

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 NOVEMBER 2023

REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND ELECTIONS

A.3 Corporate Plan (Our Vision) Consultation Report to Cabinet

CABINET

21 JULY 2023

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL & PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

A.# DEVELOPING A NEW CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2028

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek approval to commence the process of preparing a new Corporate Plan for the period 2024-2028 based on the detail set out in the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tendring has amazing opportunities and some deep-seated challenges. The Council's Corporate Plan will reflect this as the Council's focus. It needs to recognise the challenging financial position, with financial sustainability being key for delivery. The Council also recognises that it is a deliverer, influencer and facilitator, which will be the only way it can achieve its ambitious Corporate Plan aspirations.

Corporate Planning and Performance Management

The Council has an established set of arrangements to set out its long and medium term aims and to monitor progress in delivering them. This includes a long term Corporate Plan (agreed by Full Council), Annual Priorities and Projects in line with the Corporate Plan (agreed each year by Cabinet), and quarterly performance reporting. In addition, Departmental Plans are prepared annually at an operational management level.

An overview of the performance system is as follows:

Timescales/Term	Performance Document/Plan	Key Objectives
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4 Years	Corporate Plan Developed by Cabinet, agreed by Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term Council aims /priorities 'Plan on a page' • Strategic • Vision/Values of the organisation
1 Year	Highlight Priorities Developed and agreed by Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific deliverable actions with milestones Performance Standards
Quarterly Reporting	Performance Deliverables developed / agreed by Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting on individual highlight priorities, . • Reports provided to Cabinet and available for Overview and Scrutiny Committees • Reports include deliverables, targets, metrics and measures
Annually	Departmental Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational plans at officer level in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders.

A new Corporate Plan

Through this report, approval of the process of preparing a new Corporate Plan is sought.

With the election of a new Council, the formation of a new Administration and given that the current Corporate Plan runs to 2024, this is an appropriate time to begin preparatory work to develop a new Corporate Plan for agreement by the Council.

The proposed timescale and process for doing this is set out in the body of the report. It will take a number of months in order to allow proper consideration and scrutiny of the proposed content before the Council is asked to formally agree the plan.

Cabinet is requested to confirm at this stage that the overall approach to the Corporate Plan, Priorities and Projects and Performance Management and reporting should continue on the current basis and that the Corporate Plan itself should again be:

- a "Plan on a Page";
- with Community Leadership underpinning its themes; and
- a clear statement of the Council's overall vision and values.

Public Consultation

Due to the proposed timeline and limited in-house capacity it is recommended that an external social research company be used, which will enable the Council to capture Tendring specific data not only to assist the Council with developing its Corporate Plan but with future priority setting and decision-making.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) **Notes and endorses the initial emerging themes for a Corporate Plan (Our Vision) for 2024-28 as set out at Appendix A;**
- (2) **requests officers to undertake consultation with the public, stakeholder organisations, Councillors and staff on the initial emerging themes referred to in (1) above;**
- (3) **receives the outcome of that consultation to the meeting of Cabinet on 10 November 2023 with a view to development of finalised Corporate Plan (Our Vision) themes for 2024-28 being then recommended to Council on 28 November 2023; and**
- (4) **endorses engaging a social research company to support the consultation referred to in (2) above and, in view of the limited capacity within the Council, authorises that the costs of that support (up to £25,000) be met from corporately accrued vacancy savings to date in 2023/24, where this will not impact on service delivery.**

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

The recommendation is required for officers to be authorised to undertake the consultation outlined.

In itself, the report also alerts Councillors, stakeholders and the public to the process of adopting a Corporate Plan for 2024-28.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The option of not having a Corporate Plan was considered. However, as it is the Key Council Policy Framework document and is an expectation for the Local Code of Governance, this was discounted.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The existing Corporate Plan 2020-24 sets out high-level priorities for the Council for that period, alongside an annual schedule of highlight priorities, milestones and intended outcomes. The Council wants to ensure a new Corporate Plan is developed for 2024-28.

The Council's Annual Governance Statement (a statutory document which sits alongside the Statement of Accounts, inspected by External Audit and follows the CIPFA format) covers the seven principles of Local Code of Governance (for Local Government) and expects adherence with **Principle C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.**

Each Principle has Sub-Principles, and for Principle C these are:

- (a) Having a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions

- (b) Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer
- (c) Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available
- (d) Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes
- (e) Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available.

The Council can choose to have its longer term Plan/Vision at a high level with annual priorities set, with intended outcomes, milestones and performance recorded. Adoption of the Plan is the core of the Council's Policy Framework.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The content of the report reflects the work carried out to date with Cabinet Members and Councillors more generally, since the election on 4 May 2023 to identify priorities for the Council for the period 2024-28. The draft emerging Corporate Plan will be the subject of consultation with the public, stakeholder organisations, Councillors and staff on the initial emerging themes, with the outcome reported back to a later meeting of Cabinet.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

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

PART 5 CONSTITUTION - PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE RULES

The Council's Procurement Procedure Rules (PPR) (at Part 5 of the Constitution) applies to the proposed engagement of a private social research business to support the consultation around the emerging Corporate Plan 2024-28. The proposed procurement is below that requiring the application of the tender rules within the PPR. However, as the anticipated value of using an external research company is likely to be above £10,000, paragraph 4.2.2 applies, and a minimum of three quotations must be sought.

Three research businesses already in the market space for social research for local government have been approached with the proposal for support for this consultation exercise. For this report, the three businesses are referred to only as companies A, B and C. Following dialogue about the project and the time-line for it Company A declined to submit

proposals and cited capacity limits due to work being placed with it by social housing providers in preparations for the new regulatory framework for those providers. Company B has provided a detailed proposal and has previously been engaged by this Council. A detailed proposal is expected from Company C. All three of the businesses approached are currently, or have in 2023, been commissioned to undertake consultative exercises for Councils in Essex.

X	The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:
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The Monitoring Officer is the co-author of this report.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Whilst there are no financial implications, Financial Sustainability will need to be a driver in setting out the Council's aspirations in a new Corporate Plan. Individual projects still need to be fully and properly assessed and formally approved prior to commencing. One of the priorities from the LGA Peer Challenge carried out in 2018 was that an enhanced approach to project management, project delivery and performance reporting be brought into use. This will encompass a full assessment of resources and risk.

It is important that sufficient resources are made available to support the consultation that will shape the Corporate Plan 2024-28. Officers have been supporting the Leader and Cabinet in the development of the initial proposals set out in this report. However, a realistic assessment of the position is that to deliver the consultation exercise would involve a much wider human resource. To provide this internally would involve a significant realignment of the work of a wider team for a few months. The judgement reached is that this would undermine the delivery of several work streams across the Council. It is also recognised that staffing levels are not at the maximum approved establishment and an approved budget for resources to undertake work to develop the Corporate Plan has not been allocated. However, in consultation with the Chief Executive the allocation of funding from the corporately accrued vacancy savings to date in 2023/24 for the consultation referred to in this report has been identified to fund the development of the Corporate Plan 2024-28. Cabinet is requested to endorse the use of those savings (up to the sum of £25,000), which will not have an impact on wider service delivery within the relevant departments.

X	The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:
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Although there are no significant additional comments to make over and above those set out elsewhere in the report, it is worth highlighting that the Annual Governance Statement 2023 will reflect a number of issues set out in this report, such as project delivery and the work associated with securing the long term financial sustainability of the Council.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure	The development of a revised Corporate Plan will assist the Council in its prioritisation in
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it can continue to deliver its services;	respect of its use of available resources. This in itself will contribute to financial sustainability.
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	<p>The development of a revised Corporate Plan is designed to support good governance/decision making using the themes of the new Corporate Plan to inform that decision making.</p> <p>Article 1 of the Constitution commits the Council to work towards its vision for Tendring as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan. Article 4.01 of the Constitution sets out the Policy Framework of the Council and identifies the Council's Corporate Plan as the first of the named statutory policies and plans for which the full Council meeting is the adopting body.</p>
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.	One of the proposed themes of the Corporate Plan is Financial Sustainability to support sound budget management and annual priorities will themselves identify the resources to deliver them.

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

The existing Corporate Plan of the Council covers the period to the start of 2024 and to achieve a new four year Corporate Plan for the start of that year the following timeframe has been identified:

4 May 2023 – Election of District Councillors

11 May 2023 – 1st main Induction Event for all Councillors (commencing discussions at themes for the Council - *'Why Councillors stood for election'*)

23 May 2023 – Election of Leader of the Council (and appointment of new Cabinet)

30 May 2023 – 2nd main Induction Event for all Councillors (looking further at themes for the Council – *'What makes your proud of the area you live and what needs more work'*)

June/early July 2023 – Informally working with the Leader, Deputy leader and Cabinet to develop initial themes.

21 July 2023 - Draft form of initial emerging themes for the Corporate Plan (Our Vision) 2024-28 for consultation and the basis of that consultation.

26 July to 21 September 2023 – envisaged eight-week consultation period – including All Member Briefings and possible Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings

October 2023 – review the findings of the consultation on the initial emerging themes for the Corporate Plan 2024-28

10 November 2023 – Cabinet considers the consultation findings and determines proposals for a finalised Corporate Plan 2024-28 for submission to Council.

28 November 2023 – Full Council considers the recommendation from Cabinet

1 January 2024 – New Corporate Plan takes effect.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

The Council's budget situation, and the need for significant savings over the lifetime of the

intended Corporate Plan 2024-28, is set out in its Medium Term Financial Strategy. With use of one-off funding of £1.528M in 2023/24, the Council anticipates the need to find savings of £1.150M in 2024/25 and £4.250M in 2025/26. As such, it is imperative that the achievement of the required savings underpins and supports the ambition of the Council over the four years concerned.

Achieving savings will need good governance and appropriate timeframes to be factored in, and the risks around this will need to be assessed and provided for.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The development of the Corporate Plan 2024-28 will be mindful of the Council's obligations under the public sector equality duty. Under that duty, public authorities like this Council are required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This duty and consideration of equality issues will inform decision making by the Council going forward as it has since the duty first applied in April 2011.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

The development of a new Corporate Plan for the Council is a pivotal point at which to ensure that key aspects of social value are embedded in the working of the Council. Social Value refers to the wider financial and non-financial value created by an organisation through its day to day activities in terms of the wellbeing of individuals and communities, social capital created and the environment

Social value is a pre-procurement consideration and the Council has already expressed its intention to develop a Social Value Policy for Procurement Purposes, but to do so it is important to understand the Council's objectives and priorities to meet the three strands. These include, but are not limited to:

- economic (e.g. employment or apprenticeship/training opportunities);
- social (e.g. activities that promote cohesive communities); and
- environmental (e.g. efforts in reducing carbon emissions).

Social value benefits are also key to the Council in using a range of local government powers in the exercise of its duties and functions. It is considered that, collectively, the initial emerging themes contribute to how the Council wishes to deliver these either on its own or with others for the benefit of the District.

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

On 6 August 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency and instructed the Chief Executive to prepare an Action Plan that was subsequently adopted by Full Council (and forms part of the Council's Policy Framework with the aim of activities of the Council being net carbon neutral by 2030).

The Corporate Plan for 2024-28 will be developed within the Council's Policy Framework.

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.

Crime and Disorder	There are no implications from the subject matter of this report, however each project and new procurement opportunity will consider these implications through the individual decision making.
Health Inequalities	
Area or Ward affected	All.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Corporate Plan 2024-2028

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision and values together with key strategic long term aims and priorities. It has a key focus on Community Leadership being "at the heart of everything we do". Once adopted by the Full Council it is part of the Council's Budget and Policy framework and thus sets the direction and context for the Council's work for the period of the Plan. For further information on the Budget and Policy Framework Members are referred to Article 4 of the Council's Constitution.

There is a specific process set out in the Constitution for the development, scrutiny and approval of the Corporate Plan.

Initial proposals are prepared and agreed by Cabinet; they are available for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider and comment back to Cabinet as they determine; Cabinet then agree final proposals, which are recommended to Full Council for approval.

Given the importance of the Corporate Plan for the long term focus of the Council there should also be public engagement and the opportunity should be provided to partners of the Council and other stakeholders to feed into the process. This should include public service partners, business and community representatives. It is suggested that this should be carried out utilising the Cabinet's initial proposals for a Corporate Plan 2024-28 – in parallel with the opportunity for review of the initial proposals by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

In light of the above, the likely timetable for the preparation of a new Corporate Plan is as set out in the milestones section of this report above.

In so far as the wider consultation is concerned, due regard will be given the Council's

Community Engagement Strategy. The aims of that Strategy are to support strong, active and inclusive communities who:

- are informed and involved in decision making;
- can influence and shape the area in which they live and work; and
- have the capacity to develop and deliver their own projects.

It is intended that the consultation will feature:

- (1) A general invitation to residents to submit views on what makes them proud of the area they live in and what needs further improvement. This is likely to be cross-cutting in respect of the responsibilities of this Council, Essex County Council, Central Government, Parish/Town Councils (where the area has such a Council) and Health, Education and Policing partners locally. The emerging themes for the Corporate Plan as set out in this report will be used to focus some of that feedback invitation. Through a range of material, including social media posts and email communication with households around the annual electoral registration canvass, residents will be advised of the consultation and routes to submit views. It is hoped that most individuals will respond using a dedicated online survey facility to be created. Paper copies of the survey will be made available at several locations across the District and these locations too will be publicised. Individuals will be able to complete paper surveys there and then and place them into a secured box that will be emptied by designated staff only and who will then arrange for the paper based responses to be captured electronically. Organisations too may submit views through this arrangement.
- (2) A sampling exercise from the electoral register to identify 200 adults geographically spread equitably across the District and broadly matching characteristics of the population of the District allowing for age and nationality who will be invited to specifically contribute their views so that we can try to ensure that the views of individuals living in all areas of the District are heard. Again, it is hoped that most will respond online using a dedicated facility for this purpose. However, a freepost envelope will be provided for those who prefer to respond in paper. They will also be offered the opportunity to have a call back should online or paper response be an obstacle to them.
- (3) Telephone interviews will be conducted with designated individuals in partner institutions, third sector and business organisations. The aim will be to seek, among other things, to identify the extent to which the views of those organisations align one with the other and with the public's views. Where there is a divergence of views that is identified it will be important to look at what implications this has going forward for the Council.

It is proposed that an eight-week period of consultation is provided so that individuals and organisations will have the opportunity to respond within that period. This timeline also permits a revised Corporate Plan to be put forward to Council before the end of 2023 and therefore operational from 1 January 2024 (as set out in the timeline referenced earlier in this report).

During the consultation period it is proposed that an All Member Briefing session (and potentially two such sessions) are held to take Councillors through the process and assist all Councillors to submit views into the consultation process. Council staff will be consulted through the usual internal communication channels.

The Council's performance management arrangements seek to establish a clear linkage – sometimes referred to as a “golden thread” - between the long term aims of the Corporate Plan, the medium term priorities and projects, the deliverables identified for those priorities and projects and the more detailed service aims set out in Departmental Plans and ultimately in the individual performance aims set for individual officers.

Having a clear statement of the Vision of the Council and the values it expects all Members and staff to adhere to also has a wide and deep influence on the day to day working of the Council.

Finally, with regard to the content and structure of the Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management arrangements, this report suggests that the set of arrangements currently in place, and which has evolved over a number of years, is fit for purpose and works well; and should continue to be the basis used by the Council. Clearly, those performance management arrangements will need to be refined as the extended role of the Social Housing Regulator means there will be additional data requirements from that Regulator as to assurance that standards are being met and tenant satisfaction is being measured. Likewise, the requirements for performance data from the Office for Local Government (Oflog) will need to be integrated into this Council's performance management arrangements.

Thus it is proposed to prepare a high level strategic “Plan on a Page” which will include the Council's specific corporate priority themes the Council wishes to commit its resources to strive towards.

It is proposed that a strong focus on Community Leadership should be a cross cutting theme for the emerging plan.

Initial work with Cabinet and Councillors more generally has identified five themes for Our Vision, with Community Leadership to be recognised as a cross cutting element of the Plan. The initial Themes as set out in **Appendix A**, are as follows:

- **Pride in our area and services to residents**
- **Raising aspirations and creating opportunities**
- **Championing our local environment**
- **Working with partners to improve quality of life**
- **Financial Sustainability and openness**

The diagram on the next page, based on the 7 principles of Local Code of Governance (for Local Government), sets out the underlying approach to the setting of the Corporate Plan and the annual highlight priorities to be set each year in support of that Plan:

Achieving the intended outcomes while acting in the public interest at all times



PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

Council – Minute 78 of 21 January 2020 refers (in respect of the 2020-24 Corporate Plan)

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

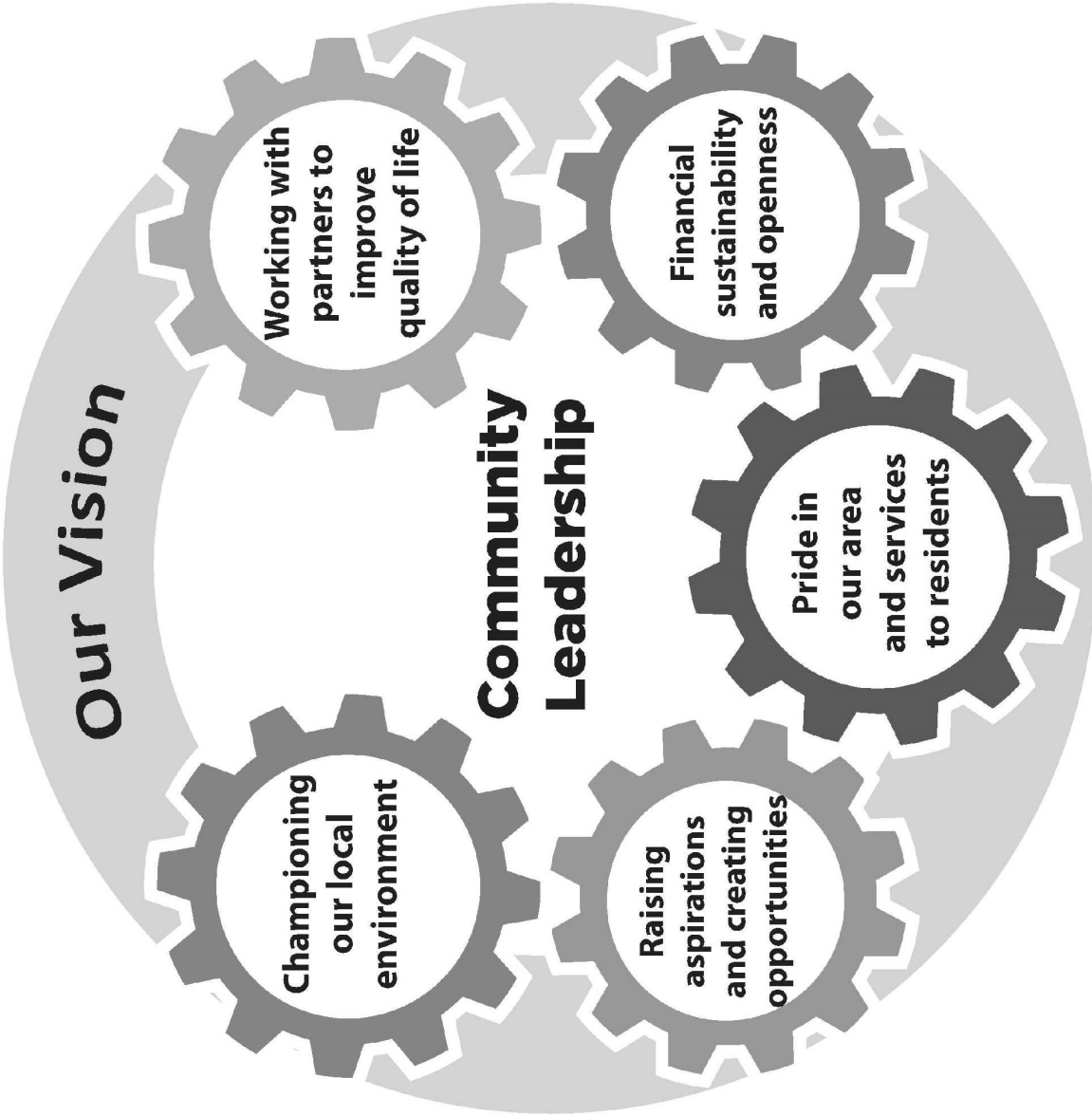
None

APPENDICES

A – Initial themes for Corporate Plan 2024-28 on which consultation will be framed.

REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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LISTENING TO AND DELIVERING FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES!

Our Vision

(Corporate Plan 2024-28)

[Community Leadership to be recognised as a cross cutting element of the Plan]

Pride in our area and services to residents

We want to put residents' first, providing and promoting clean and tidy communities, decent housing that everyone deserves, and tackling the things that make a big difference to you. This means getting the basics right on our services. We also want to promote pride in our communities, encouraging everyone to take responsibility for keeping their area a pleasant place in which to live and work.

Raising aspirations and creating opportunities

Tendring is ambitious and our residents will be supported to reach their potential and realise their opportunities. To do this we want to, working with partners, improve access to skills learning so residents can get jobs and to allow businesses to thrive in our district; particularly taking the opportunities afforded by Freeport East. We want to maximise the opportunities for young people; to inspire those dreams we will celebrate business success, encourage responsible tourism, develop our cultural sector and economic growth.

Championing our local environment

We believe our environment is special, it is the space where we live and work, and therefore deserves protection. We will be tough on those who do not respect our environment. We want to create and maintain spaces for leisure, wellbeing and active lifestyles, and deliver access to open spaces to achieve this.

Working with partners to improve quality of life

It is our aim to build on joint working with our partners across government, public, private and third sectors to improve the quality of life for our residents. We want to promote safer, connected and inclusive communities; and we recognise the vital role volunteers play in caring for others and our environment, and we want to support, encourage and facilitate those opportunities.

Financial Sustainability and openness

To continue to deliver effective services and get things done we must look after the public purse; that means carefully planning what we do, managing capacity, and prioritising what we focus our time, money and assets on. Tough decisions will not be shied away from, but will be taken transparently, be well-informed, and based upon engagement with our residents.