

Council Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of Strategic Services Director

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## Corporate Plan 2021 - 2025

### Executive Summary

Following public consultation on our corporate priorities and consideration by the Joint Executive Advisory Board, this report invites the Council to adopt a new Corporate Plan for the period 2021-2025.

The report will be considered by the Executive at its meeting to be held on 26 October 2021. The Executive's recommendation in respect of this matter will be reported on the Order Paper.

### Recommendation to Council

That the proposed new Corporate Plan 2021-2025, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, be adopted.

### Reason for Recommendation:

The proposed new Corporate Plan has been prepared to set out the Council's priorities for the period up to 2025.

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

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report presents a new Corporate Plan, attached as Appendix 1, for the period 2021-2025 for adoption by the Council.

### 2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's strategic framework and priorities for the next four years. The priorities and associated projects are fundamental to ensuring that the Council manages its business and resources effectively. They

will also ensure that our activities continue to be 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 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.
- 3.3 Having considered the outcomes of the workshop, the Executive approved new draft corporate priorities in January 2020 for public consultation. The consultation exercise, which included a representative sample survey, was undertaken in February/March 2020 and the results are set out in full in Appendix 2.
- 3.4 As this first public consultation exercise began to draw to a close, the unprecedented nature of the coronavirus pandemic and the scale of its possible impacts started to emerge. With so much future uncertainty, it was agreed that the preparation of a new Corporate Plan setting out our priorities should be put on hold for 12 to 18 months.
- 3.5 As the pandemic had such a significant impact, including on our own finances, a second public consultation exercise was undertaken in December/January 2021 to seek residents' views on our future spending priorities. Again, this included a representative sample survey and the results are set out in Appendix 3.
- 3.6 Following the completion of this second consultation, an outline of a new Corporate Plan setting out our draft vision, mission, values and priorities was presented to the Joint Executive Advisory Board on 15 March 2021. The comments made by councillors at that meeting are set out in Appendix 4.
- 3.7 Taking the consultation results into account, together with a views of the Joint Executive Advisory Board, we are now presenting a new Corporate Plan for the period up to 2025 for approval by the Council. This includes 13 priorities under three themes:

#### Homes and Jobs

- Revive Guildford town centre to unlock its full potential

- Provide and facilitate housing that people can afford
- Create employment opportunities through regeneration
- Facilitate high quality development of strategic sites
- Support our business community and attract new inward investment
- Maximise opportunities for digital infrastructure improvements and smart places technology

### Environment

- Provide leadership in our own operations by reducing carbon emissions, energy consumption and waste
- Engage with residents and businesses to encourage them to act in more environmentally sustainable ways through their waste, travel and energy choices
- Work with partners to make travel more sustainable and reduce congestion

### Community

- Tackling inequality in our communities
- Work with communities to support those in need
- Support the unemployed back into the workplace and facilitate opportunities for residents to enhance their skills
- Prevent homelessness and rough-sleeping in the borough

3.8 The draft Corporate Plan is a high level statement of our priorities. The intention is to now bring forward draft strategies covering each of the above themes to set out in greater detail what we will do to deliver against the priorities and how we will measure our success.

## **4. Consultations**

4.1 We have undertaken two public consultation exercises, including representative sample surveys, to seek residents' views on our priorities and the full results are attached as appendices.

4.2 The first consultation undertaken in February/March 2020 identified the following as the highest priorities for residents:

- Protecting our environment (air quality, carbon emissions, reduced waste)
- Caring for people who need our help
- Making travel easier and more sustainable

- Residents having access to the homes they need
- 4.3 The second consultation undertaken in December/January 2021 showed that residents' priorities for future spending were as follows:

- Services to the elderly and vulnerable
- Environmental services
- Public health and safety
- Business, jobs and unemployment
- Housing services

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, the Corporate Plan will link to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, helping to define and prioritise the resources required to deliver against our priorities.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 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.

## **7. Human Resource Implications**

- 7.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

## **8. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 8.1 The Corporate Plan is considered to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) and to support the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy Statement. The themes and many of the priorities set out in the plan will advance equality of opportunity.

## **9. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications**

- 9.1 The draft Corporate Plan includes a number of priorities to address climate change and sustainability. These would require us to show leadership by reducing our own carbon emissions, energy consumption and waste and also to work with residents and businesses to encourage them to act in more environmentally sustainable ways.

## **10. Executive Advisory Board comments**

- 10.1 The Joint EAB was consulted on 15 March 2021 and comments made by councillors at that meeting are set out in Appendix 4.

## **11. Summary of Options**

- 11.1 The existing Corporate Plan covers the period 2018 to 2023 and could remain unchanged. However, following the Borough Council elections in May 2019, public consultation and the significant impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, new priorities have been identified and a new corporate plan is needed to provide the framework for delivery of the desired outcomes.

## **12. Conclusion**

- 12.1 Having reviewed our existing priorities and activities, assessed the challenges facing us and taken into account the views of residents, councillors, staff and other interested parties, this report presents a new Corporate Plan to guide our decisions and provide a focus for our work over the next four years.

## **13. Background Papers**

[Report to Executive: 21 January 2020](#)

[Report to Joint Executive Advisory Board: 15 March 2021](#)

## **14. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Corporate Plan 2021-2025

Appendix 2: Corporate Plan Consultation 2020 - Key Findings Report

Appendix 3: Guildford Borough Council Budget Survey Report 2021

Appendix 4: Minute of Joint Executive Advisory Board (15 March 2021)