

# Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Executive

Date: 15 July 2024

Ward(s) affected: all wards

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Report Status: Open

## 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 as well as the allocation of resources to these priorities.
- 1.3 Following its consideration by both Overview & Scrutiny Committees, this report provides the Executive with an opportunity to consider the proposed strategy and to recommend to Full Council that it is adopted.

### 2. Recommendation to Executive

Executive is asked,

- 2.1. To review and comment on the draft Corporate Strategy set out at Appendix 1 of this report and, taking into account the observations

arising from the meetings of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out in the Supplementary Information Sheet, recommend to full Council meeting on 23 July 2024 that the Corporate Strategy be adopted; and

- 2.2. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Strategy and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Leader and the Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development, to make any necessary minor typographical changes and to finalise the document's design and imagery, prior to publication.

### **3. Reason(s) for Recommendation:**

- 3.1. The proposed new Corporate Strategy has been prepared to set out the Council's key priorities for the period up to 2034.
- 3.2. The timings of the meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny committees means that their comments and feedback could not be incorporated into the proposed Strategy that is set out in Appendix 1.

### **4. Exemption from publication**

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

### **5. Purpose of Report**

- 5.1. This report presents a new Corporate Strategy, attached as Appendix 1, for the period 2024-2034 for adoption by the Council.

### **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. Titled '*A Greener, Fairer, Thriving Guildford*', the new Strategy has five core priorities which form the overarching focus for the Council over the next ten years. These 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 Executive is considering today, is the version of the strategy that has been reviewed by both Overview & Scrutiny committees. Following the meeting of each committee, their comments and feedback will be circulated to the Executive for their consideration and published in the Supplementary Information Sheet.
- 7.6. Once adopted, work will begin on compiling an annual delivery plan that sets out the actions 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 each February. 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. Financial Implications**

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

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1. 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.
- 9.2. 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.

## **10. Human Resource Implications**

- 10.1. There are no direct HR implications arising as a result of this report.
- 10.2. 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.

## **11. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 11.1. There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

- 11.2. 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.
- 11.3. 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.

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

- 12.1. 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.

## **13. Summary of Options**

- 13.1. The Overview & Scrutiny committees have considered the draft strategy ahead of this meeting of the Executive. A summary of the feedback received from both committees will be made available in an addendum to this agenda pack.
- 13.2. Where either committee has provided feedback, once circulated the Executive will have the option to either incorporate or not incorporate each piece of feedback.
- 13.3. Having considered this feedback, the Executive can choose to either recommend to Council the proposed strategy is adopted, or not to.

13.4. Given the importance of the Corporate Strategy as the key strategic document that sets out the Council's priorities for the coming decade, it is recommended that the Strategy be adopted.

## **14. Conclusion**

14.1. The recommended Corporate Strategy clearly sets out the Council's vision, priorities and ambitions for the coming years. In doing this, it provides a focus for the Council's activities and will directly shape project and service delivery. It is therefore recommended that the Executive recommends to Council that the new strategy is adopted.

## **15. Background Papers**

15.1. [Report to Overview & Scrutiny – Services, 10 July 2024](#)

15.2. [Report to Overview & Scrutiny – Resources, 11 July 2024](#)

## **16. Appendices**

Appendix 1: the Corporate Strategy, 2024-2034.