

ECONOMY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
28 NOVEMBER 2019

Draft Corporate Plan 2020-24

Cabinet Member(s): Leader, Cllr Bob Deed
Responsible Officer: Chief Executive, Stephen Walford

Reason for Report: To consider the first draft text of a new corporate plan for the council, which will replace the current plan (expiring in March 2020).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the PDG considers the draft text and provides its views and comments to the Cabinet in order that a revised draft can be considered in advance of recommendations to full council.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: This report introduces a first draft of what will replace the current corporate plan. The new corporate plan will set the overarching direction of travel for the council and will guide all future decision-making for the next four year cycle.

Financial Implications: The adoption of a new corporate plan will set the direction of policy travel for the council at a strategic level. However, it does not have any direct actions associated with it at this point, and the council's financial context will continue to be set at a strategic level via the annual budget and Medium Term Financial Planning processes. To that end, subsequent decisions that may be taken to realign activity to the new corporate plan in due course, will each be subject to the appropriate impact assessments given to decisions made by the council in the normal way.

Legal Implications: As above.

Equalities Impact Assessment: As above

Risk Assessment: As above.

Climate Change: As above.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The current council Corporate Plan expires in March 2020. The council administration has substantially changed following the election in May 2019, and a cabinet of mixed political makeup now forms the executive.
- 1.2 As part of the arrangements for renewing the Corporate Plan, the new approach was discussed at an early stage with the new cabinet once those members had collectively had the chance to consider shared priorities. It was then the subject of an all-member workshop session on 6th September 2019, where the whole membership had the opportunity to contribute.

2.0 Direction of Travel

- 2.1 The member ‘away day’ produced not only a range of content, but also confirmed that there was cross-party support for a continuation of the four ‘thematic’ headings of the council’s current Corporate Plan approach (Community, Economy, Environment, Homes). This is notable since it also goes in some way to the format of governance arrangements of the council, since the four Policy Development Groups (PDGs) are based on these overarching headings. By agreeing to continue with the overarching themes, the council is giving clarity and certainty to the PDGs that are currently in place – making the most of experience and knowledge already clustered around these themes as a format for continuing policy development and onwards recommendations to cabinet. It is worthwhile recalling at this point that the council’s most recent Corporate Peer Review (March 2017) described the PDGs as *‘a novel concept that provides an opportunity for wider member involvement in the work of the council...[providing] a resource for the council to develop new policy ideas and recommend these to cabinet’*.
- 2.2 Alongside the four headings, there was an almost universally-agreed notion of embedding sustainability more prominently within the new plan. This would seem to be supported by a range of discussions and motions discussed by full council in recent months. This has been effected by introducing the plan as a matrix model rather than being presented as a purely thematic-based approach. There is no (and no need for) exact science about the formatting, but bearing in mind this will be the top-level public-facing expression of the council’s approach to prioritising outcomes, it is important for it to be well-understood without a lengthy supporting narrative.
- 2.3 Since the member workshop, the content has been refined in discussion with the cabinet to try and balance the many and varied priorities that were put forward, with the result that the first draft of a new Corporate Plan is attached at Appendix A for members’ consideration.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 The draft text at Appendix A forms the bare content of what the council will be seeking to try and achieve over the next four-year term. Officers in the communications team have already been tasked with starting work on layout and imagery to turn the raw content into a viable public-facing document, but it was felt that members’ time would be best focused on discussing and debating content rather than considering the types of pictures, layouts, fonts used etc.
- 3.2 This will be going to each of the four PDGs, with a report then being taken to cabinet to try and take on board all viewpoints and comments made, so that the final version is seen as a genuinely co-produced document, as part of an open and transparent process.

- 3.3 As the final document forms the headline document in the council's adopted policy framework, the new Corporate Plan will need to be approved by full council, so the decision of cabinet will be to recommend to full council in due course.
- 3.4 Ideally, the new Corporate Plan will be in a position to be adopted by full council alongside the budget at February's meeting of full council.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the current system of publicising 'priority activities' each year and publishing these online, continues as per the delegations agreed under the previous administration – in order to be transparent on delivery activity while ensuring the document is kept 'live' on an annual basis.

List of Background Papers:

Appendix A – draft corporate plan text