

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Corporate Plan 2022/23

Meeting/Date: Council, 20 July 2022

Executive Portfolio: Councillor Sarah Conboy, Executive Leader

Report by: Business Intelligence and Performance Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the development of a new Corporate Plan for 2022/23 and to present proposed objectives, actions and performance indicators to Council for approval.

The previous four-year Corporate Plan covered the period from 2018-2022, to align with the Council's election cycle, and a pragmatic approach has been taken to the adoption of an interim, transitional Corporate Plan at the start of the new term. The proposed Plan sets out strategic objectives for the Council, as well as actions and performance indicators to measure success and hold services to account against during 2022/23.

The 2023/24 Corporate Plan will be informed by a programme of meaningful engagement with residents, businesses and other stakeholders linked to the development of our Place Strategy. The next Corporate Plan will build stronger links between the Council's work and our strategic objectives as these become more closely aligned with our financial planning, service delivery and partnership activities.

Recommendations:

The Council is

RECOMMENDED

to approve the Corporate Plan developed for 2022/23 (attached at Appendix A)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report is intended to update Members on the development of a new Corporate Plan for 2022/23 and to present proposed objectives, actions and performance indicators for endorsement by Cabinet and approval by Council.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY

- 2.1 The Council needs a Corporate Plan setting out strategic priorities, setting out its objectives and how these will be achieved. The previous four-year Corporate Plan set out objectives for the period from 2018-2022 to align with the Council's election cycle, with key actions and performance indicators reviewed annually. With that period ended, a new Plan is needed to set out strategic objectives at the start of the new term and actions and performance indicators to measure success against.

3. ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Following the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2022, the Council is now led by a Joint Administration made up of Independent councillors, Liberal Democrat councillors, Labour councillors, and a Green Party councillor. A Joint Administration Agreement (JAA) has set out their key objectives for the four-year term and how they intend to work together.
- 3.2 Analysis to identify appropriate actions and performance indicators for each of the objectives has involved reviewing existing corporate strategies, service plans developed for 2022/23 and the JAA. The previous Corporate Plan was also part of this review as some actions and performance indicators continue to reflect ongoing activities that are important to residents, customers and the Council. However, feedback previously received on quarterly performance reports from senior officers, service managers and members of Overview & Scrutiny committees was taken into account in assessing suitability.
- 3.3 The proposed Corporate Plan attached at Appendix A sets out the Council's objectives and the key actions and performance indicators for 2022/23. Services will liaise with Portfolio Holders in setting targets and progress is expected this year on all of the actions listed. Not all will be completed in 2022/23 as many reflect ongoing or multi-year activities.
- 3.4 Reviewing new service plans allows us to more closely align the actions and performance indicators included in the Corporate Plan with those being used to manage services. This helps to ensure that services are clearly focussed on delivering the same outcomes and measuring them in the same way wherever possible. The Corporate Plan provides the highest level in the "golden thread" running from the Plan through Service Plans to individual objectives set in Staff Appraisals.
- 3.5 Managers will continue to monitor progress on their service plan aims and Members will continue to receive reports on progress made with Corporate Plan actions and performance indicators on a quarterly basis.

- 3.6 A programme of meaningful engagement with residents and other stakeholders linked to the development of our Place Strategy will begin in summer 2022 and it is expected that the output from this will inform a more fundamentally changed 2023/24 Corporate Plan. The development of a Place Strategy is expected to establish shared objectives to work towards with key partners. Success is likely to be monitored through more outcome-focused indicators that measure the wider and longer-term impact of partnership activities in addition to the performance of the Council's services.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The Panel discussed the Corporate Plan 2022/23 at its meeting on 6th July 2022.
- 4.2 Councillor Gray observed that the Corporate Plan is for the whole Council to adopt, not just the joint administration and that it would be useful to refer to it as such. This point was noted and the messaging will be amended to reflect this. Councillor Gray further observed that the new administration had inherited a very strong financial position from the previous administration, and whilst pragmatism is welcomed, the plan looked very similar to previous years with the exception of the climate emergency declaration. It was further stated that residents of Huntingdonshire had voted for change in the recent elections but that none was visible within the plan. The Panel heard that whilst there were currently similarities to previous plans, change is coming. Once this has been properly investigated and developed then it will be taken forward, and it was further noted that these continued developments were expected to be in the updated plan from April 2023.
- 4.3 Councillor Cawley echoed Councillor Gray's concerns and queried the expected outcome of the environmental crisis declaration addition. The Panel heard that the administration were taking the crisis seriously and planned to add substance to the actions currently being developed with further detail to be provided as it becomes available.
- 4.4 Councillor Howell enquired whether an indicator could be added under the objective strengthening communities to show timescales for payments to community groups. The Panel were advised that this would be investigated with context being developed into the commentary.
- 4.5 It was observed by Councillor Corney, that a Task and Finish Group had previously looked at the topic of affordable housing and enquired what further work was expected on this. The Panel heard that this is being revisited due to the shifting nature of the district and the housing market. Further cross party working and involvement from Scrutiny would be welcomed as this gathers pace.
- 4.6 The reasoning behind the invest and made in Huntingdonshire project was questioned by Councillor Pickering who felt that residents identified more with their local community than with the district. The Panel heard that the administration were mindful of this and that a blend of these identities

would be developed going forward allowing scope to attract large investors to the district as a whole.

- 4.7 Councillor Martin queried the indicator for super fast broadband, he observed that this is a fluctuating technology with constant improvements therefore hard to measure. The Panel heard that Ofcom data will be used for this indicator and would be adjusted according to the available data.
- 4.8 Having largely welcomed the report, the Panel encourage the Cabinet to endorse the recommendations contained within the report.

5. KEY IMPACTS

- 5.1 The key impact of adopting the Corporate Plan is that everyone in the Council will be clear about the Council's objectives and the actions and indicators to be used to measure progress towards delivering on them.
- Officers will be clear about what is important and how their role contributes towards this, as identified through individual objectives
 - Financial planning will be more clearly linked to corporate planning
 - Service plans will be more clearly linked to corporate planning
 - Members will know what information they will get and when
 - Portfolio Holders will be able to hold Officers to account
 - Overview and Scrutiny will have the information they need to hold Portfolio Holders to account

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN

- 6.1 Following Cabinet, the proposed objectives, key actions and PIs for 2022/23 will be submitted for approval by Council. If approved, an updated version of the Corporate Plan will be made available to all employees through the Intranet and will be published on the Council's website. Progress in delivering our key actions and performance indicator results will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet every quarter, along with details of financial performance and progress in delivering corporate projects.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The proposed Corporate Plan at Appendix A is intended to replace the previous plan and to set out the Council's corporate objectives for 2022/23.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council's 2022/23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27 was approved by Council in February 2022. The proposed Corporate Plan actions and performance indicators have been informed by the approved service budgets and savings and growth proposals. It is anticipated that there will be no additional resource implications as a result of adopting the new objectives, actions or performance indicators.

9. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposed Corporate Plan includes “Tackling climate change and caring for the environment” as a new objective. This is supported by actions including declaring a climate emergency and developing, adopting and delivering a Climate Strategy informed by resident and stakeholder engagement. It is anticipated that the Climate Strategy activity will help the Council to identify further actions to tackle climate change and care for the environment, as well as establishing further performance indicators to be measured in future.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 10.1 The Corporate Plan provides a clear direction for what we are doing, why we are doing it and what impact it is having. The interim Corporate Plan for 2022/23 aligns with the ambitions of the Council and will guide the work of services responsible for delivery on the new objectives. Actions and performance indicators selected will be used to monitor progress in 2022/23.

11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A – proposed Corporate Plan including key actions and performance indicators for 2022/23

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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