how we can 'shape up' collectively and achieve our goal of excellence in all aspects of our approach and delivery.

Shaping Up for Excellence - The Goal

We become a leader in public service in all aspects of our business and we gain a reputation for delivering excellence.

To achieve excellence, we need to ensure focus, clarity, capacity and capability. We start the journey from a strong base – our Core Values:

Perform well and get things done

Respect and value customers and staff

Improve and learn

Deliver that bit extra, *and be*

Efficient and Effective

Our approach will be one of continuous improvement with a focus on 'how' we deliver the Council's new Corporate Strategy over the next four years.

The Corporate Strategy sets out our commitments for the period from 2008 to 2012 and it is very clear:

We will ensure that people enjoy growing up, living and working in the Braintree District because it is a place where:

- * the environment is clean and green
- * business is encouraged and the local economy prospers
- * everyone can enjoy a healthy lifestyle
- * housing and transport meet local needs
- * people take pride in their local areas
- * **we deliver excellent, cost effective and valued services**

The final statement gives a clear focus on **how** we will deliver the services which will achieve the aspirations in the Corporate Strategy. It provides the basis for how we are going to 'Shape up for Excellence'.

Six objectives have been set under that theme which we will achieve by 2012. They are:

"WE DELIVER EXCELLENT, COST EFFECTIVE AND VALUED SERVICES

By 2012:

- All our services will have been robustly reviewed and improvements put in place
- People will find it easier to contact us and we will provide speedier responses.
- Greater use will be made of our website and more transactions will be able to be dealt with electronically.
- People will be able to access a range of public services through a shared 'one-stop shop' office and customer service facility.
- People who come to live in the District will be able to easily find out about the District and the services that are provided here.
- Our citizens will be more satisfied with how they feel about the Council and about whether we provide value for money."

The Four Themes of Shaping Up for Excellence

How will we, as an organisation, achieve these objectives and know that we have achieved our goal? By driving forward improvements under four internal themes, we can deliver the Corporate Strategy in a way in which we can be proud, create a reputation for excellence and ensure 'we deliver excellent, cost effective and valued services'.

Customer Service

To ensure we have clear standards of service that are delivered consistently, efficiently and in a manner where the experience for the customer is good.

We will have:

- *Clear and concise standards of service established.*
- *Improved customer satisfaction across all the Council's services.*
- *The right services provided in the right place, at the right time, first time.*
- *An understanding of who our customers are and what services they need to ensure we provide targeted and flexible services.*

People and Performance

To ensure that our organisation recruits, manages and develops staff that demonstrate excellent performance and leadership and achieve their own and the Council's overall objectives, resulting in better value and service to the taxpayer.

We will have:

- *A highly motivated workforce with high satisfaction.*
- *A responsive and flexible workforce able to adapt to changing requirements.*
- *Increased ideas and innovation from staff to improve service.*
- *A good CPA/Direction of Travel report.*
- *A skilled and developed workforce that is prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.*
- *Staff who are clear what needs to be achieved and how they contribute to this.*

Communications and Engagement

To make sure that all staff and citizens understand all that the Council delivers, what it is trying to achieve and, from that understanding, have the opportunity to influence, change and participate in the actions and services that affect their quality of life.

We will have:

- *Increased public participation in Council business.*
- *A better understanding of local community and customer needs.*
- *A greater understanding by the public of what the Council does and what we have achieved.*
- *Improved engagement and feedback from residents and staff in all services of the Council.*
- *Members who are better informed regarding their area and know how to achieve improvement.*
- *Staff who understand what the Council is striving to achieve and the part they play.*
- *Timely decision-making.*

Innovation and Efficiency

To continuously look for more effective ways of delivering services. As an organisation, we cannot stand still. We need to develop new processes, working with different partners to meet future needs and challenges. We need to embrace innovation and improvement that will address increasing expectations against a background of shrinking resources.

We will have:

- *Reduced costs across all Council services through innovative changes.*
- *Value for money in comparison with other Councils and sectors.*
- *A greater use of technological solutions to deliver services more efficiently and effectively.*
- *A greater number of innovative ideas coming from staff.*
- *A Council in the top 25% of authorities for overall BVPI performance.*
- *Use of Resources – Improve our score for our use of resources.*
- *The ability to take managed risks to improve performance and efficiency.*

Improvements and Efficiencies

We need to be clear about the things that we are going to do so that the improvements can happen and the objectives under each of the themes can be achieved.

Details are set out in Appendix 1.

Summary

The above strategy sets out what we will achieve on our journey as we are 'Shaping up for Excellence'. In turn, it will deliver the Council's Corporate Strategy in a way that we and the residents can feel proud of, because we will be doing the right things, at the right time and in the right way.

The outcomes from Shaping up for Excellence will ensure that we are recognised as an organisation that gives excellent customer service and satisfaction, through continuous improvement and performance.

We will be an organisation that delivers effective and innovative services with a motivated and skilled workforce, who meet the needs of our citizens.

We will also have a resilient organisation who can deliver consistently high levels of service, despite changes in our environment.

Overall, our journey will deliver:

- **Improved customer satisfaction**
- **Improved staff satisfaction**
- **Increased performance (nationally and locally)**
- **Greater value for money**
- **Increased public participation in the Council's activities.**

Allan Reid
Chief Executive
March 2008

**APPENDIX 1
PROGRAMME FOR IMPROVEMENT 2008/2009**

Customer Service	People and Performance
<p>The improvement plan for the theme of Customer Service will be included in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Customer Access Strategy and its associated Action Plan which will be reported to Cabinet in July 2008 • A Customer Service Improvement Plan which will be prepared as part of the business planning process during 2008 	<p>The improvement plan for the theme of People and Performance will be included in the Workforce Development Plan and the Organisational Development Plan 2008/2009 and their associated Action Plans – both of which will be reported to Cabinet in July 2008. They will also include improvements identified though:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Investors in People assessment which was carried out in March 2008 • the 'Having Your Say Sessions' with staff which were carried out in December 2007
Communications and Engagement	Innovation and Efficiency
<p>The improvement plan for the theme of Communications and Engagement will be included in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Action Plan arising from the review of Marketing and Communications which is due to be completed in June 2008 • actions and improvements arising from the development of a Marketing and Communications Strategy which will be reported to Cabinet in September 2008 	<p>The improvement plan for the theme of Innovation and Efficiency will incorporate the actions and improvements arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Business Efficiency Programme of service reviews which will be reported to Cabinet in June 2008 • the Use of Resources Key Lines of Enquiry Assessment 2006/2007 which was reported to Cabinet in February 2008 • the Audit Commission's Direction of Travel Assessment for Braintree District Council which was carried out in December 2007 • the outcomes from the joint working that we are doing with Colchester Borough Council • the outcomes from any other external inspections or assessments which have been carried out during 2007/2008 which include outstanding actions

In addition to the above, other improvements may be identified through the following. They will be added to the action plan on a quarterly basis or as they arise – whichever is appropriate:

- The Council's complaints monitoring system
- The Council's internal integrated audit process
- The Overview and Scrutiny function
- Other external inspections and assessments which will be carried out during the coming year.

Details of each of the improvements set out in these key documents will be set out in a working version of this Improvement Plan which will be programme managed by Management Board and the Senior Manager's Group.

Progress against each of the actions will be reported to the Performance and Efficiency Group – by exception - on a quarterly basis.