

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of Meeting: 29 January 2020

Report by: Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council

Report title: Developing a new Corporate Plan

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL

- a) That the new Corporate Plan is considered for adoption by Full Council.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The council's current Corporate Strategic Plan runs from 2016/17 to 2019/20. The Plan sets the strategic direction for the council, and the priorities that guide the council's work. Progress and updates regarding the current Corporate Strategic Plan priorities are regularly reported to the Performance, Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee (PAGO).
- 1.2 The current Corporate Strategic Plan is due for review. This report:
- outlines the approach taken towards the development of new corporate priorities;
 - presents the priorities which will form the basis of the new Corporate Plan.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Since the development of the last Corporate Strategic Plan in 2016 progress has been made in different areas alongside various changes locally and nationally. Major capital projects such as investing in Hertford Theatre, Old River Lane and leisure services are proceeding at pace, the District Plan has been adopted and we are anticipating the applications for Harlow and Gilston Garden Town in 2020.
- 2.2 Externally, the landscape regarding sustainability and climate change is gathering momentum. Many councils, including East Herts, have made significant sustainability commitments which build on the work undertaken over the past few years. East Herts Council also acknowledges the community leadership role it has in addressing this global challenge and recently held an environmental and climate change forum to gather stakeholders and consider collective actions.
- 2.3 Digital transformation and innovation shape to an even greater extent the ways in which we lead our lives, and the ways in which our customers prefer to access services. The council has already made significant advances in its provision of online services, meaning that our residents and businesses can access and receive information about our services in ways that best suit them.
- 2.4 At the same time, local authorities continue to face increasing pressure on services with limited resources, meaning that it is vital for the council to continue to pursue its efforts in the following areas:
 - o Developing our commercial approach and to seek out new and innovative income sources;
 - o Encouraging business growth and development

across the district;

o Enabling our communities to work collaboratively with us and our partner organisations, in order to provide services where they are most needed and where they will make the most difference.

2.5 Against this background, Executive Members have been working to develop the council's priorities for the period 2020 - 2024. The development process began on 6th July 2019 when the administration held an away day, during which initial priorities for the council were identified. Since then a number of smaller workshops have taken place to refine these priorities further. Discussions involved senior officers and partners (including the Council for Voluntary Services, the Citizen's Advice Service, the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor, The Digital Innovation Zone and the Local Enterprise Partnership).

2.6 This development process has defined an overarching vision, underpinned by 4 cross-cutting themes. Each of the themes has an associated set of actions and priorities which will be delivered. The draft corporate plan can be found at Appendix A.

2.7 The draft plan was shared at Performance, Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee on 14th January 2020 and the following comments were made:

- The plan needs to ensure council priorities and resources support all of the five towns and surrounding villages
- Sustainability has a wider application than just the environment and should cover the built environment and protection of heritage assets. Sustainability as a concept also needs to be mainstreamed across all of the themes

- Digital as a term can be quite vague and means different things to different people. The language of technology could be used instead (but acknowledging that it may not work with the 'seed' acronym)
- The committee look forward to seeing more detail in due course about how the priorities would be owned and delivered by Members and officers alike

2.8 Executive considered this feedback along with that of stakeholders (eg. the Bishop's Stortford Climate Change Action Group who provided written feedback on the priorities) at their meeting on 21st January. The latest draft proposed to Council incorporates changes based on this feedback.

2.9 It is worth noting that the corporate plan is a high level statement of the council's priorities and objectives designed to drive and direct other strategies and plans. It is not a detailed set of actions and targets covering everything the council does. However these detailed action plans will sit underneath the corporate plan and be reported to the Performance, Audit, Governance and Oversight Committee and Executive on a regular basis.

Appendix A –Draft Corporate Plan

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 To seek Council views on the new Corporate Plan.

4.0 Options

4.1 The new Corporate Plan priorities have been developed through a process involving officers, members and key partners. No alternatives are currently being considered, as to do so would disregard the development process which has been undertaken.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 There is no legal requirement for councils to develop a corporate plan, however, should the Council fail to adopt new corporate priorities the risks arising may be organisational and reputational.
- 5.2 The impact of these risks would be moderate, and the likelihood unlikely.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 The new Corporate Plan priorities will guide the organisation's work over the coming four years. They will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 6.2 Informal consultation on all the draft priorities has taken place with key partner organisations working across the district.
- 6.3 The priority 'Sustainability at the heart of everything we do' will ensure that all the Council's work is considered from an environmental and sustainable perspective.

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

Yes

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Appendix A –Draft Corporate Plan

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