

Agenda Item No: 12(i) **Report No:** 31/16
Report Title: The Council Plan 2016 - 2020
Report To: Council **Date:** 23 February 2016
Cabinet Member: Councillor Andy Smith
Ward(s) Affected: All wards
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Purpose of Report:

1. To consider and approve the final draft of the Council Plan 2016-2020 for publication.

Officers' Recommendations:

1. To agree the Council Plan for 2016-2020, which now incorporates those recommendations made by both Scrutiny Committee (14 January 2016) and Cabinet (8 February 2016), subject to 2 below;
2. To authorise the Leader of Council to agree final approval of the Plan following the addition of relevant financial information in accordance with the Council's approved budget for 2016/17 and to make any minor contextual changes

Reasons for Recommendations

3. To enable the Council to set out its strategic vision, objectives and priority projects for the next four years and provide a firm basis for forward planning and performance management.

Information

4. Following the District Council election in May 2015, the Council has an opportunity to refocus on its vision, ambitions and priorities for the Lewes District over the next four years.
5. The Council Plan is a key corporate document. It sets out the Council's commitments to its residents and businesses and outlines a programme of important strategic projects and outcomes for the District. The Plan draws upon a range of statistical data, including the views of residents and other key stakeholders, and consultees, to inform and help shape the policy priorities for the Council.

Development of the draft Council Plan 2016-2020

6. The Council Plan aims to reflect the continuing ambitions and aspirations of the organisation. It continues to emphasise the Council's strong commitment to improving services for customers and communities, achieving more by working together with key partners and delivering efficient, value for money services. The Plan is set against the challenging financial backdrop as outlined in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
7. The Council Plan has been prepared having regard to the following:
 - The Residents' Survey 2015 which was conducted during the summer 2015.
 - The Council's existing programme of transformation projects, community initiatives and policy commitments.
 - The financial and policy drivers likely to impact the Council in the short to medium term.
 - Feedback from consultation with key partners and other stakeholders. This feedback has been considered by the Council's Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet and has informed the final drafting.
8. The Plan is divided into three sections;
 - Customers – focussing on improved customer service and how we work to make our communities more resilient, healthy and engaged.
 - Place – focussing on growth and prosperity, how we deliver sustainable new housing and infrastructure, and how we keep the district clean and green.
 - Value for Money – here, following the Council's decision to develop shared services with Eastbourne Borough Council, the focus is on how the Council will deliver planned savings, in part by the integration of staff and services between Lewes and Eastbourne councils.

Consultation and engagement on the draft Council Plan 2016-2020

9. Engagement with local residents, stakeholders and elected members has been an important part of the development of the Plan.
10. Initial consultation through a Residents' Survey undertaken over the summer 2015, took account of the views of nearly 1,000 local residents. This independently run survey used an LGA approved research methodology. A weighted sample of residents ensured the demographics and make-up of the District (in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and electoral ward) was reflected. The survey provided a statistically robust evidence base on which to develop the Plan, ensuring it reflects the views, priorities and aspirations of local people. The full results of the Residents' Survey have been provided previously to all Members, and are published on the Council's website.
11. As well as the Residents' Survey, other methods of engagement have been adopted to gain feedback from partners and other stakeholders to inform the development of the Plan. Staff Forums have given staff an opportunity to understand and comment on the emerging Plan. In addition, the draft Plan was the subject of a period of stakeholder consultation (via the Council's website) which ran from 18th December 2015 to 8 February 2016.

12. Letters were sent to key partner organisations inviting them to comment on the Plan. Furthermore, the Plan was published on the Council's website and, via press releases, email alerts and social media posts, the wider community and local residents were also encouraged to give their views. Feedback received is summarised at Appendix C.
13. The Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Plan at its meeting on 14th January 2016 (see minute extract at Appendix B). Its comments were reported to Cabinet on 8th February 2016 and have also been taken into consideration as part of the consultation process.
14. Consultation responses and the views of the Scrutiny Committee have been taken into consideration in the drafting of the final version of the Plan.

Adoption and Delivery of the Council Plan

15. Following approval and adoption by Members, the final Council Plan will be published on the Council's website. Although covering a four year period, the Plan will be a dynamic document that will evolve over this timeframe.
16. Once approved by Council, it is intended that the final published version will also include a high level summary of the Council's medium term financial strategy and the impact of its budgets and spending plans on Council Tax precept levels for 2016/17. It is proposed that the Leader of the Council is delegated to approve this additional information along with any final contextual changes.
17. Progress against key success measures and project deliverables set out in the Plan will be reported to Members on a regular basis, as part of normal performance management arrangements. The Plan will be also be reviewed and refreshed each year, to ensure it continues to meet and reflect priorities and programmes over the short to medium term.

Financial Appraisal

18. The Council Plan has been drafted in light of current and planned projects and work programmes. It is consistent with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and draft 2016/17 budgets which also form part of the Council agenda. At the time of report writing, there are considered to be no significant financial implications arising from the Council Plan consultation or budget proposals.

Legal Implications

19. Cabinet may formulate the Council Plan but only full Council may adopt it; Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations 2000 refers.
20. In formulating the Plan, Cabinet may have regard to any recommendations submitted by Scrutiny Committee.
21. Scrutiny Committee is entitled to make its own recommendations direct to full Council.

Risk Management Implications

22. The risk management implications of individual decisions relating to the projects and initiatives covered in this report will be addressed as part of the planning and delivery of those individual projects.

Equality Analysis

- 23.** Equality Analyses will be undertaken in relation to the individual projects which make up the Council Plan, and therefore it is not considered necessary to undertake an overarching analysis of the Plan as a whole.

Background Papers

Residents Survey report available online at <http://www.lewes.gov.uk/council/24056.asp>

Appendices

Appendix A – The final draft Council Plan 2016 – 2020

Appendix B – Minute extract from Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14th January 2016

Appendix C – The results of stakeholder consultation on the Council Plan