

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of Managing Director

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New Corporate Priorities and Plan

Executive Summary

The Council approved its current Corporate Plan for the period 2018 to 2023 at its meeting on 15 May 2018. However, since the Borough Council elections in May 2019, members of the Executive have discussed new corporate priorities and these have been the subject of a workshop for all councillors held on 13 November 2019.

This report presents new draft corporate priorities for public consultation and proposes a timetable and process for developing a new corporate plan.

Recommendation to Executive

The Executive is asked:

- (1) To approve new draft corporate priorities for the Council, as set out in paragraph 3.2 of this report, for public consultation purposes.
- (2) To agree the proposed process and indicative timetable for the production of a new corporate plan.
- (3) To authorise the Managing Director, in consultation with Group Leaders, to appoint a councillor working group to support the development of the new corporate plan.

Reason for Recommendation:

To enable the Council to develop new corporate priorities and a corporate plan to provide the strategic framework for managing our business and resources effectively.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report asks the Executive to approve new draft corporate priorities for public consultation and to agree the process for developing a new corporate plan.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 Our corporate priorities and corporate plan will set out our strategic framework and are fundamental to ensuring that we manage our business and resources effectively. They will also ensure that our activities are aligned to the issues that matter most to local people.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following the Borough Council elections in May 2019, members of the Executive were asked to give an indication of their future priorities for the Council. From the responses received and on the basis of further discussions with councillors, a list of draft priorities was developed across the four following strategic themes:

Climate Change and Environment
Housing and Community
Economy and Regeneration
Improved Council

- 3.2 The themes and draft priorities formed the basis of discussions at a workshop for all councillors held on 13 November 2019. The workshop focussed on defining the outcomes and impacts that the Council would most wish to deliver under the following draft priorities:

Climate Change and Environment

- Working with residents and businesses towards becoming a carbon neutral borough
- Protecting our environment
- Making travel easier and more sustainable

Housing and Community

- Providing the housing that people need
- Caring for people who need our help
- Keeping the community active and well

Economy and Regeneration

- Encouraging sustainable, clean economic growth
- Supporting businesses to provide the jobs people need

- Regenerating Guildford town centre

Improved Council

- Using new ways of working to improve value for money and customer service
- Improving transparency, consultation and community engagement

3.3 The workshop started to identify the issues that councillors would most wish to address and covered topics such as homelessness, mental health, affordable homes and retaining and attracting businesses. The matters raised will help us work further with councillors on defining their priority outcomes.

3.4 At this stage, the Executive is asked to consider the draft priorities set out in paragraph 3.2 and, subject to any amendments, approve them for public consultation. The consultation will include an online survey to ensure that all residents and stakeholders can have their say and also a telephone survey to provide a representative response to the identified priorities. The proposed timetable for adoption of the new priorities and corporate plan is set out in paragraph 3.8 below.

New Corporate Plan

3.5 Sitting below the new corporate priorities, there will be key projects and actions to help support their delivery. As an example, under the priority “Caring for people who need our help”, councillors have indicated that work on homelessness and food poverty are likely to be at the forefront. In a similar way, “Reducing waste” would encompass commitments and actions around the use of plastics. The new corporate priorities and desired strategic outcomes, together with these projects and actions, will form the basis of our new Corporate Plan.

3.6 A clearly expressed ambition since the elections has been for the Council to improve its community engagement. In fact, better engagement will be central to achieving some of the Council’s stated priorities as they will rely on behavioural change by residents and businesses (e.g. climate change, plastics, public transport use etc.).

3.7 We suggest that a councillor working group is established to consider, prioritise and recommend the key activities and projects for delivery under the new corporate priorities. This group could seek the involvement of external experts and partners where appropriate and encourage wider community engagement.

3.7 The outcomes of the group’s work would contribute to the formulation of a new Corporate Plan. An indicative timetable is shown below:

- 13 Nov 2019 Workshop for councillors on draft corporate priorities
- 9 Jan 2020 Consideration of draft corporate priorities by Joint EAB

- 21 Jan 2020 Agreement of draft corporate priorities by the Executive and establishment of councillor working group
- Feb 2020 Planning and preliminary work by the working group
- Feb/Mar 2020 Public consultation on the new corporate priorities
- Mar/May 2020 Stakeholder and community engagement by the working group (including consideration of the outcome of the public consultation on the draft corporate priorities)
- June 2020 Workshop for all councillors to consider the recommendations of the working group
- 21 July 2020 Executive to recommend the new Corporate Plan for adoption by the Council
- 28 July 2020 Adoption of new Corporate Plan by the Council

4. Consultations

- 4.1 The new draft priorities were discussed at a councillor workshop on 13 November 2019. They were also presented to the Joint Executive Advisory Board on 9 January 2020 and any comments made at that meeting will be submitted to the Executive for consideration.
- 4.2 Subject to approval by the Executive, the draft priorities will be subject to public consultation. The report also proposes the establishment of a working group to engage residents and partners in the development of a new corporate plan.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The new priorities and corporate plan will need to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) and support the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy Statement. The intention is that the themes, priorities and projects set out in the plan will advance equality of opportunity.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, the new priorities and corporate plan will link to the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy, helping to define and shape the resources required to deliver our priority outcomes.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report. The Corporate Plan is not a legal requirement but is essential in setting out the Council's overarching strategic framework and priorities.

8. Human Resource Implications

8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

9. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

9.1 There are no significant implications for climate change or sustainability arising from the proposals in this report. Clearly, however, there will be a number of corporate priorities and associated key projects and actions that will have major climate change/sustainability implications, which will be identified at the appropriate time.

10. Summary of Options

10.1 The existing Corporate Plan covers the period 2018 to 2023 and could remain unchanged. However, following the Borough Council elections in May 2019, new corporate priorities have been identified and a new corporate plan will be needed to provide the framework for delivery of the desired outcomes.

11. Conclusion

11.1 The report asks the Executive to approve new draft corporate priorities for public consultation and to agree the process for developing a new corporate plan. This will provide a strategic framework to guide our decisions and provide a focus for our work over the coming years.

12. Background Papers

[Report to Executive: 24 April 2018](#)

13. Appendices

None