

**Meeting: COUNCIL**

**Agenda Item:**

**14**

Portfolio Area: Leader

**Date: 7 DECEMBER 2016**

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL CO-OPERATIVE CORPORATE PLAN  
FUTURE TOWN FUTURE COUNCIL**

**BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK DECISION**

Author – Karen Griffiths, ext 2976  
Contact Officer – Richard Protheroe ext 2938  
Lead Officer – Richard Protheroe ext 2938

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1 To seek approval of the Council's Corporate Plan- Future Town Future Council

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the Council approve the new Corporate Plan Future Town Future Council.

**3. BACKGROUND**

**3.1 Corporate Plan**

- 3.1.1 The Corporate Plan is a key strategic document for the Council and is considered as part of the Council's policy planning and performance management framework.
- 3.1.2 The Corporate Plan provides a strategic link between the National policy agenda, Council services and Stevenage Together's strategic objectives. It sets the direction of travel for the Council over the next five years and informs the project delivery plans for improvements within the Council.
- 3.1.3 The outcomes and priorities in the plan set out what the Council wants to achieve to improve outcomes across Stevenage. The priorities inform the Council's budget setting process and the focus of project work in service plans across the authority.
- 3.1.4 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, as a Budget & Policy Framework item this Corporate Plan document was considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2016. That Committee agreed the framework and content of the draft. Furthermore the document has been considered by the Council's Executive in September 2016 and a final draft

considered in November 2016 and comments made have been taken into account.

- 3.1.5 The Executive agreed with the draft document and have recommended it to Council for approval.

### **3.2 Sharing the Dividends**

- 3.2.1 The previous Corporate Plan ‘Sharing the Dividends’ was agreed at the Council meeting in July 2013 and set out the Council’s approach to meeting the needs of the community.

Corporate plan – Sharing the Dividends	
Ambition	Priorities
<b>A vibrant town</b>	<b>Improve the economy and encourage financial resilience</b>
	<b>Regenerate the town centre and neighbourhoods</b>
<b>A quality environment</b>	<b>Provide affordable homes and housing growth</b>
	<b>Help people feel safe</b>
<b>An excellent Council</b>	<b>Deliver value for money</b>
	<b>Put residents first</b>

- 3.2.2 The previous Corporate Plan ‘Sharing the Dividends’ was monitored for delivery through the Council’s Corporate Performance framework and through the production of a Council annual report which outlined key performance against our objectives and service areas. The last annual report to report against this Corporate plan was produced in July 2015.
- 3.2.3 Whilst the Council has created a new Corporate Plan to reflect the changed aspirations for the town and Council over the next 5 years; it should be noted that many of the outcomes and objectives within ‘Sharing the Dividends’ remain key priorities for this Council and form part of the new Future Town Future Council approach.

## **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The Council’s key drivers and values have changed since the current Corporate Plan was developed in 2013. The Council has faced and is continuing to face a number of significant challenges that must be considered and used to inform the Council’s priorities and vision for the coming years. These include:
- Comprehensive Spending Review and financial pressures on general fund and Housing Revenue account
  - Capital pressures on council assets
  - Housing pressures

- Welfare Reform
  - Change in partnership landscape
  - Regeneration pressures
  - Continuing pressures on local economy and impact on service users
  - Increasing demand for services
  - A need to work co-operatively with our residents
- 4.2 The Council must respond flexibly to these changes and challenges to ensure it is adaptable and fit for the future. It is necessary to become more customer focussed and cost effective in an era of increasing service demand and reducing resources. The Council must make use of emerging technology to ensure services are efficient and effective and to increase accessibility for customers and residents. There has been a rising demand on core services and more residents seeking information and service support through the customer service centre. There is a needs to work smarter to enable customers to self-serve and ensure that limited resources can be focussed on services and outcomes that really matter.
- 4.3 Internally, the Council needs to prioritise and focus to ensure quality delivery. Decisions must be made more quickly and must be based on key data and insight. The Council needs to retain the best of its skilled and motivated staff and managers; and attract staff with new skills and perspectives into the organisation to ensure that despite ongoing challenges that the Council is fit for purpose and able to deliver quality services that our residents need and want.
- 4.4 In consideration of these challenges, resident feedback and the need for internal cultural and processual change the Council has adopted a new transformation programme 'Future Town Future Council'. The Executive approved the proposals for the programme in October 2015. It consists of nine key focused programmes that aim to deliver improved outcomes and real change for Stevenage residents despite continued austerity.
- 4.5 The Council's new Corporate Plan 'Future Town, Future Council' has been developed following agreement of the Future Town Future Council ambitions and projects and enshrines the change programme within the Council's Corporate Policy framework. The Future Town Future Council programme has now been established with robust governance mechanisms and processes in place to ensure delivery against the required outcomes. Programme managers and sponsors are now assigned to shape and drive the programmes. Furthermore each programme has clear delivery plans in place with requisite milestones to be delivered. The performance and quality of each programme is monitored through a monthly Programme Board consisting of senior officers, which is co-ordinated and effectively managed by an established programme office.
- 4.6 The Corporate Plan will articulate to the public the Council's key priorities and the objectives that support achievement of the 'Future Town Future Council' programme over the next five years. It operates as the strategic policy

framework for the Council ensuring that services consider the Council's key priorities in service planning and resource allocation. It has been produced as a short, easy read 1 page public document in line with the Corporate Style Guide and co-operative council ethos. It highlights how the Council will build strong foundations for change and deliver on its promises and as such operates as a key lynchpin in the Future Town Future Council communication plan.

- 4.7 A supporting summary action plan has been developed to sit alongside the one page summary (appendix 2). This articulates clearly to the public the Future Town Future Council priority objectives; where we will focus our improvement efforts each year over the next five years. These objectives will be supported by key performance targets and indicators to ensure performance of the programme can be monitored.
- 4.8 The Future Town Future Council Corporate Plan also further enshrines our ambitions and principles as a Co-operative Council through inclusion of a key priority- 'Co-operative and neighbourhood management. As a Co-operative Council the views of our residents matter to us and residents are at the heart of service design and delivery. The Co-operative element of the Future Town Future Council plan ensures that residents can shape their neighbourhoods, working with us to tell us what matters most at a local level.

### **Consultation on the plan**

- 4.9 The bi-ennial resident survey in 2015 sought views on which priorities matter the most to our residents. The results of this (1000 participants) and activities at Stevenage Day in June 2015 (174 participants) confirmed again residents' priorities - community safety, the regeneration of the town centre and neighbourhoods and housing development which continue to rank as the top priorities for the town and Council. The Council listened to these views and their views of our services and the Future Town Future Council programme was shaped accordingly.
- 4.10 Following agreement at September Executive the draft Corporate Plan was sent out for a brief consultation exercise to ensure that residents had a further opportunity to comment on the Future Town Future Council programme. It was made available on the Council website and a quarter page advertisement placed for 2 concurrent weeks in the Stevenage Comet and on the Comet website to seek further views. The consultation was designed to confirm agreement of the priorities within the Future Town Future Council programme, capture views on the specific outcomes and objectives and seek feedback on the layout. Respondents agreed with the priorities within the Plan and commented that the layout was clear, simple and gets the message across.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 4.11 In order to demonstrate the positive outcomes achieved from this plan, its implementation will be monitored through the Future Town Future Council Programme Governance arrangements and performance captured within the

Council's Corporate Performance framework. A yearly short summary action plan has been developed and alongside the Council's Annual Report it will ensure that there is clarity for residents as to what the Council has done, and will do, to deliver its promises.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial Implications**

5.1.1 The Council has already refocussed resources to support the priorities outlined in the Future Town Future Council Corporate Plan. Where possible existing budgets have been identified within key service areas to fund activities within 2016/17. In addition Members have approved significant resources through the September 2015 MTFS Executive report and the March Executive report Future Town Future Council Outcomes and Resources to support the delivery of the programme.

5.1.2 Any additional resources required to support the programme over and above that identified through the agreed reports outlined in paragraph 2.1 above will be included as growth bids as part of the annual financial planning and budget setting process.

### **5.2 Legal Implications**

5.2.1 There are no legal recommendations

### **5.3 Risk Implications**

5.3.1 The risks associated with individual service areas and objectives will need to be considered through normal service planning processes.

5.3.2 A strategic risk register has been developed for the Future Town Future Council programme to ensure risk is effectively managed across the programme. It will be monitored by the strategic Programme Board on a quarterly basis.

### **5.4 Policy and Service delivery Implications**

5.4.1 The Corporate Plan is the keystone in the council's policy framework. It sets out the council's strategic priorities and informs the corporate improvement and change programme.

5.4.2 The Corporate Plan impacts on some Council services and will need to be reflected in all relevant Service Delivery Unit planning processes.

### **5.5 Equalities Implications**

5.5.1 All projects and activities leading to policy or service change in the Future Town Future Council programme will be assessed through the Council's EQIA process.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Executive Report: Stevenage Borough Council Sharing the Dividends
- Council report Stevenage Borough Council Sharing the Dividends July 2013
- Executive Report Future Town future Council October 2015
- Executive Report Future Town Future Council Outcomes and Resources March 2016.
- Executive Report Corporate Plan Future Town Future Council September 2016

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Draft Corporate Plan Future Town Future Council

Appendix 2: Summary action plan

Appendix 3: Equalities Impact Assessment