



REPORT TO: Council
LEAD OFFICER: Chief Executive

22 February 2018

Corporate Plan 2018-2019

1. Purpose

This report proposes a refreshed Corporate Plan, recommended by Cabinet for approval.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet **RECOMMENDED THAT COUNCIL:**

- (a) Approve the Corporate Plan, comprising the document 'South Cambridgeshire: Your Place, Our Plan 2018-2019' (Appendix A) and accompanying Delivery Plan (Appendix B), incorporating feedback from Scrutiny and Overview Committee;
- (b) Authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with Portfolio Holders, to prepare detailed implementation plans and associated performance measures and ensure these are reflected in directorate service plans and quarterly Position Reports during 2018/19; and
- (c) Authorise the Chief Executive to make any minor wording changes required before publication, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan is a key element of the Council's policy framework which articulates the Council's priorities and actions for the next year. The Corporate Plan will guide and influence the Council's resources and actions and provides a focus for our plans, activities and services. Key issues and aims are highlighted within the Corporate Plan along with setting out the context within which we operate, our ambitions, details of achievements over recent years and linkages to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan informs the subsequent agreement of annual service plans, prepared by the Council's directorates, setting out service, team and individual objectives, aligned to the Vision and Corporate Aims.

4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Corporate Plan shares the Council's vision for the future and shows how we plan to meet our priorities and the needs of our communities. The plan should be easy to understand. It is primarily intended for residents, councillors, officers and statutory bodies, but is also shared with other local authorities and partners. The format of the plan has been reviewed to provide a summary of key information at a glance.

After listening to feedback, the council will look to continue to support both residents and businesses to achieve their full potential, to increase prosperity in the district and create the environment for South Cambridgeshire to be a place where people want to live, learn, work, visit and invest.

- 4.2 A key aim is to maintain all that is special about the district, value the wealth of history and heritage in our villages, whilst also working with partners to improve transport links and housing provision when planning for a growing population.

It is recognised that the Council on its own cannot deliver all the services which the community require and want. As a result, the Council's approach will be to continue to work with partners in different fields to deliver services. These include our work with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to deliver the Council's Housing Strategy, with the Police on Community Safety and as a constituent member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

5. Background

- 5.1 In developing the plan, current and future issues for the district were considered, such as the community profile trends and data, government legislation, social changes, feedback from residents, businesses and elected members.

In a geographically large district, where our communities include many small rural settlements, it is important that these characteristics are taken into account when delivering services and priorities.

- 5.2 The information highlights that the district has:

- A low unemployment economy, with jobs based predominantly across research, life sciences and technology businesses;
- An ageing population, but a population which is generally in relatively good health;
- Issues concerning social isolation of older and vulnerable groups, particularly in the villages but also impacting newer communities;
- An increasing need for more homes over the next 10 years, but they need to be affordable for local people;
- Issues associated with increasingly congested transport links;
- A strong desire amongst residents to protect the natural environment and heritage assets; and
- A proportion of young people leaving the district for jobs, facilities and more affordable housing elsewhere.

6. Considerations

- 6.1.1 The priority themes have been developed into a final draft plan, which is recommended for Council approval, at **Appendices A-B attached**.

- 6.1.2 The document 'South Cambridgeshire: Your Place, Our Plan 2018', attached at **Appendix A**, sets out the Council's Vision and strategic aims, contextual information and examples of what we plan to do to deliver each aim. The Delivery Plan at **Appendix B** develops these into measurable projects and actions. Subsequent delivery of key actions and performance against key indicators will be closely monitored via quarterly Position Reports to Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Cabinet during 2018/19.

- 6.1.3 It should be remembered that alongside these priority areas we will continue to carry out a vast range of statutory and non -statutory functions as part of 'business as usual'; our suite of key performance indicators includes a number of specific measures of the effective running of the business.

7. Developing the Plan

- 7.1. The Council's priorities over recent years have focussed around the cornerstones of facilitating housing options, stimulating economic growth and connectivity, promoting active healthy lifestyles and ensuring that the district's clean, green and healthy environment is enhanced and protected.

During Summer 2017, a community engagement project ('Let's Talk') was carried out to inform the Corporate Plan review process. This involved talking to residents at events in a selection of six communities around the district. Additionally, a focus group and online surveys were undertaken.

Residents indicated that the following issues were important to them:

- Infrastructure is in place to support new housing ahead of development;
- South Cambridgeshire villages are well-connected and allow people to get around;
- High quality jobs are available and small businesses can grow and flourish;
- South Cambridgeshire maintains its rural look and feel, with green space for all to enjoy;
- Communities are thriving and vibrant with strong social networks;
- South Cambs shapes and influences positive growth and quality housing;
- New and established communities provide thriving, healthy safe and attractive places to live.
- Joined-up working by the Council with its partners is visible and effective.

- 7.2 Additionally, a Member Task and Finish Group recently completed a project seeking to identify what South Cambridgeshire District Council can do to assist in the encouragement, development and support of rural businesses across the district.

- 7.3 The group gathered evidence from consultation, research and deliberation and has proposed a range of potential actions, which are set out for Cabinet consideration elsewhere on this Agenda. Subject to the recommendations being agreed, these actions are incorporated in the delivery plan as part of a specific focus upon economic development and business support.

- 7.3 Many of the themes raised by our communities are broadly similar to those included in the existing Corporate Plan, which would seem to validate the Council's current aims and policies; as such, it is proposed to retain the following priority themes: Living Well, Homes for our Future, Connected Communities, Innovative and Dynamic organisation. Objectives will be achieved through a series of actions that take into account emerging priorities and issues that local people value and consider important.

Living Well

- 7.4 We want to help support our communities to make sure the district is a healthy place for everyone to live in. We know that for new and established communities to thrive they must have the facilities they need. This is why we plan to ensure the facilities are available as we build new communities. Our partnership with the Police through the South Cambridgeshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership also makes sure we are dealing with local crime and anti-social behaviour issues.

With more than 100 parish councils and hundreds of community groups, clubs and societies in South Cambridgeshire, there are plenty of active individuals and organisations supporting their local areas and working with us in a variety of ways to make positive differences to quality of life for residents.

Homes for our Future

- 7.5 South Cambridgeshire sits at the heart of one of the most economically successful and fastest growing regions of the UK. This makes it an extremely attractive and sought-after, and consequently often high cost, place to live.

We know there is a pressing demand for housing. That's why we want to keep working with developers to ensure early delivery of high quality new homes, good transport links and facilities, and with communities, landowners and housing association partners to develop innovative local solutions such as self-build.

We need a mix of housing that meets the needs of residents of all ages and backgrounds, including starter homes for younger couples, homes for purchase or rent for families, a range of affordable options for those on lower incomes and provision for the increasing proportion of older people, with appropriate support to help them live independently in their own homes and live well with conditions such as dementia.

We are also focussing on preventing people becoming homeless through giving support early and on managing the impact of welfare reform on our most vulnerable residents, specifically the full roll-out of Universal Credit across our district.

Connected Communities

- 7.6 Our district is home to over 8,000 businesses, the majority of which are small and medium-sized although there is also a significant knowledge based economy and Life Science clustering.

Our aim is to facilitate additional employment opportunities for small rural business to help them grow and expand locally, whilst continuing to attract national and international organisations to the area.

We will need to help secure infrastructure that meets the housing and growth priorities for South Cambridgeshire. Transport links and better digital infrastructure, such as broadband, are also important to connect people and businesses.

The Council, in conjunction with business partners and the Combined Authority, can play a major leadership role in positioning Greater Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire as an area with rapidly improving productivity. Promoting economic growth and improving skills will be an ongoing focus.

It's also a top priority to make sure that, as a constituent member of the Combined Authority, we achieve the devolution of more funding and powers from Whitehall to enable more informed and accountable local decision-making.

An Innovative and Dynamic Organisation

- 7.7 If the Council is to operate successfully and support the delivery of priorities we will need to continue to develop a modern, flexible approach to service delivery. Meeting customer needs and expectations and operating commercially to make the most of Council resources to deliver priority outcomes will be a primary focus.

We will need to ensure ease and convenience of access to a range of services offered whilst adopting a business like commercial approach. Significant funding reductions have meant we need to continue to make savings and generate income, maximising opportunities to make the best use of our council assets, investing to save and increase income/revenue when and where appropriate to do so.

Our housing company – Ermine Street Housing – is one of the ways we are already doing this with interest on our investments directed straight back into service delivery. We plan to keep doing this so we can continue to deliver the best possible services at the lowest possible cost – including sharing services with neighbouring councils where there is a sound business case.

We will continue to develop and equip our workforce with more digital skills and a more flexible, coordinated approach to working across services. A comprehensive “Council Anywhere” programme will put the customer at the heart of service delivery and enable better access to services at times which are more convenient to our communities.

We will look to take advantage of the Government scheme to increase the number of apprentices so that new skills and talent can be generated within the organisation and help address key skills gaps and shortages.

Implications

Finance and Staffing

8. The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2023 and Budget Estimates for 2018-19, submitted for Cabinet consideration elsewhere on this Agenda, set out how the priorities in the Corporate Plan will be resourced.

Legal

9. The Corporate Plan forms an integral part of the Council’s Budget and Policy Framework; as such, it is reserved for Council approval as required by the Constitution.

Risk Management

10. The risks in the Strategic Risk Register have been taken into account in developing the Corporate Plan. Without such a plan in place, the risk of failing to deliver for our communities increases.

Equality and Diversity

11. The draft plan has been subject to an initial screen, as a precursor to updated and new impact assessments which will be required as part of the implementation of Council Actions during 2018-2019. By continuing to support more vulnerable residents and connect communities through initiatives such as Living Well, Localised Council Tax Support, improved Broadband and rural travel hubs, it is anticipated that the plan will provide a number of positive equality impacts in pursuance of its Statutory Public Sector Equality Duty.

Climate Change

12. The Council’s Vision commits us to maintaining residents’ quality of life in an exceptionally beautiful, rural and green environment. This will be delivered through a combination of strategic growth projects focussing on quality design, new initiatives such as the community energy grant and green energy loan schemes and ‘business as usual’ responsibilities for environmental protection and enhancement.

Effect on Strategic Aims

13. The Corporate Plan provides the vehicle for the effective delivery of the Council’s Vision and strategic objectives.

Conclusion

14. The Corporate plan is a key document that will shape the future direction of the Council and determine where resources will be focused. The priorities/outcomes are based on knowledge and data collected from independent sources. The priorities laid out in the document have been reviewed to provide organisational focus in key areas, to refresh the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and will form the basis of resource allocation in the future.

The Corporate Plan does not exist in isolation. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (also subject to a recommendation to Council), Strategic Risk Register and People and Organisational Development Strategy also support the delivery of the Council's priorities and the allocation of resources. The continuing financial pressures faced by the Public Sector make it even more important that a priority- led approach to spending is adopted to make sure the Council focuses its resources in the right areas.

Customer feedback will continue to be used to inform and improve service delivery. Elected Members act as community leaders and are advocates for local people. Regular feedback from members including task and finish group recommendations will be incorporated into improvement plans to deliver effective services.

Community engagement will be undertaken to promote and support social inclusion, and identify skills, knowledge and experiences within communities to give a basis for future service improvements.

Elected Members will regularly monitor delivery of the Corporate Plan through regular reports to Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Cabinet.

Background Papers:

Available from the Policy and Performance Team:

- (1) Strategic Risk Register
- (2) Equality Impact Assessment of the Corporate Plan: Screening Tool
- (3) People and Organisation Development Strategy
- (4) Engagement response summary

Report Author: Beverly Agass - Chief Executive, Richard May - Policy & Performance Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713430/713366
Email: richard.may@scambbs.gov.uk