

CABINET

15 DECEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

A.2 DELIVERING AGAINST THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN 2024-28 – INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR HIGHLIGHT PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Council's strategic direction is set out in its Corporate Plan which is a fundamental element of the Council's Policy Framework. The Corporate Plan ('Our Vision') was adopted unanimously by Council on 28 November 2023 (Minute 76 refers) and covers the period 2024-28 (and is reproduced at Appendix A to this report). Key elements of delivering against the adopted Corporate Plan is through annual highlight priority actions approved by the Cabinet. The 2024/25 initial proposals for highlight priorities are set out at Appendix B to this report. Through this report, Cabinet is invited to adopt these for consultation purposes before finalising its highlight priorities for 2024/25; which will involve consideration of the outcome of the consultation undertaken.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council's Corporate Plan 2024-28 ('Our Vision') sets out its strategic direction. That strategic direction itself seeks to reflect the issues that matter most to local people, the national requirements from Government and the challenges that face the District over the time period of the Plan.

The themes of the 2024-28 Corporate Plan ('Our Vision') are:

- 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
- Promoting our heritage offer, attracting visitors and encouraging them to stay longer
- Financial Sustainability and Openness

The Corporate Plan ('Our Vision') itself is set out at Appendix A to this report.

Cabinet establishes each year its priority actions to deliver against the Corporate Plan and thereby ensure that the ambition of that Plan is central to its work. The priority actions 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. They are though intended to reflect imperatives across the Council and for the District and actions that it is right to focus on in 2024/25.

At Appendix B are the initial thoughts for highlight priorities for 2024/25 and through this report it is hoped that they can be adopted to support an engagement with residents and partners on those priorities. The outcome of that consultation will be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet when finalised proposals will be considered having regard for the outcome of the consultation.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that:

- (a) Cabinet approves the initial highlight priorities for 2024/25, as set out at Appendix B to this report, for consultation;
- (b) all Councillors, other partners and the public be invited to consider the initial priorities referred to in (a) above; and
- (c) the outcome of the consultation referred to in (b) above be reported to Cabinet on 15 March 2024 in order that Cabinet can formally adopt its finalised highlight priority actions for 2024/25.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

The rationale for the recommendations above is to set out openly for all concerned the initial proposals for highlight priorities for 2024/25. This supports the openness agenda of the Council and provides an opportunity for engagement with the public, businesses and partners on those initial proposals. Through consultation it is hoped that the views received can help shape the priorities that will finally be adopted (within the reality of the Council's budgetary position).

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

As these are initial proposed highlight priorities the Cabinet has not discounted any alternatives replacing those identified in Appendix B. The option of not publishing initial proposed highlight priorities was assessed and discounted as it did not support the Council's openness agenda and good decision making (through taking account of the views of residents, businesses and partners).

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The initial highlight priorities set out at Appendix B seeks to deliver in the year 2024/25 on the ambitions of the four year Corporate Plan 2024-28. Other actions in 2024/25 will also be undertaken as the Council applies the strategic direction of the Corporate Plan to its work overall.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT (including with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other stakeholders where the item concerns proposals relating to the Budget and Policy Framework)

The consultation undertaken this year as part of the development of the Corporate Plan 2024-28 has helped shape the initial highlight priorities of the Cabinet now submitted in this report. The link to the report from the social research agency who supported that consultation exercise for the Council is in the public domain using this link:

[Corporate Plan \(Our Vision\) 2024-28 Consultation Findings Report](#)

A paper copy of that Findings Report is available upon request.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)			
Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	YES/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)	<i>Although not a Key Decision, notice of the intention for Cabinet at this meeting to consider 'Draft Highlight Actions to support the Corporate Plan' was given on 26 October 2023.</i>
<p>Through highlight priorities that will be adopted, following the intended consultation, will support to deliver against the Council's adopted Corporate Plan 2024-28. That Corporate Plan decision was a key decision for the Council. While this report (and its recommendations) are not of themselves a Key Decision, particular schemes and actions referenced in the highlight priorities will be such decisions and require the relevant prior notification. The legal implications of individual actions will be assessed when they are brought forward for formal decisions to be made.</p>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Deputy Monitoring Officers confirm they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:		
No further comments are submitted.			
FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS			
<p>The initial highlight priorities set out at Appendix B 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>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:		
No further comments are submitted.			
USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY			
<p>The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:</p>			
A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;	<p>The Corporate Plan 2024-28 includes the critical theme of "Financial Sustainability and Openness" and Cabinet intends to pursue this theme in order to secure services and functions for the residents the Council serves. To this</p>		

	end, the initial highlight priorities outline actions that at this stage appear appropriate to support good resource management.
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	The development of highlight priorities each year seeks to keep the organisation focussed on measures aimed at securing the intentions of the Council's Corporate Plan. These highlight priorities sit between the Council's Corporate Plan and the individual decisions that will relate to the actions and activities necessary to achieve the intentions for the highlight priorities at Appendix B. As such, this process seeks to add to the governance reassurance of the Council around good decision making and awareness of cross cutting risks.
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.	Performance against the annual highlight priorities is measured during the year concerned (and beyond) and the experience obtained from that monitoring assists the Council on its continuous improvement journey.
MILESTONES AND DELIVERY	
<p>The Council has worked at pace to reach this point with initial highlight priorities for 2024/25 being considered by Cabinet at this meeting. This follows the adoption unanimously by Council of the Corporate Plan 2024-28 on 28 November 2023. The proposed highlight priorities for 2024/25 will again be made available for comment and suggestions for changes by residents, businesses and partners across the remainder of this month and January 2024. The outcome of this consultation will then be submitted to Cabinet for consideration of the finalised highlight priorities. This is scheduled for the Cabinet meeting on 15 March 2024.</p> <p>It is an important part of this process that, for each highlight priority action/activity, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely milestones are identified, approved and resources allocated to achieve those milestones. These milestones will be reported to the 15 March 2024 meeting of Cabinet as part of its consideration of the highlight priorities to be adopted for 2024/25.</p>	
ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION	
<p>The most significant risk associated with this process is that overall package of highlight priorities for 2024/25 do not match the issues that matter most to local people, the national requirements from Government, the challenges that face the District and the capacity of the organisation to deliver those activities and actions in 2024/25. Through the process of consultation and evaluation of the resource needs associated with each activity and action, prior to the adoption of the finalised highlight priorities, the Council seeks to address that risk and ensure that the finally adopted priorities do match the various tests referenced.</p>	
EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS	
<p>In developing the initial highlight priorities for 2024/25, consideration has been given to the general equality duty set out in S149 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires that the Council (as a public authority), in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:</p>	

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Further consideration of equalities implications will be given in respect of each and every decision that will, in due course, be taken in respect of the actions and activities that will form the finalised highlight priority actions. The views of residents, businesses and partners will help to frame that consideration in so far as that related to those with protected characteristics and implications of taking particular decisions on those actions/activities.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

The actions and activities that will, finally, be adopted by the Cabinet as its highlight priorities will seek (collectively) to secure social, economic and environmental benefits for the District and its residents. More generally, the Council will continue to encourage the creation of job opportunities for local people, support young people into apprenticeships and provide opportunities for local suppliers (and in particular SME businesses) to be represented in the Council's supply chain.

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

The consideration of measures to support the Council's net zero by 2030 aim will be a feature of consideration of each of the required decisions involving Cabinet that will be associated with the activities and actions that will form the highlight priorities for 2024/25. The initial proposed priorities itself references the Council's next Climate Change Action Plan.

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	Individual highlight priorities set out in Appendix B seek to specifically support anti-crime and disorder measures and, more widely, each action/activities that will form part of the finalised highlight priorities for 2024/25 will, in due course, be considered against the duty under S17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to (within the limits set out in that section) do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder, misuse of drugs etc., re-offending and serious violence.
Health Inequalities	Individual highlight priorities set out in Appendix B seek to specifically support measures to address and respond to health inequalities.
Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance)	While this is not a matter for this report, subsidy control considerations will be undertaken in respect of any relevant actions/activities finally adopted as Highlight priorities for 2024/25 (and

	more generally where relevant)
Area or Ward affected	All

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The development of the Cabinet’s annual highlight priorities in support of the Corporate Plan ambition, and the reporting on them, follows the rhythm set out below:

1. Initial draft proposals for the Highlight Priorities 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).
2. The initial proposals will be subject to consultation; including Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
3. The outcome of consultation and finalised proposals for the Annual Highlight Priorities for the following financial year will be considered early in the New Year.
4. Following the adoption of the Annual Key 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.
5. 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.
6. Each quarter, a summary report on delivery against all of the Cabinet’s Annual Highlight Priority 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 key 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.
7. A half-yearly report on performance against the Annual Key Priority Actions will be submitted to the relevant Cabinet Meeting (in October). This not only enables the Cabinet to consider the delivery of key actions in that year but also to encourage the start of the process to set key actions for the following financial year.
8. 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.

The Outturn position on performance against the Cabinet’s Annual Highlight priority actions 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 considering the annual highlight priorities for 2024/25, Cabinet has been made aware of the following deliverables across the lifetime of the Corporate Plan 2024-28. These

deliverables are in addition to the multi-million pound investment schemes the Council is responsible for that are referenced in Appendix B that will span several of those years:

2024/25:

- Council to implement significant savings.
- Review the Council's arrangements against the Government's Best Value Duty Guidance.
- Apply learning from major projects.
- Use data on cost and performance to support improvements/efficiency.
- To receive and assess the external pay review for the Council.
- Address the implementation of the Beach Hut Strategy.
- Develop and implement a Social Value Policy for the Council.
- Undertake a Community Governance Review.

2025/26:

- New Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning arrangements
- Updated Local Plan (pre-examination).
- Council to implement significant savings.
- Develop a District-wide Coastal Strategy.
- Develop a new Open Space Strategy.
- Look at opportunities for a Beach Festival.

2026/27:

- Council to implement significant savings.
- Tendring-Colchester Borders Garden Community – Spades in the ground to commence.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

Council on 28 November 2023 (Minute 76) – Adoption of the Corporate Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

APPENDICES

A – Corporate Plan 2024-28
B – Initial Highlight Priorities for 2024/25

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