

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Corporate Plan Refresh 2024

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 19 March 2024
Council – 27 March 2024

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 refresh of the Corporate Plan, which includes revised lists of key actions and operational performance indicators for 2024/25.

The Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 was adopted in March 2023 and established three priorities for the Council, with related outcomes set out through detailed outcome statements. These are accompanied by a list of actions and operational performance indicators.

The actions are reviewed annually and are removed, amended or added to where work has been completed or new approaches have been identified, for example through pilot activity or as a result of engagement with partners and residents. Performance reporting has continued to evolve with new or amended operational performance measures proposed where better indicators have been identified.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

To endorse the refreshed Corporate Plan to Council (attached at Appendix 1).

The Council is

RECOMMENDED

To approve the refreshed Corporate Plan (attached at Appendix 1).

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report is intended to update Members on the annual refresh of the Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 and to present actions and operational performance indicators for 2024/25 to Council for approval.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY?

- 2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out our priorities, desired outcomes and how we plan to achieve these. The action plan and our operational performance indicators are due to be refreshed on an annual basis. This allows us to remove actions which are completed or where a new approach is considered necessary and to introduce new actions that we have identified a need for through recent progress and the results of engagement activities. Operational performance measures are regularly reviewed to ensure that we are using the most appropriate measures and to reflect changing public or government priorities. We have also taken the opportunity to review the wording of priorities and outcomes and are proposing two minor changes to improve clarity.

3. AMENDMENTS TO PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

- 3.1 To provide greater clarity for Members, officers and the public, it is proposed that our third priority be changed to "Doing our core work well" and the "Lowering our carbon emissions" outcome be amended to "Lowering carbon emissions". The third priority is shorter and easier to reference than the existing wording, which would be retained as the title of the outcome we aim to deliver under this priority ("Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations"). This will help to ensure that the importance of achieving value-for-money, strong governance and statutory duties remains a key focus for the Council. In changing the other outcome to "Lowering carbon emissions", it will be clearer that our efforts to reduce emissions are not just focused on what we can do to cut the Council's own emissions but also on how we can influence and enable others to reduce emissions across the district, reflecting the actions we plan to deliver.

4. ACTIONS FOR 2024/25

- 4.1 The Corporate Plan 2023-2028 is bold and ambitious in the outcome statements it sets out to achieve, while also being clear on what it is we can do, what we can enable and what we can influence as a district council. It calls on the Council to play more of an enabling role, to make more use of partnership working and to empower people to reduce demand for traditional public services. The challenges we face can only be solved through working collaboratively and the responsibility is not the district council's alone. This is particularly the case for the outcomes under the first priority "Improving the quality of life for local people", where work with partners and residents has identified the need for an approach focused on "Community Wealth Building" and targeting support for residents. Delivering the actions proposed under these outcomes will require us to work collaboratively with partners and communities.

- 4.2 Across the outcomes, there were actions in the 2023/24 action plan which were due to be delivered over multiple years or reflect ongoing activity. Existing progress is recognised in minor changes to wording in some cases (e.g. adding “Continue to” at the beginning). More significant changes are highlighted in the Corporate Plan by “(amended)” or “(new)” labels added at the end of actions listed. These labels will be removed in the version to be published on approval of the refreshed Corporate Plan.
- 4.3 In addition to replacing the actions in the Corporate Plan document with those proposed for 2024/25, we have also listed some examples of what has been delivered against our outcomes in 2023/24. Due to timing, the “We said, we did” sections have been written before the year has ended so the Q4 performance report due to be published in June will provide a more detailed update on what was achieved in 2023/24.

5. OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR 2024/25

- 5.1 The operational performance measures used in 2023/24 remain relevant for monitoring how well our services perform so we are not proposing to remove any. Some amendments are proposed, including revising our measure of the planning ‘backlog’ to count minor planning applications without a current extension of time as ‘old’ if they exceed 16 weeks rather than 26 weeks, in line with recent changes to the Planning Guarantee.
- 5.2 We also intend to amend performance measures relating to staffing, with turnover to be reported on an individual monthly basis rather than for rolling 12 month periods and staff sickness absence to be reported separately for long-term and short-term absences. These changes should help to identify where high turnover in a short period or high levels of sickness absence cause a concern. Further information on staff turnover and sickness will continue to be reported to Employment Committee on a quarterly basis.
- 5.3 Additional operational performance indicators to be included from April 2024 include the amount of residual household waste collected per household (reporting on the weight of waste which is not recycled, reused or composted) and measures of the number of fly tips reported and enforcement actions taken on fly tip offences. These are all measures currently, or expected to be, included in the Office for Local Government (Oflog)’s [Local Data Explorer](#). Oflog was introduced in 2023 to support local government to improve performance and their Local Data Explorer reports data for a range of performance indicators for all English local authorities. We report our performance on at least a quarterly basis, while the Local Data Explorer is currently only reporting on annual results.
- 5.4 Target setting for operational performance indicators will take past performance, resources available and known issues/challenges into account, as well as benchmarking data where possible (e.g. for those indicators that Oflog reports on or where we are members of benchmarking clubs such as the Association for Public Service Excellence). Targets proposed by service managers will be subject to challenge from senior officers and key Cabinet Members, with draft targets to be tabled for scrutiny at the Overview and Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel.

- 5.5 Both quarterly and year-end results will continue to be published via our Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel and Cabinet meeting agendas and on our website.
- 5.6 We will continue to align service plans with the Corporate Plan. This helps us to ensure services are working to the same priorities, aiming to deliver the same outcomes and measuring their performance in a consistent way, where possible. The Corporate Plan provides a 'golden thread' throughout the organisation, linking activity at strategic levels to activity in service plans, ultimately filtering through to objectives set for individual employees.

6. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 6.1 The Panel discussed the Corporate Plan Refresh Report at its meeting on 6th March 2024.
- 6.2 Following a question from Councillor Wells requesting detail on the fleet decarbonisation plan, the Panel heard that the Council was looking at alternative fuels whilst assessing the challenges of new technologies. More detail would be sought from the Portfolio Holder and reported back to the Panel at a later date.
- 6.3 In response to a question from Councillor Blackwell relating to the Operational Performance Measures, the Panel heard that sickness reporting would continue via the quarterly performance reports and Employment Committee and that a range of data would be gathered and analysed going forward and in turn would drive policy development.
- 6.4 The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor Cawley, that happiness would be measured via district level data from the Office for National Statistics.
- 6.5 Following a further question from Councillor Cawley, the Panel heard that reporting on reductions in carbon emissions would be reported via the Climate Strategy, however the Panel were assured that robust measures were in place. It was observed by Councillor Cawley that an overarching timescale for this work would be helpful and would help reassure residents that work was being undertaken.
- 6.6 Councillor Martin stated that it would be helpful to understand progress from the previous year's report, the Panel were advised that this would be incorporated within the quarter 4 Corporate Performance report.
- 6.7 The Panel were assured, in response to a query from Councillor Slade, that a robust communications plan was in place and that this sat alongside the Corporate Plan and would ensure that the right messages went to the right people at the right time.
- 6.8 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

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

- 7.1 The refreshed Corporate Plan at Appendix 1 sets out key priorities and outcomes for 2023-2028 as well as the annual action plan and list of operational performance measures for 2024/25. Proposed amendments to the wording of one priority and one outcome are described in section 3.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 This Corporate Plan 2023-2028 was informed by 2022's programme of engagement, which included both public and stakeholder consultations to help develop both the Huntingdonshire Futures place strategy and the Council's Climate Strategy.
- 8.2 Proposed actions for 2024/25 include a number that will involve further engagement with partners to deliver joint ambitions, and we are retaining an action to listen to local residents and respond to their input on service delivery (now moved under priority three).

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Council's 2024/25 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2028/29 was approved by Council in February 2024. The proposed actions and performance measures 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 agreeing new actions or performance indicators.

10. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Under our first priority, the outcome statement for "improving quality of life for local people" specifically references 'good health' as one of the foundations of a good life. Actions proposed to help improve the health of local residents include delivering a Community Health and Wealth Strategy and work to maximise physical activity in the district. We are proposing to retain operational performance indicators relating to One Leisure Facilities, One Leisure Active Lifestyles and Sports Development services to ensure we continue to monitor and manage their performance.

11. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Corporate Plan supports the approach set out through our new Climate Strategy and commits us to applying a "green lens" to our decision making – embedding the climate and green agenda through all we do and considering environmental impacts and opportunities to improve the environment when making all decisions.

11.2 Within the “Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations” priority, we want to deliver the outcomes of “improving housing”, “forward-thinking economic growth” and “lowering carbon emissions”. Actions planned under each of these outcomes should reduce carbon emissions and help to improve the district’s environment. We have already delivered actions from the Climate Strategy action plan such as hosting the Climate Conversation in November 2023 and new actions such as accelerating solar panel adoption on our buildings will lower carbon emissions further.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

12.1 This report is seeking endorsement from Cabinet and approval from Council for the refresh of the Corporate Plan for 2024/25. Delivery of the new action plan and updated list of operational performance measures will help us to achieve the Council’s priorities and desired outcomes.

13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – refreshed Corporate Plan 2023-2028, including proposed actions and operational performance measures for 2024/25

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