

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Leader and Cabinet

6 November 2014
13 November 2014

AUTHOR/S: Executive Management Team

SETTING THE POLICY FRAMEWORK - CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2015-2020

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider and agree a draft Corporate Plan for 2015-2020 for consultation and development, comprising the Council's Vision, Aims and Objectives. Cabinet is further recommended to confirm its support for, and participation in, a local alliance lobbying government to commit to early investment and improvements on the A428.
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 2014 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (a) Agree the Council's draft Corporate Plan 2015-2020, consisting of its Vision, Aims and Objectives, as the strategic planning framework for the authority for consultation and development and the preparation of draft 2015-16 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.
 - (c) Confirm its support for, and participation in, a consortium of key partners including neighbouring authorities, the Highways Agency and local Members of Parliament, to lobby government for early investment and improvements on the A428 to support the continued growth and prosperity of the area in pursuance of current and proposed Corporate Plan objectives, specifically the inclusion of funding for upgrade work within its forthcoming spending plans.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. These recommendations enable timely internal and external stakeholder input at an early stage and the production of service plans that are properly linked to corporate objectives, thus ensuring an integrated approach to service and financial planning.
5. The report will be submitted to Scrutiny and Overview Committee for consideration at its meeting on 6 November 2014. Comments and recommendations will be reported to the Cabinet.

Background

6. In February 2014, Cabinet agreed a revised format for the Corporate Plan, based on:
- A simplified Vision providing a clearer external focus
 - Three strategic Aims
 - Twelve key Objectives, replacing Approaches and Actions.

7. These Aims and Objectives 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 – Engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money

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

Partnerships – Work with partners to create opportunities for employment, enterprise, education and world-leading innovation

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

Wellbeing – Ensure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents

- 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

8. For each Objective, the plan sets 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 and qualitative performance indicators (also published on the Plan).
9. The clarity of Vision, Aims and Objectives provided by the Corporate Plan has been welcomed by key internal and external stakeholders. The format has therefore been retained for the 2015-2020 plan.

Considerations – Evidence Base for the Plan

10. 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.

11. 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 continues to undertake major consultations on key issues such as the draft Local Plan, Northstowe, and Corporate Enforcement and Inspection Policy. We also continue to engage communities through established mechanisms such as the Parish Forum, growth area community fora and residents' Consultation Panel. The results of such exercises continue, therefore, to inform future policy development and review.
12. These elements were brought together into the Corporate Plan Forward Look report, submitted to Cabinet on 10 July 2014. Cabinet noted the policy and financial context in which the Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reviews should take place, endorsing a number of priority areas, which are reflected, along with developments since that meeting, within the draft Corporate Plan, attached at **Appendix A** and recommended for approval for consultation.
13. The Forward Look report explored the national political agenda in the context of the forthcoming 2015 General Election. A new government programme may impact upon Corporate Plan delivery in ways that require a review of priorities after adoption.
14. It is recommended that the Vision, Aims and Objectives are retained from the current plan, with the following changes:
 - Objective (1) updated to reflect opportunities to deliver a mix of high quality accommodation including, subject to the development of viable business plans, private rented and affordable housing.
 - Added reference to the A428 in objective (11) to reflect this route becoming the highest regional transport priority in terms of lobbying the government and Highways Agency to prioritise improvements between the Caxton Gibbet and Black Cat roundabouts. The 'What we will do to achieve these objectives' and 'What success will look like' sections have been updated to reflect progress anticipated by April 2015 and actions for the following 12 months.
15. Members have participated in preliminary discussions around the establishment of a strategic alliance of key partners, including neighbouring authorities, the Highways Agency and local Members of Parliament, to lobby government for early investment and improvements on the A428, specifically the inclusion of funding for upgrade work within its forthcoming spending plans. Cabinet is recommended to confirm its support for, and participation in, the work of this consortium, in pursuance of objective (11) in the draft plan.

Options

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

Implications

17. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:

Financial

18. Cabinet will be asked to consider the financial context as part of its review of the 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 2014, it is envisaged that the MTFS will provide for all proposed Corporate Plan actions to be carried out within existing resources. Implementing more efficient ways of working and commercial opportunities is a key theme of the draft plan.

Staffing

19. 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

20. 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

21. 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

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

Legal

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

Consultations responses

24. As indicated above, the Council's strategic policy framework is informed by local intelligence and the organisation's understanding of the customers it serves. It is recommended that the draft framework be approved for further 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 2015-16 and beyond.
25. 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 will also hold staff briefings and will display the draft plan widely around the Council's premises.

Effect on Strategic Aims

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

Conclusions / Summary

27. 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 2014-2019: Plan and monitoring reports
- Corporate Plan Forward Look report and appendices (10 July 2014 - Item 13 refers)

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