

TITLE OF REPORT: CORPORATE PLAN 2017 TO 2021

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR FINANCE, POLICY & GOVERNANCE
EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR JULIAN CUNNINGHAM

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report recommends the Corporate Plan for 2017 to 2021 to guide and inform the 2017/2018 Corporate Business Planning Process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommend to Full Council the adoption of the Corporate Plan 2017-2021 as attached at Appendix A.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council is required to have a suitable, high level strategic policy document to inform its corporate business planning process, and Council is required to approve the final Corporate Plan document as the formal, overarching policy framework for the authority.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 5.1 No external consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of this report. Members will, however, be aware that consultation is an integral part of the corporate business planning process, and consultation on the individual actions and projects planned to support the revised Corporate Plan and Corporate Objectives will be carried out in accordance with the Corporate Business Planning Timetable. Wherever it is available, use has been made of valid opinion research data, including the results of the latest Districtwide survey.

- 5.2 As part of the Corporate Business Planning Process a Member workshop will be held in regard to priority areas of work to deliver the Corporate Plan, and this is in addition to seeking the views of the Finance Audit and Risk Committee, the North Hertfordshire Partnership, parish, town and community councils, statutory partners and business ratepayers views as appropriate

6 FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 15th June 2016.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Before considering the detailed budget position for the authority, the Corporate Business Planning Process requires that the Council's high level objectives are determined, those Corporate Objectives for 2016-21 remaining unchanged, as agreed at Cabinet on 14th June 2016.

- 7.2 The Corporate Plan attached as Appendix A narrates the opportunities and risks facing the district, and also identifies the high level projects which will ensure the Corporate Plan is being delivered. Budgets must then be allocated to ensure their achievement; this is known as 'policy led' budgeting and enables the authority to best reflect not only services it must deliver by statute, but those over which it has a degree of discretion.
- 7.3 The Council's budget and its objectives are inextricably linked. There is no point in having a key project that cannot be funded and no point in spending limited resources if they are not achieving the objectives that have been set. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), proposed for adoption in this same committee cycle, informs the Council's budgetary position and ensures that policy and budget, especially at times of increasing financial constraint, are aligned.

8. ISSUES

- 8.1 North Hertfordshire District Council moved away from the production of a formal, printed Corporate Plan document some time ago, when it was replaced by a more streamlined policy document; this establishes what the Council will deliver, not only directly but importantly in partnership and through other service arrangements. This is not published in hard copy, but once agreed, provided for download from the Council's website.
- 8.2 There are obviously areas of work that remain important to future delivery by the Council; the development and adoption of the Local Plan, providing areas for sustainable growth in the district, ensuring we deliver schemes whilst still balancing budgets, and more notably, continuing to work and engage with our local communities, be they communities of residents or businesses.
- 8.3 However, the Council also needs to ensure that, as its strategic business planning document, its Corporate Plan also reflects more recent changes in;
- Legislation, which may require changes to existing services, or new provision to deliver
 - Capacity, since the authority has continued to reduce headcount over recent years, whilst statutory requirements placed on the authority have continued to rise
 - Financial constraints – there is still a degree of uncertainty in regard to the adoption of the Local Plan, the availability of New Homes Bonus, the district retention of their proportion of Business Rates (still subject to review and implementation but covered in more detail in the Medium Term Financial Strategy at this same meeting), uncertainty surrounding the future use of the Better Care Fund
 - Population – while we know with certainty that any individual or population ages, it is the proportion of older people in the overall district population that we must factor in. Over the age of 70, it is increasingly likely that an individual will have one or more health needs, over the age of 80 health needs can become more complex especially with potential for sensory and mental (dementia, Alzheimer) deterioration too. For many of these older people there is a wish to remain living independently at home, as there is by care providers to encourage care provided as home as long as possible, both of which require health, social care and Council service providers to consider how this support can be provided together.
 - Patterns and location of deprivation have changed in the past five years (evidenced by the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation) so we should ensure that our services, and how they may be delivered, respond accordingly to these; in times of increased financial constraint it is all the more important that limited resources, both those of the Council and its partner agencies working in the local community, are directed to areas of greater need.

8.4 Having considered all of these Cabinet recommended to Council that the existing three objectives (below) remain unchanged and inform the Council's Corporate Budget Setting for 2017/21:

- 1. To work with our partners to provide an attractive and safe environment for our residents, where diversity is welcomed and the disadvantaged are supported**
- 2. To promote sustainable growth within our district to ensure economic and social opportunities exist for our communities, whilst remaining mindful of our cultural and physical heritage**
- 3. To ensure that the Council delivers cost effective and necessary services to our residents that are responsive to developing need and financial constraints.**

8.5 The Corporate Plan containing these objectives and plans for their delivery will be presented to Cabinet on 26 July and then to Council on 1st September to inform the Corporate Budget setting process through late 2016, ready for delivery from the new financial year 1st April 2017.

8.6 All projects included in the Corporate Plan will be subject to sound business cases being provided, and specific targets established as they are introduced and the Council's performance against these will be monitored and reported. The NHDC project management framework requires project managers to create and maintain a project risk log for their projects. The Corporate Risk and Opportunities Management Strategy sets out that a summary of the project risk log be added to the corporate performance management system, Covalent. When a summary risk entry is created on Covalent, it will be reported to the Risk Management Group as a new risk; any identified as top risks, i.e. the Local Plan, will be reported to the Finance Audit and risk Committee.

8.7 Performance reports are made quarterly through the Council's Senior Management Team, and to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee twice a year. Any exceptions in regard to delivery of a high risk project are reported on to the Council's Cabinet as necessary under their terms of reference.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee include at 6.2.7(e) the power "to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the Executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive"

9.2 Cabinet's terms of reference include at 5.6.34, the power by recommendation "to advise the Council in the formulation of those policies within the Council's terms of reference".

9.3 Full Council's terms of reference include "approving or adopting the policy framework" which at 4.2.10 (f) includes Priorities/Objectives for the District." The 'Corporate Plan' attached as Appendix A to this report represents that same document and objectives/priority areas of work.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The cost of delivering the projects to support the agreed Corporate Plan for 2017/21 will be resourced through the corporate business planning process cycle. A number
CABINET (26.7.16)

of these projects are likely to form part of the Council's capital programme for 2017-22 and may also have associated implications for the Council's General Fund (revenue) account. For example, the investment in the extension of North Herts Leisure Centre will mean that, once complete and operational, the Council will benefit from an adjustment to the annual management contract sum.

- 10.2 It is clear that the Council will continue to face difficult spending decisions in view of the current economic climate and the continuing reduction in government support in future years and that the availability of funding will impact on the projects that can be undertaken. Individual projects will therefore be reviewed and costed and, where necessary, a business plan developed for consideration to ensure that the overall programme of activity corporately can be achieved within the agreed budget assigned and that there is capacity to deliver within the proposed timeframe.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Adoption of the Corporate Plan, and within it the Council's objectives for 2017/2021 commences the Council's business planning processes for the next financial year. A robust Corporate Business Planning process is key to managing the Council's Top Risk of Managing the Council's Finances and delivering a balanced budget.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1 October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5 April 2011. There is a General duty, described in 12.2, that public bodies must meet, underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.

- 12.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, give **due regard** to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 12.3 By developing and reporting delivery against the Corporate Plan and priorities which inform the delivery of individual projects, this provides a means to monitor whether the Council are meeting the stated outcomes of its priorities, its targets or delivering accessible and appropriate services to the community to meet different people's needs. This helps the Council to fulfil a number of obligations arising from the Public Sector Equality Duty as well as the Equality Act 2010. Where individual projects exceed a value of £50k, or affect two or more wards (a 'key decision'), it is a requirement that a full equality analysis is completed, to ensure that all aspects of a project ensure best comply with equalities requirements in place at such time.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at Paragraphs 12.1 -12.3.

- 13.2 Where any key projects proposed as part of the Corporate Plan or priorities referred to in this report relate to the award of a public service contract, 'social value' for each project will be captured and reported in accordance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no additional human resource implications arising from this report. The resources needed to deliver projects are considered through the Corporate Business Planning process.

15. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 16.1 Liz Green, Head of Policy & Community Services, Tel 474230 email:
liz.green@north-herts.gov.uk

Contributors

Norma Atlay, Strategic Director of Finance, Policy & Governance Tel 474297; email
norma.atlay@north-herts.gov.uk

Jeanette Thompson
Senior Lawyer
Jeanette.thompson@north-herts.gov.uk
Tel 474370

Kerry Shorrocks,
Corporate HR manager,
Kerry.shorrocks@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474224

Ian Couper,
Head of Finance, Performance and Asset Management,
ian.Couper@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474243

Reuben Ayavoo
Policy Officer,
Reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474212

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 16.1 Corporate Objectives 2017-21 (Cabinet June 2016).

17. APPENDICES

- 17.1 Appendix A – Corporate Business Plan 2017-21.