

# CABINET

25 FEBRUARY 2022

## REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

### **A.2 HIGHLIGHT PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2022/23 AND MONITORING DELIVERY OF THOSE ACTIONS**

(Report prepared by Keith Simmons and Hattie Dawson-Dragisic)

#### **PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION**

##### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To receive the outcome of consultation with the public, partners and the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees on provisional highlight priority actions for 2022/23. Cabinet is then invited to determine its highlight priority actions for 2022/23 against which performance will be monitored and reported on in that year.

##### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Council approved a Corporate Plan for 2020/24 and this established its strategic direction for those four years. That strategic direction itself seeks to reflect the issues that matter most to the local people, the national requirements from Government and the challenges that face the District over that time-period. The Corporate Plan was adopted unanimously at the Council meeting on 21 January 2020 (Minute 78 refers).

The themes of the 2020/24 Corporate Plan are:

- Delivering High Quality Services
- Building Sustainable Communities for the Future
- Strong Finance and Governance
- Community Leadership through Partnerships
- A Growing and Inclusive Economy

The Corporate Plan shapes and directs the Council's work and an extensive range of actions will be undertaken across the 2020-24 life of the Plan to deliver against its themes and priorities.

Each year, Cabinet establishes its priority actions to deliver against specific elements of the Corporate Plan and thereby ensure that the ambition of that Plan is central to its work. Each year those priority actions will obviously change as we move through cycles of planning, delivery and evaluation across the life of the Corporate Plan. As such, the priority actions for 2022/23 do not cover every separate element of the ambition of the four year Corporate Plan; nor are they intended to indicate that other projects, schemes or activities are not being pursued, in addition to service delivery through business as usual. They are though intended to reflect imperatives across the Council and for the District and actions that it is right to focus on in this year.

The past two years have been exceptional not only nationally but also globally. In Tendring, our Community Leadership role has never been more important. Working with our Councillors, we took on additional responsibilities in supporting our residents and businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic. It is difficult to underestimate the impact of almost two years' worth of

restrictions and redeployed staff to support testing, tracing, vaccination centres and community volunteer liaison has had on the way the Council was able to carry on with its ambitions for 21/22 whilst continuing to operate all of its services, where restrictions did not prevent us from doing so

In considering the highlight priorities for 2022/23, it is useful to record the following list of some examples of key projects that will get underway very soon, following the approval of the Council's budget on 15 February 2022, as well as some that have commenced and should be able to complete very shortly:

- The provision of a covered market and managed workspaces in Jaywick.
- The development of the former Starlings site in Harwich.
- Various projects set out within the Back to Business action plan.
- Supporting the development of the major Freeport project, centred on Harwich.
- Replacing the all-weather pitch at Clacton Leisure Centre along with wider investment in the centre.
- Supporting celebratory events such as Clacton 150 and Mayflower 400 in Harwich.
- The replacement of our cremators at Weeley.
- Supporting our heritage assets such as the Treadwheel Crane in Harwich.
- Undertaking cliff stabilisation work along Clacton and Holland seafronts.
- Demolition of a multi-storey car park in Harwich, to be replaced with housing; and
- Disposal of the former Weeley Council office site, which will not only provide us with additional housing, but will also enable us to secure the full savings from disposing of that site.

All of these provide a great foundation on which the Council will continue to deliver its Corporate Plan over its life until 2024. The 2022/23 actions will, of themselves, underpin further actions in 2023/24. As such, it is appropriate to invest time and energy to delivering them.

On 17 December 2021, Cabinet considered a provisional list of highlight priority actions, which had been prepared following consultation with individual Portfolio Holders and the Leader of the Council. These were then submitted to the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees to engage with those Committees on the priority actions to be adopted and the performance monitoring of the delivery of those actions. In addition, between 5-19 January 2022, local partner organisations and the public were invited to submit views on the initial priorities.

The Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 January 2022 considered Cabinet's request for feedback. The Cabinet's request for feedback was then submitted to the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 January 2022. Set out at Appendix B are the views of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees and a summary of the views from the public and partner organisations.

The feedback is presented to Cabinet for it to consider before it determines its highlight priority actions for 2022/23.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**It is recommended that:**

- (a) the outcome of the consultation with the public, partner organisations and then Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the provisional list of highlight priority actions agreed by Cabinet on 17 December 2021 (set out at Appendix B) be received and welcomed; and**

**(b) following consideration of the submitted views referred to in (a) above, the highlight priority actions for 2022/23, as set out at Appendix A to this report, be adopted by Cabinet.**

#### **REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Council's delivery of highlighted priorities is a key element of the Council's performance management process to ensure there is focus on highly significant developments, projects, schemes and activities. By way of the recommendation, the outcome of consultation on the initial highlight priorities is being received and considered by Cabinet and informing its decision on the priorities to be highlighted in 2022/23. Arrangements will then be put in place to deliver against the highlight priorities (subject to specific approvals required for those priorities) and to report on that delivery.

#### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

Not submitting highlight priorities was considered and discounted in view of the beneficial impact of the focus the highlight process gives to focus on significant developments, projects, schemes and activities for the District and for the Council. The alternative options considered for which highlight priorities to select for 2022/23 are referred to in the report and the reasons for selection or non-selection are set out for each.

## **PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

#### **DELIVERING PRIORITIES**

The highlight priority actions set out at Appendix A seek to deliver in the year 2022/23 on the ambitions of the four-year Corporate Plan. Other actions in 2022/23 will also be undertaken as the Council applies the strategic direction of the Corporate Plan to its work overall. In addition, Cabinet will establish a further set of key actions for 2023/24 further advancing achievements against the Corporate Plan.

#### **OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

On 17 December 2021, the Cabinet approved a series of initial highlight priorities for 2022/23 to form the basis of consultation. Following that decision, an online survey was created that set out the initial highlight priorities and invited views on them. This was open to members of the public and to organisations to complete. In addition, paper copies of the survey were made available at the Council's Offices in Pier Avenue and the Town Hall in Clacton-on-Sea. The consultation ran from 5 January to 19 January 2022. A press release was issued to draw attention to the survey and social media posts were used to repeat that message.

In addition to writing to each of the 27 Parish/Town Councils in the District to advise them of their opportunity to comment, the following organisations were also invited to submit views on the initial highlight priorities:

- Essex County Council - Trading Standards, Education and North East Essex Children's Services
- Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
- Essex Police
- North East Essex Children's Partnership Board
- North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group
- North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance
- Department of Works and Pensions

- Essex Probation Service
- Essex Youth Offending Service
- Community Voluntary Services Tendring
- Tendring Together Voluntary Sector Coalition
- Citizens Advice Bureau Tendring
- Catch22 – who work in prisons, alternative provision schools, colleges, and in a range of community settings
- Chelsea Football Club
- Estuary Housing Association
- Salvation Army Housing Association
- Clarion Housing
- Guinness Housing
- Chelmer Housing Partnership
- Family Mosaic (part of the Peabody Group) - providing homes and support to the most vulnerable.
- Samaritans
- African Families in UK
- Care Action on Rape and Abuse
- Security Industry Authority
- Restorative Justice Hub
- Next Chapter – who provide person-centred, trauma-informed support to victims and survivors of domestic abuse.
- Phoenix Futures – working with those who are recovering from drugs and alcohol problems
- Family Solutions – who work with families to identify their own solutions to their problems
- Co-op
- Open Road Charity – who provide Drug and Alcohol Recovery support
- Find Your Spark (Social Enterprise) – who provide One to one Brief Solution Focused Therapy for parents and anger management for young people
- RSPCA
- Inclusion Ventures – who provide a safe environment and activities for young people to encourage them to become responsible members of their community.
- UTURN4SUPPORT – who seek to help young people to develop their capabilities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society
- Barnardos
- Lads Need Dads
- Crimestoppers
- Neighbourhood Watch

A total of 160 completed responses were received to the consultation using the survey provided. The full set of responses is available to Councillors in the Leadership Support Office. A summary of those responses is set out at Appendix B with a commentary around those responses.

<b>LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation &amp; constitutional powers)</b>			
<b>Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)</b>	<b>YES/NO</b>	<b>If Yes, indicate which by which criteria it is a Key Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Significant effect on two or more wards</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Involves £100,000 expenditure/income</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Is otherwise significant for the service budget</b>

	<p><b>And when was the proposed decision published in the Notice of forthcoming decisions for the Council (must be 28 days at the latest prior to the meeting date)</b></p>	
<p>The legal implications of individual actions will be assessed when they are brought forward for formal decisions to be made. A number of these decisions will be designated 'Key' Decisions.</p>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:</b></p>	
<p>The Code of Corporate Governance provides a framework of the governance arrangements in place in the Council and reflects the CIPFA / SOLACE framework. The activities undertaken and set out within the report in bringing forward the Highlight Priority Actions and how delivery of these actions will be monitored demonstrates compliance with four of the seven Core Principles of Good Governance identified in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance, being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</li> <li>• Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</li> </ul> <p>Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability</p>		
<p><b>FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b></p>		
<p>The highlight priorities set out at Appendix A includes the delivery of the financial savings target within the Medium Term Financial Strategy. In considering all matters, it is vital that the balance of resources can be accommodated by this Council, and that it does not put further strain on the Council being able to balance its budget each year.</p> <p>A key risk as Cabinet determines its highlight priorities for 2022/23 is the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed to address the pandemic. These risks will need to be assessed in a dynamic way as respond to and live with Covid-19. There may yet be further work for the Council to achieve, such as new grant schemes, as there has been in 2020/21 and this too will affect the capacity of the Council to achieve the Cabinet's adopted highlight priorities.</p>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:</b></p>	
<p>There are no additional comments over and above the financial information / commentary already set out elsewhere in this report.</p>		
<p><b>USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY</b></p>		
<p>The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:</p>		
<p>A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its</p>	<p>The fiduciary duty of the Council to its residents has been a continuing part of the process to develop highlight priorities. A specific highlight priority concerns achieving the savings required by the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	

services;	
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	The issuing of initial highlight priorities, consulting on them, receiving and considering the responses is designed to encourage informed decisions. The individual priorities will still be subject to their own individual approvals process to ensure relevant risks are assessed as an integral part of that process.
C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.	The monitoring of the delivery of the highlight priorities seeks to ensure that it does indeed learn and respond to the issues faced in the delivery of those priority actions.

### **MILESTONES AND DELIVERY**

17 December 2021 –	Initial highlight priorities approved for consultation/development.
5 January – 19 January 2022 – 25 February 2022 –	consultation on the initial highlight priorities. Cabinet receives the outcome of consultation and determines its highlight priorities for 2022/23.
7 March 2022 –	The highlight priorities may be implemented if not called-in.
1 April – 30 June 2022 – Quarter 1 –	To be reported on at the end of this period and the detail added to the Transparency Data on the Council's Website.
1 July – 30 September 2022 – Quarter 2 –	To be reported to Cabinet on (provisionally) 7 October 2022 and available for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider specific items.
1 October – 31 December 2022 – Quarter 3 -	To be reported to Cabinet on (provisionally) 27 January 2023 and available for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider specific items.
1 January – 30 March 2023 – Quarter 4 –	Year Outturn report to Cabinet on (provisionally) 21 July 2023 and available for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider specific items.

### **ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION**

The process of developing the highlight priorities, involving discussions with individual Members of Cabinet (and collectively with them) seeks to ensure that they focus on highly significant developments, projects, schemes and activities for Cabinet and the Council. The consultation undertaken seeks to ensure that a range of confirmatory and contrary views are sought, and obtained, to test that the focus is correct or requires adjustment. Throughout the year, whilst monitoring performance, consideration should be given to the assessment of risk and any mitigation required should be highlighted through project management and the reporting updates.

### **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

In preparing this report, due regard has been given to the likely effect of the exercise of the Council's functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and

disorder in its area. In addition, due consideration has been given to the District Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

#### **SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS**

The Council takes seriously its obligations under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (Act) to look beyond the financial cost of a contract and consider how the services they commission and procure might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of an area. Indeed, the proposal for a highlight priority promoting the Council as an Anchor organisation seeks to affirm the Council's intention to use its position as a provider of services, employer, buyer of goods and services etc to benefit the area it serves. Through encouraging other bodies to take on the Anchor organisation role locally it wishes to see tangible benefits for the area.

#### **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030**

The report has also had regard to the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan as adopted by the Council. A highlight priority proposed in Appendix A is to take forward the delivery of the actions under that Strategy/Action Plan and thereby achieve its objectives as approved by Council.

#### **OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS OR IMPLICATIONS**

**Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.**

<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	The specific inclusion of a highlight priority to strengthen and enhance enforcement activity by the Council in the three outlined offence areas of fly tipping, littering and dog fouling is seen as demonstrating the Council's action in support of its duty.
<b>Health Inequalities</b>	The specific inclusion of a highlight priority to work with health partners to address health inequalities in 2022/23 is seen as demonstrating the Council's commitment to addressing this matter.
<b>Area or Ward affected</b>	All Wards – This is a District-wide package of priorities that will touch all wards.

### **PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The proposals set out in this report have been anchored in the findings from the last Peer Challenge Review of the Council.

In 2018, through the Local Government Association, the Council benefitted from a 'Peer Challenge Review'. Peer Challenges provide a robust and effective improvement tool managed and delivered by the local government sector, for the sector. Peers are at the heart of the peer challenge process and provide a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge. The Review considered five key strands that all Peer Challenges cover:-

- Understanding of the local place and priority setting

- Leadership of place
- Financial planning and viability
- Organisational leadership and governance
- Capacity to deliver

Following the Peer Challenge Review, the Council was recommended to:

- Improve how we tell the story of what we are achieving
- Devise an approach to programme management and project delivery
- Bring the four strands of transformation – customers, property, digital and people – together
- Review how we deal with underspends, savings and financial risk and look at the phasing of our capital programme
- Add housing as a strand to our community leadership focus alongside education, health and community safety
- Be confident in our plans for Jaywick

In respect of programme management and project delivery the following detailed recommendations were identified to strengthen governance:

- Be clear from outset of projects re desired outputs / outcomes.
- Establish a clear decision making process re priorities / projects and ensure it is understood by Members, staff and partners.
- Develop a TDC approach to Project Governance – e.g. business cases, PID, risk, dependencies, budget, tolerances, milestones, performance management.
- Set out clear “golden thread” to members / staff / partners linking Corporate Plan, annual priorities, budgets, performance monitoring.
- Quarterly Performance report should cover all Cabinet priorities and projects.
- Strengthen role of Members on Performance Management - ensure new O+S arrangements add value and align strongly with key priorities and projects.

Building on the changes made already since the Peer Challenge Review, the proposals now submitted seek to:

- Ensure that success measures and key milestones for delivery are built into the project/priority before it is/they are approved so that implications for resource allocation and other consequences can be factored in.
- Align the Cabinet’s Annual Priority Actions with the Budget approval process and thereby to clarify decision making. Likewise the six monthly review provides the opportunity to reset projects/priorities to take account of events.



- Strengthen further project governance by giving greater clarity as to the measures of success and the key milestones in delivery of the Cabinet's priority actions.
- Link back the annual priority actions to at least one Corporate Plan Priority Theme. The golden thread approach is further enhanced through the alignment with the budget timetable to ensure there is clarity that both have been developed to the same aim around achieving the Corporate Plan.
- Cover all Cabinet approved Priority Actions in the Quarterly reporting to Portfolio Holders and then publishing that data.
- Enhancing the role of Members in Performance Management so that OSCs will be free to review and scrutinise individual matters through bringing forward those matters in a more timely way following publication (one month after the end of the quarter concerned). And otherwise ensuring that review items approved for the OSC work programme include relevant performance data.
- Requiring OSC's, in submitting their work programmes each year to Council, how the items in the work programme address the Corporate Plan ambitions.

For the reasons set out here it is opportune to revisit the development of Priority Actions on an annual basis within the ambition of the Corporate Plan.

The overarching strategic direction of the Council is encapsulated in the themes of the 2020/24 Corporate Plan are:

- Delivering High Quality Services
- Building Sustainable Communities for the Future
- Strong Finance and Governance
- Community Leadership through Partnerships
- A Growing and Inclusive Economy

More detail of how the framework the Council operates in and how it will seek to deliver its legal obligations and ambition of the Council for the District are set out in a range of key Strategies and Policies, including:

- Transformation Strategy
- Back to Business
- Housing Strategy
- Tending 4 Growth
- Tourism Strategy
- Heritage Strategy
- Culture Strategy
- Asset Strategy
- Corporate Enforcement Strategy
- Local Plan
- Climate Change Action Plan
- Economic Growth
- Leisure Strategy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

Together the Corporate Plan and the key Strategies and Policies of the Council provide the direction of the Council across its many service areas, namely:

- Property and Asset management
- coast protection,
- council housing and assistance to private sector,
- customer services,
- economic development and growth,
- electoral registration/elections (providing resources to the Electoral Registration Officer/Returning Officer),
- local planning, land charges and building control,
- environmental health,
- off-street car parking,
- refuse collection and recycling,
- cemeteries and crematoria,
- leisure services,
- public realm,
- port health authority,
- public conveniences,
- street cleaning, and
- tourism.

The Council is responsible for its own performance and for leading the delivery of improved outcomes for local people in the District. Performance data gives the Council the best chance of improving its services by understand its own strengths and areas for improvement and take steps to deal with any problems.

Performance information has many audiences, including senior managers, Portfolio Holders/Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny, other partners of the Council and the wider public/businesses who receive services from the Council. Ensuring appropriate information is gathered is as important as making it available in a timely way to support consideration of it.

In so far as the Cabinet's Annual Highlight Priorities are concerned, the following approach is proposed:

1. Proposals must have a description of the action for the year in question, the milestones towards achieving the action, the intended outcome, reference to the budget allocated and who is the responsible senior manager and Portfolio Holder.
2. Initial draft proposals for the Annual Highlight Priority Actions for the following financial year will be considered at the meeting of Cabinet that also considers the Initial budget for the Council for the same year (in December).
3. The Proposals will be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committees and views submitted on the initial draft proposals.
4. The finalised Proposals for the Annual Highlight Priorities for the following financial year will be considered at the meeting of the Cabinet that also considers the draft budget for the Council for that same year (at the end of January). This will include Quarter 3 report on performance against the Annual Highlight Priorities for the current year.
5. Following the adoption of the Annual Highlight Priority Actions, the performance

triggers will be built into the performance monitoring system of the Council based on the milestones approved as part of those Priority Actions.

6. Officers will report to the relevant Portfolio Holder on delivery of the Priority Actions and Portfolio Holders will determine, by exception, if issues need to be reported to Cabinet throughout the year.
7. Each quarter, a summary report on delivery against all of the Cabinet's Annual Highlight Priorities Areas for the year will be reported to Portfolio Holders and then published as part of the Council's transparency data. Overview and Scrutiny Committee members may then identify specific highlight priorities actions where there is performance against relevant milestones that should be subject to further enquiry and these may then be referred to the next relevant meeting of the Committee.
8. A half yearly report on performance against the Annual Highlight Priorities will be submitted to the relevant Cabinet Meeting (in October). This not only enables the Cabinet to consider the delivery of highlight priorities in that year but also to encourage the start of the process to set highlight priorities for the following financial year.
9. The half yearly report will be available for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to include in their work programmes so as they can consider the likely achievement of the envisaged outcomes envisaged.
10. The Outturn position on performance against the Cabinet's Annual Highlight priorities for the previous financial year will be timed to be reported to the Cabinet Meeting at which budget Outturn for that year will be reported.

In addition to the performance data on the above Annual Highlight Priorities, data is also provided to Government Departments on a range of services. This will be gathered corporately and reported as part of the transparency data (excluding personalised data provided – and in these cases a numerical summary will be collated). As the data concerned is already provided annually, half yearly, quarterly or more frequently to Central Government, the collation of the information will involve limited additional work. For items that are provided to Central Government more frequently than quarterly we will collate a snapshot of the data at that point in time. Other than data provided to Central Government, there is information such as the number of Ombudsman complaints (and upheld) and planning appeals (and dismissed) which will be held corporately and contribute to the overall performance of the Council. This will be published annually as part of the Council's commitment to transparency. It will also be available to be reported on when items are to be submitted on the services/functions to Cabinet or a relevant Committee.

#### **PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS**

Cabinet – 17 December 2022 (Minute 98 refers) – adopting the initial highlight priorities for consultation.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL**

None

#### **APPENDICES**

- A – Highlight Actions for 2022/23 in support of the Corporate Plan themes
- B – Consultation Response Summary

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