

Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of:

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To: CABINET

Date: 1 October 2020

The development of the South Oxfordshire District Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024

Recommendation

- (a) Agree the final content to be included in the South Oxfordshire District Council Corporate Plan 2020-24 and make a recommendation to full Council on 8 October 2020 for the formal adoption with a marketing material launch following on 30 October 2020.

Purpose of Report

1. For Cabinet to:
 - (a) Note the completion of the Corporate Plan 2020-24 content pack and review the final milestones for delivery, governance and adoption.
 - (b) Review and note the engagement findings.
 - (c) Agree the final content to be included and make a recommendation to full Council on 8 October 2020 for its adoption.

Corporate Objectives

2. A new Corporate Plan for the period 2020-2024 is required to establish a vision and priorities for the council.

Background

3. A new Corporate Plan for the period 2020-2024 is required to establish a vision and to set strategic priorities for the council. As a large organisation working in partnership with a variety of stakeholders, public, private and the community and voluntary sector, the vision and priorities are important in setting the strategic context for the execution, delivery and monitoring of council business in accordance with Councillor intentions.

The Corporate Plan

4. The Corporate Plan does not supersede national policy or legislation or allow the council to override existing policies or statutory frameworks that the council have to abide by. Implementation of the plan is, where necessary subject to formal decisions of the bodies involved and will be subject to the usual democratic and scrutiny processes.
5. It is envisaged that the Corporate Plan will:
 - Establish the strategic direction for South Oxfordshire District Council for the period 2020-2024, informed by Councillors, Strategic Management Team (SMT), service areas, stakeholders and residents.
 - Provide a framework to align council work to priorities.
 - Target resources towards the priorities identified in the plan, aligning projects undertaken by the council to directly contribute to the delivery of the plan.
 - Enable plans, projects, policies, strategies and delivery to be tied into a 'golden thread' linking service and team performance to overall council performance.
 - Align staff objectives setting and appraisal system with the objectives of the Corporate Plan allowing all staff to understand how they as individual contributors help the whole organisation achieve its objectives.
 - Increase residents' awareness of the work the council is doing and what the council hopes to achieve.
 - Provide a performance monitoring and reporting framework to improve transparency and accountability.

Update

6. Through January to June 2020 Heads of Service and Cabinet Members continued to work on illustrative projects and actions that could contribute to the themes that had been identified as part of the Corporate Plan 2020-24. These were considered and amended to reflect the changing landscape due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
7. On 09 July 2020 the scope and content for the engagement exercise for the Corporate Plan 2020-24 was agreed by Cabinet.
8. The public engagement exercise asked for feedback on the six priority themes and illustrative projects and actions that were being proposed to deliver the plan. A survey was open to all those living and working in South Oxfordshire, as well as council staff and councillors. We asked for feedback on the themes particularly in the context of the financial and recovery challenges in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

9. The engagement ran for four weeks between 16 July and 13 August 2020. The survey included 29 questions, plus another 4 questions that were aimed at district council staff and councillors. In total 932 responses were received, specifically 928 online submissions and 4 postal responses, which included an Easy Read version of the survey. Several of the submissions came from Parish Councils, Community Groups and local businesses. Overall, 5,431 individual comments were received.
10. Internal and external engagement on the Corporate Plan 2020-24 has helped us to:
 - Test out themes and illustrative projects.
 - Convey the priorities and aspirations of the recently elected administration
 - Better understand and respond to the needs of local people, staff, Councillors and businesses.
 - Encourage participation in local democratic decision making and raise awareness of the council's work.
 - Enable residents to influence their "place" which could harness the increased sense of community spirit and local resilience we have experienced since Covid-19.
 - Increase transparency and be more accountable for what we do.
11. The engagement report and appendices are attached to this report.
12. Following the engagement exercise, findings were reviewed by all Cabinet Members and the Strategic Management Team (SMT). Recommendations were put forward for discussion and have resulted in a series of actions to be taken or amendments to the Plan. These can be found in Appendix H.

Measures

13. During September a set of measures that indicate how Cabinet Members plan to measure success against the delivery of each of the themes in the Plan were identified by Cabinet Members with the support of officers and have been included as part of the content pack.
14. On 14 September 2020 measures for Theme 1, Protection and Restoration of the Natural World and Theme 3, Action on the Climate Emergency were considered by the council's Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) and a recommendation was made to Cabinet, on possible suggestions for measures, these are reflected in the content pack appended to this report.
15. The measures included in the Plan cover strategic "quality of life" measures as well as more operational measures to facilitate Cabinet Members to get a holistic "read" on the direction of travel towards the high-level outcomes they envisage for each Theme but do not reflect an exhaustive list.
16. The council will be reliant on data availability within teams and externally, and it should be recognised that a number of these measures are new so will require a baseline and data source to be established. Further, a number of the measures will require a narrative/qualitative update so are likely to lead to an upturn in engagement activity to enable effective reporting.
17. These measures will inform the development of the forthcoming performance management framework for the Council. It is envisaged that the framework will

enable the council to maximise the value in our data and information, by making all of our performance reports publicly available. It is planned that the formal performance reporting arrangements will include an annual performance report to Cabinet and Scrutiny summarising the Council's progress towards its Themes.

Marketing Material

18. It is planned that the Corporate Plan 2020-24 will primarily be supported by digital marketing material, given the depth, level and success of the digital engagement campaign. This is further supported by how agile we expect this plan to be; digital marketing material can be amended to reflect "real-time" changes and supports the Council's climate commitments.

19. As with all the Council's policies, hard-copy prints will be available on request.

20. Marketing material to support the content for the Corporate Plan is currently being created in line with the timetable below.

Timeline

21. Key dates are as follows:

- 29 September 2020 - Scrutiny Committee meeting to examine full draft plan content
- 1 October 2020 - Cabinet meeting to approve plan content
- 8 October 2020 – Full Council meeting to formally adopt plan content
- 30 October 2020 – Plan comes into effect with marketing material launch
- 01 November 2020 – 31 December 2020 – Detailed annual thematic delivery planning and budget setting

Financial Implications

22. As the Corporate Plan 2020-24 gets adopted it is likely that existing resources and budget will need to be redirected and refocused towards the outcomes within it. All future budget proposals will be subject to the usual financial, democratic and scrutiny process.

Legal Implications

23. There are no legal implications arising from this report. Legal implications may arise in respect of individual projects as part of the future delivery of the Corporate Plan 2020-24.

Risks

24. The Corporate Plan 2020-24 will be a strategic document that will be underpinned by a series of programmes and projects. As the underpinning work progresses, risks will be detailed in individual project risk registers or captured in the corporate risk register and be subject to the usual democratic and scrutiny process.

25. It is anticipated that there will be a HM Government White Paper released in late Autumn detailing a new push for devolution and raised potential for further local

government reorganisation which may impact the implementation of the Corporate Plan 2020-24.

26.

Other implications

27. There are no other implications arising from this report.

Conclusion

28. A new Corporate Plan for the period 2020-2024 is required to establish a vision and priorities for the council. It is envisaged that this Plan will support the alignment of resources to council priorities and increase residents' awareness of the work the council is doing and what the council hopes to achieve. A timeline is included in this report to illustrate final milestones for delivery, governance and the adoption.

29. A number of priority themes, projects and measures have been developed by Cabinet Members informed by SMT, which will form the basis of a new Corporate Plan 2020-24. These have been refreshed and revised in light of the findings from the recent engagement exercise as indicated in Appendix H.

30. Cabinet to agree the final content to be included in the Corporate Plan 2020-24 and make a recommendation to full Council on 8 October 2020 for its adoption.

31. Marketing material will be created and launched in line with the timeline in this report once final content has been agreed and adopted by full Council.

Background Papers

APPENDIX 1: A-F SEPT 2020

APPENDIX A – BACKGROUND TO THE ENGAGEMENT

APPENDIX B – ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

APPENDIX C – ENGAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

APPENDIX D – SURVEY

APPENDIX E – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

APPENDIX F – QUANTITATIVE DATA

APPENDIX 2: G-H SEPT 2020

APPENDIX G – FULL LIST OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

APPENDIX H – TABLE CONFIRMING RECOMMENDATION OUTCOMES

APPENDIX 3

South Oxfordshire Corporate Plan 2020-24 engagement report

APPENDIX 4

South Oxfordshire Corporate Plan 2020-24 content pack