

Corporate Plan

Strategy & Resources Committee Thursday 27 June 2024

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

The existing Strategic Plan expires this year and as part of the work to improve corporate governance and set out a clear strategic direction for the Council, a new draft Corporate Plan, which sets out our vision, priorities and actions for the next four years, has been drawn up (Appendix A).

A Corporate Plan establishes clear priorities, creates a framework for strengthening performance management through service planning and appraisals and informs future budget setting. In addition, it aims to promote the work of the Council and strengthen relationships with key partners.

The draft plan has been developed in consultation with residents, local businesses, councillors, our staff and other partners.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

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Recommendation to committee:

The committee approves the new Corporate Plan and recommends it to Full Council for adoption.

Reason for recommendation:

This committee has strategic oversight of the Corporate Plan, which sets out a new vision, corporate priorities and objectives. An action plan will be developed to deliver the objectives over the next four years and will be monitored annually by this committee.

Introduction and background

1. A good Corporate Plan sets out a council's vision, along with the priorities and actions to take the Council through the next four years, as well as the resources required. Without a corporate plan there is no vision, strategic focus or direction for the district or the Council, which makes it difficult to set clear objectives and allocate resources to deliver those objectives. It also makes it harder to ensure scarce resources are being used to best effect.
2. The Council's existing Strategic Plan expires this year and was developed during the pandemic, which means it reflects the situation the Council was in at that time and is now out of date.
3. As part of the development of the new Corporate Plan, an evidence pack was developed to provide key facts and figures about the district, as well as current issues and challenges, to help inform the new plan.
4. Internal workshops were held with councillors, senior managers and other staff. There were also workshops with external stakeholders from over 30 organisations, including neighbouring district and borough councils, parish councils, Surrey County Council, East Surrey College, the Business Improvement Districts, health partners, Coast 2 Capital, Freedom Leisure, Tandridge Voluntary Action, Environment Agency, DWP, East Surrey Rural Transport, schools and charities.
5. Questions about the emerging priorities and themes were included in the [2023 Residents' Survey](#).
6. Following the workshops and consultation, a draft plan was developed and shared with senior councillors for further comment. This draft plan reflects the Council's priorities for the next four years.
7. It is important to note this plan is what the Council wants to achieve and is aiming to deliver, but financial constraints and uncertain central government funding may affect the Council's ability to achieve everything and there may be a need to prioritise the delivery of services. With this in mind, the plan will be kept under review annually to monitor what has been achieved, what can be achieved and to adjust priorities as necessary depending on future circumstances.

Consultation

8. During February and March 2024 a stakeholder consultation about the draft plan was carried out to invite feedback on the vision, priorities and objectives. The online survey was shared widely across all communication channels, as well as e-mailed directly to stakeholders.
9. There were 181 responses, with the majority of responses from residents and staff, as well as others from businesses, charities, people who work in the area, volunteers, parish councils and councillors. A report about the survey results is attached at Appendix B.
10. Respondents were supportive of the proposed vision, priorities and objectives. A high percentage of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the vision (88%).
11. Responses which strongly agreed or agreed with each priority were:
 - 89% for a safe, healthy and caring community supporting those most in need.
 - 88% for protecting and enhancing our environment.
 - 86% for financial prudence and sustainability.
 - 87% for putting residents at the heart of what we do.
 - 87% for a thriving economy.
 - 78% for delivering affordable housing for local people.
12. The following were the highest rated objectives agreed with under each priority.
 - 92% for engaging with, listening to and acting upon residents' concerns.
 - 91% for ensuring new development is properly planned and sustainable and benefits the district's communities.
 - 91% for working with partners to create strong, safe and welcoming communities.
 - 90% for funding high quality services.
 - 89% for supporting local businesses and high streets, encouraging regeneration to make the district attractive to live, work and visit.
 - 85% for reducing homelessness in the district.

Setting the strategic direction

13. The new vision set out in the plan is: Protecting the environment, delivering affordable housing, putting residents at the heart of what we do and encouraging economic growth.

We will do this by:

- Delivering high quality services and continued improvement.
- Providing value for money for your council tax.
- Being financially responsible.
- Responding to the needs of the district's residents, businesses and other partners.

14. There are six priorities:

- Protecting and enhancing our environment.
- Delivering affordable housing for local people.
- Financial prudence and sustainability.
- Putting residents at the heart of what we do.
- A safe, healthy and caring community supporting those most in need.
- A thriving economy.

15. An action plan for each priority and its objectives will be developed and presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee annually. At the same time, the existing objectives will be reviewed to ensure the plan reflects any external or internal challenges and opportunities. This will ensure the plan remains relevant.

16. The action plan will be delivered by the service plans developed by each head of service for their teams. The action and service plans will be regularly reviewed by the Extended Management Team.

Budget

17. All work on developing the Corporate Plan has been carried out in-house, with the exception of the stakeholder workshops, which were facilitated by an external provider.

18. No additional budget has been provided to deliver the priorities. These will be met within existing budgets set over the four years. The annual review process set out in paragraph 15 will allow for consideration for targeting resources at priorities at that time.

Conclusion

19. The new Corporate Plan will inform service delivery. It is a framework which will guide officers to prioritise the delivery of services to residents and businesses. It will also support engagement with stakeholders and partners to influence and lobby for improvements to services in the areas where the Council has no direct control.
20. The plan will create a clear link from the vision and objectives to staff performance. Staff objectives will demonstrate how they contribute to the success of the corporate objectives. This ensures every level of the organisation is aligned around a shared purpose and staff understand their role in delivering services which meet the corporate objectives.
21. The Council will do its best to deliver the aims of the plan, but this will be within a context of significant change and challenge and priorities may have to be adjusted to reflect changing circumstances. The plan will be kept under regular review, refined and updated as needed.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

The financial implications of the report are set out in section 7, in that it is important to note this plan is what the Council wants to achieve and is aiming to deliver, but financial constraints and uncertain central government funding may affect the Council's ability to achieve everything and there may be a need to prioritise the delivery of services. With this in mind, the plan will be kept under review annually to monitor what has been achieved, what can be achieved and to adjust priorities as necessary depending on future circumstances. This will be considered alongside the Council's budget process for 2025/2026 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report. Proposals and actions contained within and arising from the new Corporate Plan may, where necessary, be the subject of legal advice and support.

Equality

Where applicable projects and initiatives taken forward from the Corporate Plan will be subject to equality impact assessments to ensure decision makers fully understand the impact of any decisions made.

Climate change

Climate change mitigation activities will be carried out to deliver objectives under Priority 1: Protecting and enhancing our environment, as detailed in the plan.

Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2028.

Appendix B - Have your say about our new Corporate Plan survey results.

Background papers

None.

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