

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR/S: Executive Management Team

19 November 2013

SETTING THE POLICY FRAMEWORK - CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2014-2019

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider and agree a draft Corporate Plan for 2014-2019 for consultation and development, setting out revised Vision, Corporate Aims and Objectives for the Council.
2. This is a key decision because:
 - it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; and
 - it is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area of the District comprising two or more wards.

It was first published in the July 2013 Forward Plan.

Recommendations and Reasons

3. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (a) Agree the Council's draft Corporate Plan, consisting of its Vision, Corporate Aims and Objectives, as the strategic planning framework for the organisation for consultation and development and the preparation of draft 2014-15 service plans, as set out in **Appendix A** attached.
 - (b) Authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Corporate and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, to make further editing changes to the draft, which may become necessary prior to publication.

These recommendations are brought forward to enable timely internal and external stakeholder input at an early stage, and the production of service plans that are properly linked to corporate objectives and ensure an integrated approach to service and financial planning.

Considerations – Updating the Plan for a clearer strategic focus

4. The Council's current Corporate Plan, agreed in February 2013 for 2013-2018, continued the 'Three As' approach based on:
 - Our Vision for the district
 - Three Strategic Aims setting out how the Vision will be achieved
 - 24 Approaches providing a framework within which the aims will be achieved;
 - 30 specific annual Actions, using these approaches to deliver the aims.

The Corporate Plan informed the subsequent agreement of annual service plans setting out service, team and individual objectives, aligned to the Vision and Corporate Aims through a 'Golden Thread'. Progress against plan objectives is monitored through quarterly reports to senior management and members.

5. The Council has used the 'Three As' approach to corporate planning for the past four years; this has provided a consistent framework within which objectives have been agreed, communicated and monitored, yet at times has lacked strategic focus due to the breadth and variety of actions within it, and clarity linking actions to approaches.
6. The Corporate Plan needs to be contemporary and continue to reflect the needs and aspirations of our communities, taking account of the local and national context of increasing demand on core services and diminishing central government funding.
7. In order to provide continuity, build on what has worked well and address the issues identified, Cabinet is recommended to develop a new plan based on:
 - A simplified Vision providing a clearer external focus
 - Three Strategic Aims, retained from the current plan.
 - Twelve key Objectives, replacing Approaches and Actions.
8. These objectives are intended to provide a strategic focus on the issues of greatest significance to the Council, residents and businesses in the district and key partners. They are arranged under the themes of Engagement, Partnerships and Wellbeing, and are summarised as follows:

Engagement

- Housing property company
- Efficiency, value for money and financial viability
- Support for new and existing businesses
- Facilitate and sustain successful, vibrant villages

Partnerships

- Council house building programme.
- Best use of Council assets and shared services
- Explore a commercial, income-based approach to service delivery
- A waste service which delivers more for less

Wellbeing

- Improving the health of our communities
- Managing the impacts of the government's welfare reform programme
- Successful and sustainable new communities with housing and employment
- Increasing the range and supply of temporary accommodation

9. For each Objective, the plan makes initial suggestions setting out:
 - What we will do to achieve them
 - What success will look like in terms of positive outcomes for customers and consistent performance against key quantitative performance indicators.

It should be emphasised that these sections provide indicative suggestions only at this stage; they are therefore likely to be subject to substantial change following development work and feedback.

10. The plan contains a section identifying key performance indicators against each theme. This section is currently blank, but will be completed as actions are developed and outcomes identified.

11. The draft plan is set out in **Appendix A** attached.

Considerations – Evidence Base for the Plan

12. Achievements against Corporate Plan objectives are reported through the Position Statement report, elsewhere on this Agenda. This progress report provides a crucial element of the evidence base for the review, reflecting projects which are nearing completion and ongoing priorities for the district in which outcomes will be achieved within medium to long-term timescales.
13. The other key element of the evidence base is the organisation's understanding of the needs of the community, bringing together the district's demographic and health profile, formal and informal feedback, local, regional and national policy trends and current performance. The Council has undertaken three major consultations at key stages of its emerging Local Plan and consulted extensively prior to the implementation of a Localised Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS). Following six months of operation and review, the scheme remains financially viable whilst minimising the impacts of the government's welfare reform programme on our most vulnerable residents. The results of such exercises continue, therefore, to inform future policy development and review.

Options

14. Cabinet may agree the draft plan as recommended, or bring forward amendments that meet the needs of the organisation and community it serves.

Implications

Financial

15. Cabinet will be asked to consider the financial context as part of its review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) elsewhere on this agenda. Whilst there are uncertainties in financial planning given that details of the government's financial settlement for local authorities will not be made available until December 2013, it is envisaged that the MTFS will provide for all proposed Corporate Plan actions to be carried out within existing resources. Exploring and implementing more efficient ways of working and commercial opportunities is a key theme of the draft plan.

Staffing

16. The Corporate Plan will be carried out within existing staffing resources wherever possible. Specific proposals for additional staffing capacity and other resources will be considered as part of the emerging MTFS and incorporated within the draft revenue and capital estimates as required.

Risk Management

17. Cabinet and EMT have considered the Council's Strategic Risk Register as part of the evidence base for the development of revised policy and resource priorities.

Equality and Diversity

18. Subject to Cabinet approval, the revised draft plan will be screened for equality implications as part of the consultation and development process. It is anticipated that the initial screening will provide a 'signpost' to full impact assessments of specific initiatives arising as the plan is implemented.

Climate Change

19. The Council's Vision commits it to achieving sustainable economic growth. The Green Deal and Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership are cited as specific actions as part of the objective to facilitate successful, sustainable, vibrant villages.

Legal

20. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report and recommendations.

Consultations

21. As indicated above, the Council's strategic policy framework is informed by local intelligence and the organisation's understanding of the customers it serves. Nevertheless, it is recommended that the draft framework be approved for consultation to test whether the priorities we have identified are well-supported, and internally to apply this same test, to ensure that the objectives are meaningful and provide a realistic and coherent 'golden thread' for the staff tasked with implementing them. Communication with staff and residents will emphasise the financial as well as policy context, in order to reflect an integrated approach; feedback will inform final service plans and the Council's budget and Corporate Plan for 2014-15 and beyond.
22. The draft plan will be published on the Council's website for comment, accompanied by publicity including articles in the *South Cambs* and *Scene* magazines, and via the Consultation Panel, Youth Council and social media. We are also holding staff briefings and will display the draft plan widely around the Council's premises.

Effect on Strategic Aims

23. As set out in the main body of the report.

Conclusions / Summary

24. Cabinet is recommended to agree for consultation and development a draft Corporate Plan which sets out a consistent Vision and Aims, which can be implemented through a focussed, realistic and achievable suite of Objectives which can be delivered within the financial parameters set out within the developing MTFS.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

[Corporate Plan 2013-2018 and Position Statements on progress, September and November 2013](#) (web link)

[Information about the district](#) (web link)

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