

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 1st December 2016

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Title: Corporate Plan 2017 - 2021

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Howard Rolfe

Key decision: No

Summary

1. The Corporate Plan is a key document that sets out the Council's vision and priorities for the next four years. However, it is reviewed annually to ensure that it remains relevant and deliverable.
2. This report sets out the core contents; the format will be finalised once approved but its simplicity will be retained by presenting it on a single page.
3. It is important to recognise that the Corporate Plan forms part of a wider strategic planning framework, which directs how and where Council resources are allocated. The delivery plan that sets out the outputs, outcomes and performance measures will be included in the budget report, due to be considered by Council in February 2017, to ensure that resources follow the priorities.

Recommendations

4. That the draft Corporate Plan for 2017-21 be recommended to Council for approval.

Financial Implications

5. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications resulting from the delivery plan will be identified in the budget.

Background Papers

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

Communication/Consultation	The plan is derived from ongoing community and budget consultation activities.
Community Safety	Community safety is more clearly identified

	as a corporate priority; specific actions and projects will be identified in the delivery plan and service plans.
Equalities	Any equalities implications resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the delivery plan and service plans. The corporate plan can be made available in Braille, larger print or translated on request
Health and Safety	Any health and safety implications resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the delivery and service plans.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	There are no human rights implications. Any legal implications resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the delivery and service plans.
Sustainability	Any sustainability implications resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the delivery and service plans.
Ward-specific impacts	Any ward-specific impacts resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the service delivery and service plans.
Workforce/Workplace	A strong vision that creates a sense of purpose is key to engaging staff more effectively in their work. Clarity and focus enables staff to be more confident in delivery of services, guides decision making and assists staff (as well as Members and the public) to identify good performance as they are clearer on what success looks like. Any workforce implications resulting from actions or projects in the corporate plan will be identified in the delivery and service plans

Situation

- The Council has for many years followed the good practice of setting out its priorities in the form of a Corporate Plan. Since 2007, much of the focus has, by necessity, been to ensure that the Council's finances were restored to good order. Whilst it is essential that the Council continues its efforts in maintaining a financially sound position, it is considered to be an opportune time for the Council to prioritise its Community Leadership role

8. Community Leadership is widely used to describe the key and unique value that councils can bring to their localities. As the only over-arching locally elected body, councils have a uniquely democratic role within the locality. The Council is well placed to perform a more visible Community Leadership role, focusing on bringing partners together, joining up local services, exercising influence in developing a shared local agenda, engaging with residents and creating a vision for our locality. This is in addition to its more traditional role of meeting its statutory requirements and as a provider of good quality services.
9. The role of Community Leadership is also essential when the rapidly changing nature of the public sector is considered, brought on by significant reductions in central government funding, increasing demand in services, a greater reliance on digital delivery. The Council is uniquely placed to maintain an overview on how these changes impact on the residents, businesses and the community of Uttlesford.
10. In addition, individuals, families and communities experience much more complex issues that cannot be tackled by individual parts of the public sector. Again, the Council is well placed to exercise its Community Leadership role by bringing statutory partners and the voluntary and community sectors together to provide more holistic, and wherever possible, earlier interventions and support.

Vision

11. To this end a vision is proposed within the Corporate Plan: **Working together for the well-being of our communities and to protect and enhance the unique character of the District.**
12. Implicit in this vision is the community leadership role that the council will need to play if progress is to be made towards this vision for the District.

Priorities

13. The Corporate Plan builds on the direction set in previous corporate plans but is intended to provide greater focus on the priorities. The addition of the narrative is intended to ensure that the public, members, staff and partners are clear what the issues and challenges are that drive the priorities, which therefore informs an assessment of what actions are most likely to deliver greatest progress on those priorities.
14. Underpinning the Corporate Plan will be a delivery plan for 2017/18 that sets out the more significant actions/projects (outputs), expected outcomes and performance measures by which success will be measured. The delivery plan has to be completed alongside the budget for 2017/18 to ensure that resources follow priorities; the delivery plan will therefore be included in the budget report considered by Council in February 2017.
15. However, it should be recognised that all of the Council's activities should be contributing to one or more of the priorities and it is not desirable or practicable to set out in a delivery plan all operational activities that contribute to the priorities.

However, the performance indicators for the relevant service areas will be mapped to the priorities to enable Members, the public and staff to recognise the role and importance of these operational activities.

16. The order of the priorities listed below should not be seen as having any particular significance; they are in many respects inter-connected and over emphasis on one may be to the detriment of another.

Promote thriving, safe and healthy communities: Uttlesford is one of the most affluent areas in the country with a strong sense of community and low levels of crime, where most residents enjoy generally good health. But in some communities (including newly forming ones) and for some residents, there are early signs of a reversal of these positive trends. The Council, with its partners, wants to act early to support communities and individuals to live well; Live Well will be the coordinating campaign for the Uttlesford Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and its work groups to promote all aspects of health, wellbeing, security and safeguarding. Housing is essential to enabling our residents to live well and we will strive to ensure everyone has access to a safe, secure, warm and affordable home. The following activities are examples that will assist in delivering this priority:

- Encouraging the production of Neighbourhood plans
- Improving community engagement
- Encouraging young people to live well through volunteering, engaging in civic life and being active
- Promoting garden city development for new settlement(s)
- Working through the LSP to promote Live Well; the Community Safety Partnership and the Community Safety Hub
- Increasing the number of council owned homes
- Promoting better standards in private rented housing.
- Supporting people to remain living in their own homes

Protect and enhance heritage and character: The combination of over 3800 listed building, historic towns, traditional villages and open countryside make Uttlesford a great place to live, work and visit. It is also one of the fastest growing places due to its location, which presents opportunities and challenges to protect and enhance its essential character for present and future generations. Too often our beautiful place is blighted by fly tipping, litter and untidy open space. Together with residents, communities and businesses, we want to ensure that Uttlesford always looks its best to encourage more people and businesses to visit or locate here. The following activities are examples that will assist in delivering this priority:

- Producing and adopting a Local Plan
- Promoting Pride in Uttlesford
- Working with others to increase access to the heritage and history of the District
- Encouraging positive planning that values heritage and promotes growth
- Opposing a 2nd runway at Stansted airport

Support sustainable business growth: Uttlesford benefits from very low levels of unemployment but key to this is a diverse and growing economy. Located between London and Cambridge and with Stansted airport in our district, we want to attract and retain businesses that provide good jobs for local people. Digital connectivity is essential for businesses and their customers, which is why we are investing directly to improve broadband access. The retail sector everywhere faces particular challenges but our town centres provide local services for our residents and are important to our tourism offer; we all need to do what we can to maintain and improve their vitality. The following activities are examples that will assist in delivering this priority:

- Promoting broadband and mobile telephony to support businesses and home working
- Promoting town centres
- Promoting economic benefits of Stansted Airport,
- Encouraging more people to visit Uttlesford
- Supporting business parks and business communities on industrial estates and support for the SE Cambs Science Cluster
- Using the Local Plan to identify sites for commercial development
- Encouraging the establishment of a higher education offer in Uttlesford

Maintain a financially sound and effective Council: The way in which the Council funds its activities has and continues to undergo significant change. Grants from government will end in 2018 and so the Council will be reliant on income from council tax, business rates, new homes bonus and the income we can generate directly through investments. Key to this is also that we spend wisely and ensure our services are as effective as possible. Good customer service is essential to enable us to get it right first time. We also need our residents to help us for example, by recycling as much waste material as possible and paying their bills online to reduce transaction costs. The following activities are examples that will assist in delivering this priority:

- Setting a MTFS that balances prudent use of investment, reserves and capital
- Maximising the use of our assets, including utilising the available space within the council offices
- Reviewing all services to ensure efficiency and effectiveness
- Developing a commercial strategy for the council, including trading Aspire
- Enabling enhanced self-service through the council website
- Working in partnership to deliver good services and reduce costs

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The Council fails to deliver on its priorities	1	3	Greater clarity and explanatory narrative enables staff to understand the priorities more clearly; a delivery plan with outputs and outcomes will be produced alongside the budget to ensure that adequate resources are allocated; activities will feature in service and individual performance plans

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.