

Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Services

Date: 10 July 2024

Ward(s) affected: all

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Report Status: Open

Development of a new Corporate Strategy (2024-2034)

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In accordance with sector best practice as well as an action arising from the Council's Improvement Plan, work to develop a new Corporate Strategy has been undertaken in recent months.
- 1.2 The Corporate Strategy is a key strategic document for the Council. It sets out our priorities and ambitions through to 2034 and is crucial to shaping service delivery and the allocation of resources to these priorities.
- 1.2 This report provides the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to consider the draft strategy and provide comments and feedback prior to its consideration by Council in July 2024.

2. Recommendation to Committee

That the Committee:

- 2.1. Notes the work undertaken so far in developing the new Corporate Strategy.
- 2.2. Considers the draft Corporate Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report, and make any recommendations on its contents to the Executive before it considers whether to recommend the adoption of the Strategy by Full Council on 23 July 2024.

3. Reason(s) for Recommendation:

- 3.1. Both of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny committees play an important role in the Council's policy development, providing constructive challenge and feedback to drive improvement in service delivery and strategic decision-making.

4. Exemption from publication

- 4.1. No parts of this report are exempt from publication.

5. Purpose of Report

- 5.1. For the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the Council's new Corporate Strategy.

6. Strategic Priorities

- 6.1. The Corporate Strategy is a key policy document, central to the Council's strategic planning approach. The Corporate Strategy sets out the medium and long-term priorities for the authority, informing the wider strategy and policy framework. The Strategy provides focus for service delivery and the allocation of the Council's resources through the annual service and financial planning process.
- 6.2. Subject to it being adopted, the Council's new Corporate Strategy will supersede the document titled '*Guildford Corporate Plan, 2021-2025 Listening, Acting, Delivering.*'

7. Background

- 7.1. The new Strategy has five core priorities which forms the overarching focus for the Council over the next ten years, which are:

- Priority 1: A more **sustainable** borough
 - Priority 2: A more **prosperous** borough
 - Priority 3: A more **inclusive** borough
 - Priority 4: Decent and affordable **homes**
 - Priority 5: A **resilient** and **well-managed** council
- 7.2. Each priority also has a corresponding set of delivery outcomes. The outcomes are the results that we are aiming to achieve over the period of the Corporate Strategy.
- 7.3. Waverley Borough Council is also reviewing its Corporate Strategy at this time. The Joint Management Team have contributed to the drafts for both draft strategies.
- 7.4. The draft strategies for both Councils are aligned in terms of a common structure of five priorities. Both confirm the ongoing commitment to the collaboration between them. Beyond that, the outcomes and narrative within each strategy are largely unique to each Council.
- 7.5. Appendix 1, which the Committee is considering today, is in draft form at this stage and the design and imagery is still being finalised. The feedback received from the Committee will be considered as the Strategy continues to develop.
- 7.6. Once adopted, work will begin on compiling an annual delivery plan that sets out the action that will take place in the year ahead to deliver on our outcomes, as well as how success will be measured. The delivery plan will align with, and be informed by, the Council's annual service and financial planning process and the ultimate adoption of an annual budget in February 2025. It will also align with other key strategic documents, including the Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Investment Strategy.
- 7.7. Progress against delivering the Corporate Strategy will be reported quarterly and will form the basis of the Council's performance monitoring and reporting, which is currently undergoing review and improvement.

8. Adoption process

- 8.1. The draft Strategy is also being reviewed by the Overview and Resources – Resources committee at its meeting on 11 July 2024.
- 8.2. Following the scrutiny process, the Strategy will be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 15 July 2024.
- 8.3. Subject to the Executive’s approval, the Strategy will be recommended for adoption at Full Council on 23 July 2024.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 9.2. Once adopted, the Corporate Strategy will guide the allocation of resources and inform the Council’s annual budget setting process.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. As the Council’s key strategic document, the Corporate Strategy articulates the Council’s vision for itself as an organisation and the wider borough, it sets out what we are trying to achieve for residents and businesses. As such the Corporate Strategy is vital for ensuring the Council continues to meet its statutory Best Value duty.
- 10.2. The need to develop and publish a new Corporate Strategy was an action identified by the recent SOLACE Governance Review, and doing this was an action contained within the Council’s Improvement Plan.

11. Human Resource Implications

- 11.1. There are no direct HR implications arising as a result of this report.
- 11.2. The priorities set out within the Corporate Strategy provide focus and direction for the Council’s officers. They inform the setting of objectives and priorities for staff at all levels of the organisation, and are a key input into the individual staff appraisal and performance management process.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1. There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.
- 12.2. One of the priorities proposed for the plan is for Guildford to be “A more inclusive borough”. This priority focusses on a number of different outcomes and areas of work including the equality and diversity agenda, as well our ambition to ensure local people, regardless of background, feel empowered to shape and influence the delivery of our services.
- 12.3. The Corporate Strategy does not directly define or shape operational service delivery. Rather, it sets the overall strategic direction for the Council. Operational service delivery is guided and delivered through plans and strategies which sit within the Council’s strategic framework. Should any of these services or functions change as a result of the Strategy’s implementation, these decisions would be subject to their own Equality Impact Assessments to ensure there is full consideration of any impacts for all of the protected characteristics.

13. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

- 13.1. The draft proposed Corporate Strategy sets out a strategic priority for “A more sustainable borough” in which addressing the climate emergency is key. This priority will influence the delivery of the Council’s Climate Change Action Plan which contains the aspiration for the Council to be carbon neutral by 2030 and the wider borough to be so by 2050.

14. Summary of Options

- 14.1. The Committee has the option to either provide comment and scrutiny on draft Corporate Strategy, or not to.
- 14.2. It is recommended that the Committee provides comment and scrutiny, to support the Strategy’s development. These comments will then be considered by the Executive as the Strategy progresses towards being considered by Council on 23 July.

15. Conclusion

- 15.1. The Corporate Strategy is due to be considered by Council on 23 July 2024. This report has provided the Committee with an overview of the work undertaken to date to develop the strategy, as well as setting out the next steps up to and after adoption.

16. Background Papers

- 16.1. Equality Impact Assessment for the Corporate Strategy - May 2024

17. Appendices

- 17.1. Appendix 1: draft Corporate Strategy