

COUNCIL

3 SEPTEMBER 2015

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

TITLE OF REPORT: ITEM REFERRED FROM CABINET: 28 JULY 2015 – CORPORATE PLAN 2016-2021

The following is an extract from the Draft Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 28 July 2015.

31. CORPORATE PLAN 2016-2021

The Executive Member for Policy, Transport and Green Issues presented a report of the Strategic Director of Finance, Policy and Governance in respect of a proposed Corporate Plan for 2016-2021. The following appendix was submitted with the report:

Appendix A – Corporate Plan 2016-2021.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the following referral from that Committee, made at its meeting held on 21 July 2015, in respect of the Corporate Plan 2016-2021 (Minute 34 refers):

- “(1) That due to the various redrafts of the document affecting the flow of the document, consideration be given to rewriting parts of the Corporate Plan 2016–2021 to aid clarity; and
- (2) That consideration be given to whether the document is forward looking enough due to the inclusion of projects that have already been started.”

The Executive Member for Policy, Transport and Green Issues stated that, in order to aid clarity, he had no problem with moving the bullet points in each section from the beginning to the bottom of each Objective. However, he felt that mention of projects which had already started should remain in the document, as many of these were not scheduled to be completed until after the Plan came into operation. The list of projects was not considered to be exhaustive, but rather an indication of the types of projects pertinent to each Objective.

The Executive Member for Policy, Transport and Green Issues advised that the Council's budget and its objectives were inextricably linked. There was no point in having a key project that could not be funded and no point in spending limited resources if they were not achieving the objectives that had been set. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which informed the Council's budgetary position, was also to be considered at this Cabinet meeting to ensure policy and budget, especially at times of increasing financial constraint, were aligned (see Minute 32 below).

The Executive Member for Policy, Transport and Green Issues stated that he wished to strengthen the document in relation to rural communities. He therefore proposed that the following paragraph be added to the narrative under Objective 1: Attractive and Thriving:

“We are aware of the threat that the changing demographics present to our rural communities. We will work with them to ensure appropriate development will allow them to remain attractive and thriving.”

Cabinet supported this addition, but asked the Executive Member to not limit support for rural communities to just Objective 1, and to look at reflecting this support throughout the document as a whole.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That the Corporate Plan 2016-2021, as attached at Appendix A to the report, and as amended, be adopted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To put in place a suitable high level strategic policy document to inform the Council's Corporate Business Planning process.

The following is the report considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 28 July 2015 (including amendments made to Appendix A).

TITLE OF REPORT: CORPORATE PLAN 2016 TO 2021

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, POLICY & GOVERNANCE
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR JULIAN CUNNINGHAM, POLICY TRANSPORT
AND GREEN ISSUES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report recommends the Corporate Plan for 2016 to 2021 to guide and inform the 2016/17 Corporate Business Planning Process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommend to Full Council the adoption of the Corporate Plan 2016-2021 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 policy framework for the authority.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The option to retain the 2015/16 Priorities, as agreed in September 2013, was considered but discounted, since the Council's policy document needs to inform and align with the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-21 (also for discussion and consideration by Cabinet at this meeting), whilst also reflecting the changing nature of the district and its communities.

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 Citizens' Panel.

- 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, panel of residents, 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 19 May 2015.

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 having been agreed by

Cabinet on 16th June 2015. 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.

- 7.2 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) which informs the Council's budgetary position is also to be considered by Cabinet at this meeting to ensure policy and budget, especially at times of increasing financial constraint, are aligned.
- 7.3 North Hertfordshire District Council published its first 'Corporate Plan' in 2005. This high level strategic document set out the Council's ambitions and aspirations for the district over the 10 years from 2005 to 2015. In recent years this became known as the 'Priorities for the District', but following discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Policy, Transport and Green Issues it has been agreed to return to the former title of Corporate Plan, but a much shorter document than previously, and which spans a shorter, five year timeframe. A number of areas of change are anticipated going forward and it is therefore timely with the expiry of one plan to reconsider the objectives and Corporate Plan for the next five years.

8. ISSUES

- 8.1 North Hertfordshire District Council moved away the production of a formal, printed Corporate Plan document some time ago, but following discussion with the Policy Transport and Green Issues Portfolio Holder it has been agreed that we return to the development of a similar, streamlined policy document; this will establish what the Council will deliver, not only directly but importantly in partnership and through other service arrangements. This will not be published in hard copy, but once agreed, provided for download from the Council's website.
- 8.2 There are obviously areas of work which 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 reduced headcount over recent years
 - Financial constraints – there is still a degree of uncertainty in regard to the availability of New Homes Bonus, Revenue Support Grant, district retention of their proportion of National Non-domestic Rate collection (still subject to review)
 - Population – what we know for certainty is that any individual or population ages, but it is the degree to which our older population will increase as a proportion of the overall district population which 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 that can become more complex especially with potential for sensory and mental (dementia, Alzheimer) deterioration too. But for many of these older people there is a wish to remain living independently at home which requires health, social care and Council service providers to consider how this support can be provided together.

- Patterns and location of deprivation have changed since the development of the last Corporate Plan, 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 additional factors, the three objectives agreed by Cabinet to inform the Council's Corporate Budget Setting 2016/21 are;
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 Following discussion and agreement at Cabinet, the Corporate Plan containing these objectives and plans for their delivery will be presented to Council to inform the Corporate Budget setting process, through late 2015, ready for delivery from the new financial year 1st April 2016.
- 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; this will be quarterly through the Council's Senior Management Team, and to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any exceptions in regard to delivery of a project are reported on to the Council's Cabinet as necessary under their terms of reference. Project risks are reported via the Council's Risk Management Group and onward to the Finance Audit and Risk Committee.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet's terms of reference include the power, "to advise the Council in the formulation of those policies within the Council's terms of reference" and the power to make recommendations regarding that advice.
- 9.2 Full Council's terms of reference include "approving or adopting the policy framework...Priorities for the District." The 'Corporate Plan' attached as Appendix A to this report represents that same document and priority areas of work.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The projects to support the agreed Corporate Plan for 2016/21 will be resourced through the corporate business planning process cycle for 2016/21. A number of these projects are likely to form part of the Council's capital programme for 2016/17, and for those which will need to be delivered over a longer period, across subsequent years.
- 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 be 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.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Adoption of the Corporate Plan, and within it the Council's priorities for 2016/2021 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. 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 compliance 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' 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

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16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix A – Corporate Business Plan 2016-21.

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 Corporate Objectives 2016-21 (Cabinet June 2015).