

Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Council

Date: 23 July 2024

Ward(s) affected: all

Report of Director: Joint Chief Executive

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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 deliver these priorities.
- 1.3 In recent weeks, the draft Strategy has been reviewed by both Overview & Scrutiny Committees and is being considered by the Executive at its meeting on 15 July 2024. Due to the agenda for this meeting of Full Council being published prior to the meeting of the Executive, the Executive's response to any observations made by

Overview & Scrutiny will be circulated to Full Council via a supplementary agenda pack.

- 1.4 This report provides the Council with an opportunity to consider the proposed strategy and it is recommended that it is adopted.

2. Recommendation to Council

- 2.1. That the draft Corporate Strategy set out in Appendix 1 to this report, alongside any recommended changes made by the Executive at their meeting on 15 July 2024 following consideration of feedback from Overview and Scrutiny, be adopted.
- 2.2. That the Assistant Director for Strategy and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Leader and the Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development, be authorised to make any necessary minor typographical changes and to finalise the document's design and imagery, prior to final publication.

3. Reason 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.

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. It 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 Leadership Team have contributed to the drafts for both draft strategies, as have both Executives.
- 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 is the version of the strategy that has been reviewed by both Overview & Scrutiny Committees. Their comments and feedback will be reviewed by the Executive at its meeting on 15 July 2024. Any alterations to Appendix 1 that the Executive wishes to propose in light

of this feedback will be published in the Supplementary Agenda Pack.

- 7.6. Once adopted, the strategy will be used to inform the resource allocation decisions as part of the Council's annual service and financial planning process. It will inform the development of the annual budget, the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the Capital Investment Strategy.
- 7.7. The strategy will also kick off a series of conversations, with partners residents and businesses about how we achieve each of our priorities and outcomes.
- 7.8. Informed by the resource allocation process and the wider engagement and conversations, 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.
- 7.9. 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 focuses 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 Council can choose to either approve the draft Corporate Strategy, as presented in this report, or not to approve the Corporate Strategy.
- 13.2. 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 Council adopts the new Strategy.

15. Background Papers

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

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

[Report to the Executive, 15 July 2024](#)

16. Appendices

Appendix 1: the Corporate Strategy, 2024-2034.

Any alterations to Appendix 1 that the Executive wishes to propose, in light of feedback from Overview and Scrutiny, to follow once the Executive has met on 15 July 2024.