

**REPORT TO THE STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 28TH JULY 2020
AGENDA ITEM 9**

STRATEGIC PLAN

Report of:	Heather Wills - Improvement Adviser hwills@tandridge.gov.uk - 07770 701188
ELT Lead:	Elaine Jackson - Acting Chief Executive ejackson@tandridge.gov.uk - 01883 732717
Purpose of report:	To seek approval of a strategic plan for the Council for the period 2020/21 – 2023/24.
Publication status:	Unrestricted
Recommendations:	That the Committee approve the draft Strategic Plan, as set out in Appendix A.
Appendices:	Appendix 'A' – Draft strategic plan
Background papers defined by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985	None

1. Background

- 1.1 Work began to develop a strategic plan for the Council in January 2020. Workshops were held with Members and Officers to explore potential priorities for the Council and the District, informed by analysis of local demographic, economic and social information. Meetings were held with stakeholders and partners to understand their perspectives and hopes for the District. This work was paused in mid-March due to COVID-19. In the interests of moving this work forwards, Group Leaders came together in July to review work to date and identify priorities for action.
- 1.2 The independent review of governance (referred to elsewhere on this agenda) has highlighted that it is essential that the Council has a clear set of priorities and objectives. This will give clear direction to Officers and will ensure that scarce resources are targeted where they are most needed.
- 1.3 As the Council starts to look ahead to the longer term following the immediate response to COVID-19, the following context is relevant:
- All councils are facing significant budget challenges – particularly in relation to reduced income streams in boroughs and districts;

- The global and national economic impacts of the pandemic will be profound for businesses and communities, and will potentially increase demand for local government services and support;
- Councils across Surrey have collaborated with each other, with town and parish councils, and with voluntary and community organisations to deliver support – in many cases delivering new services and working in new ways;
- During the COVID pandemic residents and visitors have valued walking, cycling and a return to nature – we are keen to understand how this may help our District to thrive;
- Much of the COVID response has been achieved by communities and volunteers: councils have an important enabling role but at times need to get out of the way to allow others to deliver.

1.4 The Government has confirmed that it plans to publish a White Paper on Recovery and Devolution in the Autumn: this may provide a framework for continued public service reform in Surrey. In this context, it is essential that this Council can clearly define what it wants to achieve for local residents: there is an opportunity for the Council to make a positive contribution to the debate and drive a bid for a unitary in the east of the county in the interests of local residents and businesses.

2. A draft strategic plan for Tandridge Council

2.1 A strategic plan for the period 2020/21 – 2023/24 has been drafted, informed by Member and Officer workshops and feedback earlier in the year, the views of partners and stakeholders from the business, health and voluntary and community sectors, and the input of Group Leaders in July. The draft plan appears at Appendix A.

2.2 The Council has to make some difficult choices. It is financially challenged, has experienced a period of significant change and is currently working through a vital improvement programme. Unless and until this important work is progressed, there will be a limit on what it can achieve.

2.3 However, the Council is not operating in a vacuum:

- i) The District's local economy was facing a number of challenges pre-COVID and these have been exacerbated as a result of the pandemic. Funding and other opportunities will arise, working with the Local Enterprise Partnership, using Government funding, and working with local businesses and other partners. It is essential that the Council uses its local knowledge, partnerships and influence to mitigate the risk of further economic decline, which would be costly for local people, and to maximise opportunities as they occur for the benefit of local residents and businesses.
- ii) Actions by the Council can positively impact on wider public sector organisations – and the public purse. More affordable housing in the District can help to make it possible for social care and health workers to live and work locally. Support for homeless people can reduce costs to a wide range of public agencies- and support for local businesses can reduce local unemployment figures. By working closely with our partners – such as providers of health services - the Council will try to ensure that these services meet the needs of local people.

2.4 Working in partnership in this way does not necessarily require significant expenditure or resources on the part of this Council: by doing so, the Council will ensure that Tandridge gets its fair share of investment which is managed and allocated beyond the District's boundaries.

2.5 The plan contains the following high level priority outcomes:

- i) **Building a better Council** – making the Council financially sustainable and providing residents with the best possible services:
- ii) **Making Tandridge a good place to live and work** - with homes, open spaces and infrastructure that meet local needs now and into the future;
- iii) **Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge** – from lockdown to growth that everyone benefits from;
- iv) **Becoming a greener, more sustainable District** – tackling climate change.

We will achieve these priority outcomes by working in partnership with other public sector agencies and businesses within the District and beyond.

2.6 Actions have been identified for each proposed priority: some of these relate to more detailed strategies and action plans which will be separately reported to Members.

2.7 While the plan identifies outcomes to be achieved over the medium term, the Council will keep the plan under review, both to monitor delivery and to ensure appropriate flexibility in response to changing circumstances and opportunities. It is anticipated that, in six months time, when further progress has been made against improvement and financial recovery plans, it will be possible to develop the Council's ambitions further.

2.8 The actions proposed within this plan can be delivered through existing resources (and the action relating to the financial recovery plan is designed to ensure the Council's financial sustainability). As the Council implements its financial recovery plan, any further actions to deliver the plan's priority outcomes which have additional resource implications, including opportunities to secure external funding, will be brought to Members for approval.

2.9 Subject to approval of this plan by the Committee, Officers will develop:

- Regular reports to the Committee to enable Members to oversee the delivery of the plan
- A framework to monitor and manage risks relating to relevant detailed actions within the plan.

3 **Financial / risk implications**

3.1 Given the challenging financial position of the Council both in the current financial year and over the medium-term, we need to ensure that any new financial implications of the strategic plan are comprehensively assessed to ensure deliverability within current budgets. New plans and proposals referred to in the strategic plan will be developed for Member decision along with proposals for the financing of support for development and implementation of the Local Plan. The financial implications of these will need to be fully evidenced via a business case to ensure they are deliverable within existing budgets.

4 **Legal implications**

- 4.1 In order to govern the direction of the Council, using a strategic plan as the steering document, a change to the way it will work has been proposed. The draft plan sets out a number of detailed objectives for 2020/21 – 2023/24. There may be a variety of statutory powers that underpin the actions in the strategic plan, but it may be possible to justify them by reference to the well-being power in section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000. Pursuant to the well-being power the Council may do anything which it considers likely to achieve promotion of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the whole or any part of the District or all or any people resident or present in. It will be for Officers to ensure that specific actions are carried out according to law.
- 4.2 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 also requires best value authorities, including the Council, to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. The development of the actions in the draft strategic plan, together with their delivery and subsequent monitoring will contribute to the way in which the best value duty can be fulfilled. Monitoring reports to Committees and actions arising from those reports will help to demonstrate that the Council has undertaken activity to satisfy the statutory duty.

5. **Equality impacts**

- 5.1 The high-level priority outcomes within this plan are informed by an understanding of local communities and their needs. As significant new actions to address these priority outcomes are approved, they will each be subject to impact assessments to consider potential positive or negative impacts.

6. **Data Protection impacts**

Following the completion of a Data Protection Impact Assessment, consideration of potential data protection implications arising from this report are as follows:

Questions	Answer
Do the proposals within this report have the potential to contravene the Council's Privacy Notice?	No
Is so, what steps will be taken to mitigate the risks referred to above?	N/A

7. Climate change impacts

- 7.1 The proposed strategic plan includes a priority to develop a greener, more sustainable District and an action to implement a climate change action plan. It is currently intended to bring this plan for member approval in September.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 This report presents a draft Strategic Plan for Member review and approval. Subject to the views of the Committee, once agreed the plan will be published with appropriate design and branding: it will be shared with Officers, partners and stakeholders, and published on the Council's website.

----- end of report -----