

CABINET

31 JULY 2018

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

AGENDA ITEM No.

6A

TITLE OF REPORT: ITEM REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 24 JULY 2018 – CORPORATE PLAN 2019 – 2024 AND CORPORATE OBJECTIVES 2019 – 2024.

23. CORPORATE PLAN 2019 - 2014 AND CORPORATE OBJECTIVES FOR 2019 - 2024

The Senior Policy Officer presented the report entitled Corporate Plan 2019 – 2024 and Corporate Objectives 2019 – 2024.

He advised that the Corporate Plan informed the Corporate Business Planning process.

Since the report was published, it had been amended and an updated version had been tabled.

Minor amendments had been made to the objectives as follows:

Objective 1

Ensure the phrase “disadvantaged people” is used consistently throughout.

Objective 2

To read “To promote sustainable growth both within and where it affects our district to ensure economic and social opportunities exist for our communities, whilst remaining mindful of our cultural and physical heritage.”

The Senior Policy Officer advised that the plan reflected changes in legislation, capacity of the authority, financial constraints, population changes and patterns and location of areas of deprivation.

The Corporate Plan, at Appendix A, recognised the daily activity that the Council undertook

The objectives had remained the same for the last 3-4 years, however the aim was to review and refresh the document for the 2019/20 new Civic year.

The current Corporate Plan was a living document and minor amendments had been made to the published and current Corporate Plan as follows:

Percentage of Household Waste sent for Reuse, Recycling and composting.

The target for 2018/19 had been reduced from 60% to 55%, as the 60% target was aspirational and, although in the future this might be achieved, recent forecasting indicated that performance this year would be lower.

Crime Figures

North Herts had moved from fourth to third lowest in the county.

Third Party reporting Centre

Clarity around what a third party reporting centre is.

CAB

The significant support that NHDC provides to CAB seeks to address the needs of those that live in areas of deprivation

Local Plan

The Submission Local Plan was subject to an extensive Examination in Public, potential sites were subject to individual and group representations made to the Inspector. The forthcoming Modifications put forward by the inspector will be subject to a further consultation process.

We recognise that tensions exist in creating opportunities for growth both to sustain the local population and to meet the growth aspirations of neighbours, including the impact on rail and road networks and the green and open spaces so important to our residents.

- We will review both existing and future green space provision.
- We will represent the authority with regard neighbours plans, policies and aspirations such as with the expansion of London Luton Airport, the growth envisaged within the Oxford/Milton Keynes/Cambridge Arc and London.

Go Local Policy

Expenditure under the Go Local Policy increased 16% to 38%

Town Centres

Acknowledgement of the challenges facing high street/town centre retail and Local plan – social housing provision

Commercialism

Appointment of the Service Director - Commercial in June to drive this agenda for the council.

The progression of the building control company (Herts Building Control)

Highlight of the excellent work of Careline and its expansion across the districts with 16,000 service users.

Areas of Deprivation

Added clarity to identify the areas of deprivation in North Herts.

Financial

Readiness for future reductions that could arise from Business rates retention models, fair funding and new homes bonus allocations.

Members were generally disappointed with the Corporate Plan and were concerned that the document appeared to be a list of past achievement rather than a forward facing aspirational document that included details of future plans and expressed concern that the document was just an amended version of last years Plan

A number of suggestions were made regarding items that should be included in the Corporate Plan including:

- How the Council will continue to address air quality issues across the District;
- Inclusion of aspirational targets rather than Targets that were achievable, so as to encourage improvement;
- More reference to supporting equality and diversity throughout North Herts including work undertaken with LGBT groups;
- More detail on how objectives and targets would be achieved;
- Acknowledgment of changing risks to employment opportunities in surrounding areas such as Stevenage;
- More detail regarding the issues that would have an impact on the organisation and its budget and how these would be overcome

In response to questions the Service Director – Legal and Community confirmed that it was planned to refresh the Plan in time for the 2020 Civic Year and work would likely start in September 2018 regarding this that would include Member workshops and that the new document could potentially look very different.

Most Members felt strongly that the Corporate Plan was not fit for purpose and needed to be refreshed and there was lively debate as to the appropriate timing for this to happen, with some Members demanding an immediate rewrite, and that there should be more Member involvement, at an earlier stage, in the development of the Plan, possibly through a Member workshop.

Some Members commented that the Corporate Plan had not included some of the most important issues in past years, such as the re-rendering of the Waste Contact. Decision making was being led by financial issues rather than by this document.

In response to a question the Senior Policy Officer advised that the drawing up of a brand new Plan would take a large amount of Officer time.

RESOLVED: That the report entitled Corporate Plan and Corporate Objectives 2019-2024 be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers that the current Corporate Plan Document is a record of past achievements rather than a plan for the future, and that it should be revised to clearly set out plans to achieve Council's objectives.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Urges Cabinet to revise this Plan at the earliest opportunity.

REASON FOR DECISION: To consider the report entitled Corporate Plan and Corporate Objectives 2019-2024 prior to consideration by Cabinet.

[Note: the item to which this referral relates is Item 8 on this agenda.]