

**Report to:** Full Council

**Date:** 18 May 2022

**Title:** Corporate Plan 2020-2024 - Refresh

**Report of:** Robert Cottrill, Chief Executive

**Cabinet member:** Councillor David Tutt, Leader of the Council

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of report:** To propose a refreshed edition of the current corporate plan in the light of the Covid pandemic and the recommendations of the CIPFA assurance review

**Decision type:** Budget and policy framework

**Officer recommendation(s):** To approve the refreshed Corporate Plan for the period 2022 to 2026

**Reasons for recommendations:** The Council's aims and objectives, as set out in its current 4-year Corporate Plan, need to be adjusted to meet the challenges created by the Covid pandemic and to factor in the subsequent recommendations provided by the CIPFA assurance review, following the Council's capitalisation request to Central Government.

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Council will be aware that, as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic, application was made to the government for a capitalisation direction to help with offsetting the resulting financial pressures. This was agreed subject to consenting to an Assurance Review undertaken by CIPFA. At its meeting on 9 February 2022, Cabinet received a report on the outcome of that review which contained a total of 31 recommendations. These were all approved by Cabinet. One of those recommendations was that the current Corporate Plan should be refreshed in the light of the pandemic.
- 1.2 The Corporate Plan is the Council's overarching strategic document setting out high-level aims and ambitions. The current edition has a lifespan of 4 years from 2020 to 2024. It was approved by Full Council on 19 February 2020. Whilst the content of the Corporate Plan is, in essence, the strategic agenda of the Executive and controlling Administration, the document requires the approval of Full Council under the terms of the Constitution.

## **2 Key Headline Changes to the Corporate Plan**

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan contains four high level strategic themes, namely Growth and Prosperity, Quality Environment, Thriving Communities and Housing and Development. These remain largely unchanged in the proposed amended version attached, although they have been amended to reflect progress and adaptation since 2020. There are also some adjusted ambitions to reflect the current financial pressures unforeseen in 2020. In particular, it is necessary to 'park' further large commercial capital projects at this time. However, it is important that the nature and direction of the strategic ambitions are maintained, even if the pace and level of achievement needs to be tempered.
- 2.2 The main change in this refreshed edition of the Corporate Plan is that the fifth theme, previously stated as 'Best Use of Resources', has been replaced by a new overarching theme entitled 'Recovery and Stabilisation'. This theme seeks to pick up the key headline messages arising from the Assurance Review around financial stability, disposal of assets and robust governance, also factoring in work that is already underway. As with all the other themes, this theme will be supported by a number of operational level projects. A key message here is that the Council's ability for the foreseeable future to deliver on its aims and ambitions for all the current themes, will be largely dependent on its ability to deliver on the challenges of the Recovery and Stabilisation theme. This is reflected in the introductory text by the Leader of the Council in the opening section of the plan. Further, in order to have due regard to the magnitude of the challenge ahead, it is considered prudent to extend the lifespan of the refreshed plan for a further four years to 2026. This, in no way, precludes further refreshes within that timeline should it be deemed necessary.
- 2.3 The document attached to this report provides the text to be used in the refreshed version of the plan. Following this meeting, given the Council's approval, then a fully designed version will be producing using this text.

## **3 Consultation**

- 3.1 The original 2020-2024 Corporate Plan was subject to stakeholder consultation and the arising themes, aims and ambitions remain. This refresh of the Corporate Plan has been constructed following the recommendations of the CIPFA Assurance Review, and extensive dialogue with the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the capitalisation process.

## **4 Corporate Plan and Council Policies**

- 4.1 Approval of this proposal would require the current 2020-2024 Corporate Plan to be replaced by this version. There is no additional effect on other Council policies arising from this refreshed version of the plan other than it being a key part of embracing the policy directions recommended in the CIPFA Assurance Review.

## **5 Business case and alternative option(s) considered**

- 5.1 There are no viable alternative business case options. For the Council to be able to continue its essential service delivery and maintain its key strategic ambitions, it is first necessary to stabilise its financial position following the effect of the covid pandemic and other pressures outside of its direct control.

## **6 Financial Appraisal**

- 6.1 A financial appraisal of the Recovery and Reset programme was set out in the Cabinet report of 3 November 2021. The Council has been granted capitalisation direction of £4.6m for the year 2020/21 and £4.4m for the year 2021/22. The financial aspects of all projects and actions within the Corporate Plan will be included within the approved budget for 2022/23 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

## **7 Legal implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications in arising from this report.

## **8 Risk management implications**

- 8.1 The risk management implications of individual decisions relating to the projects and initiatives set out in the corporate plan will be addressed as part of the planning and delivery of those individual projects.

## **9 Equality Analysis**

- 9.1 Equality Analyses will be undertaken in relation to the individual projects which make up the Corporate Plan. None of the proposed changes in the refreshed Corporate Plan are, in themselves, likely to add further equality-related impact. However, should the Council fail to achieve a level of action necessary to recover its sustainability, it is possible that important services may be impacted with significant effect on the community as a whole.

## **10 Environmental sustainability implications**

- 10.1 Environmental Sustainability implications will be considered for each individual project and is a prime consideration for all areas of the Council's work. The council is committed to the delivery of its Environmental and Climate Change Strategy.

## **11 Conclusion**

- 11.1 The refreshed Corporate Plan maintains the consistency of the Council's strategic direction set out in 2020. However, it recognises that, in the light of the unprecedented and unforeseen pressures, there has been very significant impact on the Council and local government as a whole in the last two years, compounded by existing pressures prior to that time. Thus, there is now a need to restabilise finances and future sustainability so that essential services can

continue and that the Council is in a healthy position to fulfil its community leadership role.

## **12 Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – The proposed refreshed Corporate Plan 2022-2026 – text only version. A fully designed version of this document will be produced once Council has given its agreement to the revisions.

## **13 Background papers**

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- CIPFA Assurance Review full document
- The original Corporate Plan 2020-2024 document
- Cabinet reports dated 5 February 2020, 3 November 2021 and 9 February 2022
- Council minutes dated 19 February 2020