

East Herts Council Report

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 18th January 2022

Report by: Councillor Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council

Report title: Corporate Plan Refresh 2022/23

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

- This paper invites Committee Members to review and comment on Corporate Plan priorities ahead of them being adopted by Council alongside the 2022/23 budget

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

- A) To review and comment on the One Page Plan priorities (Appendix A);**
- B) To make recommendations to Executive on any proposed changes or amendments ahead of the plan being proposed to Council for adoption**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 That the Corporate Plan priorities are reviewed ahead of being adopted at Full Council alongside the 2022-23 budget

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan, "East Herts: A Place to Grow" was originally adopted in January 2020 and a refreshed version agreed by Council in July of 2021. The plan contains a high level summary against each of the four SEED themes. There are then a series of more detailed actions and indicators to help measure progress towards objectives. The full plan can be found here:
<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=158&MIId=3914&J=2>
- 2.2 As part of 2021-22 year there are 85 actions and 75 Performance Indicators to help The Council monitor progress the SEED objectives. An update was provided to Overview and Scrutiny Members in November 2021 and a full report on progress will be provided in May 2022 as part of the Council's Annual Report.
- 2.3 Corporate plan priorities are refreshed on an annual basis, usually alongside budget considerations, to accommodate any changes in priorities. The 2021/22 refresh process was fairly substantial, incorporating new and additional activity related to Covid but remaining focused on the SEED structure and core priorities of the council. Executive Members have undertaken an initial review of the one page plan and the draft refreshed version can be found at Appendix A. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members are invited to review and comment.
- 2.4 Some of the issues that may affect priorities in the upcoming year could include the following:
- 2.5 The 2022/23 budget is quite challenging for East Herts District Council and the refresh process needs to be considered in this

context. The scope for new/ additional activity which has not been identified in the budget is very limited.

- 2.6 The capital programme remains in place and the proposed budget sets out how the commitments will be met. Key projects (such as Hertford Theatre and Old River Lane) are likely to continue to be priorities for the Council.
- 2.7 The Sustainability at the Heart of everything we do theme is monitored on a monthly basis and the key activities have changed substantially since the last refresh. A number of high level actions and priorities have been identified for the 2022/23 year. The full details of all the theme's activities can be found here: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/about-east-herts-0/environmental-sustainability/environmental-sustainability-action-plan>
- 2.8 Under the Enabling Communities theme a substantial amount of new activity was incorporated last year around addressing the impact of Covid and supporting national programmes such as enforcing restrictions and the vaccine roll out (see "keeping communities safe" objective). One-off funding was made available for much of this activity which expires on 31 March 2022. It is uncertain at this stage what the appetite will be from central government to continue funding this work throughout 2022 (even with the new Omicron variant) although East Herts will continue to support countywide and national programmes around vaccine take up.
- 2.9 Similar to the above the Encouraging Economic Growth theme had a strong focus on business support during Covid (eg. administration of grant funding). It is uncertain whether this will continue in 2022/23 however support to businesses will remain a priority.

2.10 There has been a substantial amount of activity around the Digital by Default theme in the past six months. Officers have begun a Transforming East Herts programme designed to save £1m over the next three years. There are six themes underneath the programme and a number of them have been added into the one page plan given the impact they may have on customers and staff:

- Lean Processes: looking at improving existing business and customer processes and encouraging more channel shift
- Modern Workforce Development: looking at new ways of working following the pandemic and getting the right skills for the future. This includes maximising benefits from the new blended working policy for staff
- Commercial Skills: looking at opportunities to generate more income.
- Modern Workspaces: looking at the use of our buildings. A key project within this strand will be an evaluation of our office requirements in terms of desks, meeting and flexible use spaces for the future. This will involve looking at options for reconfiguring Wallfields and letting part of it commercially. Another project will look at receptions/ front of house services in both Hertford and Bishop's Stortford and take an evidence based approach to ensuring our face to face offering is effective and efficient.
- Service Reviews: looking at overall quality of services and ensuring they are future proofed. This strand will provide a framework for how we review current services in terms of benchmarking performance with peers, reviewing customer feedback and agreeing expectations for quality against costs.
- Technology: looking at our hardware and software solutions. This strand will focus on supporting the roll out of Office 365, use of MS Teams as a tool for

communication and collaboration and ensuring staff have the right equipment to undertake their roles

- 2.11 Members invited to comment on priorities within the one page plan (see appendix A) and make recommendations to Executive for their consideration.
- 2.12 Following this meeting the Corporate Plan will be shared with Executive on the 8th February and Council on the 1 March alongside the proposed 2022/23 budget.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 The report

4.0 Options

- 4.1 N/A

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 None

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 The annual consultation on what residents think of East Herts Council services concluded shortly before Christmas and the results can be found within the budget papers.

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

The SEED framework supports the delivery of East and Equal – the Council’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy

Environmental Sustainability

The SEED framework outlines the Council’s proposed actions towards meeting its sustainability commitments

Financial

The priorities can only be delivered with investment and details concerning spending are contained within the budget papers

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 – One page plan

Contact Member

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