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**Meeting: EXECUTIVE**

**Agenda Item:**

**9**

Portfolio Area: All

**Date: 13 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN FUTURE TOWN  
FUTURE COUNCIL**

**BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK DECISION**

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**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To seek approval for the draft Corporate Plan which outlines the Council's vision and strategic priorities for the next five years and the related consultation plan.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Executive agree the Council's draft Corporate Plan 'Future Town Future Council', as appended to this report;
- 2.2 That the approach to consultation on the strategy be agreed as set out in paragraph 4.10 of this report.

**3. BACKGROUND**

**3.1 Corporate Plan**

- 3.1.1 The Corporate Plan is a key strategic document for the Council and must be 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, Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) 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.

### 3.2 Sharing the Dividends

3.2.1 The previous Corporate Plan 'Sharing the Dividends' was agreed by the Council 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>

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

4.1 The Council's key drivers, vision and values have changed since the current Corporate Plan was approved in 2013.

4.2 The Council has faced, and is continuing to face, a number of significant challenges that must be considered to inform its vision for the coming years. These include:

- The continuing need to work co-operatively with our residents.
- Comprehensive Spending Review and financial pressures on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account
- Capital pressures on Council assets
- National Housing policy related pressures
- Welfare Reform
- Change in partnership landscape
- Regeneration challenge and opportunities
- Continuing pressures on local economy and impact on service users
- Increasing demands related to the use, quality and accessibility to services

4.3 The resident survey in 2015 and activities at Stevenage Day in June 2015 confirmed again residents' priorities - community safety, the regeneration of the town centre and neighbourhoods and housing development continue to rank as the top priorities for the town and Council.

4.4 Internally, the Council is striving to prioritise and focus to ensure effective delivery. This means using reduced resources to achieve the outcomes that

matter most. Members and officers continue to work together and decisions must be made more quickly and 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 that we're to meet the challenges faced and most importantly deliver the services that residents need and want.

- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 The Council's new Corporate Plan 'Future Town, Future Council' has been developed following agreement of the related ambitions and projects which enshrine the change programme within the Council's Corporate Policy framework. The Future Town Future Council programme has been established with robust governance mechanisms and processes in place to ensure delivery against the required outcomes. Programme managers and sponsors are 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 performance managed through a monthly Programme Board consisting of senior officers, which is co-ordinated and effectively managed by an established programme office.
- 4.7 The Corporate Plan will articulate to the public our 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 when undertaking planning and resource allocation. It has been produced as a short, easy read, 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.
- 4.8 A supporting summary action plan will be developed to sit alongside the one page summary. This will be a short plan articulating clearly to the public the Future Town Future Council top 10-15 key priority objectives, which will highlight to residents where the Council will focus improvement efforts each year over the next five years. These objectives will be supported by key corporate performance targets and indicators to ensure performance can be monitored on delivery.
- 4.9 The Future Town Future Council Corporate Plan also further enshrines SBC's ambitions and principles as a Co-operative Council through the inclusion of a key priority focused upon 'Co-operative and neighbourhood management'. As a Co-operative Council the views of our residents matter greatly 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 help shape their neighbourhoods, working with the Council and saying what matters most at a local level.

- 4.10 Following agreement by the Executive the Corporate Plan summary document will be sent out for a short 6 week consultation with residents. It will be circulated to Members, staff, community partners and placed on the Council website to seek views on the content and layout. As a Budget and Policy Framework item the draft will also be formally submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is not envisaged that this will be a large scale consultation exercise as the Council has already carried out extensive consultation on the key priorities that matter to residents through the Residents Survey and Stevenage Day activities in 2015 which were considered when shaping the Future Town Future Council programme.

## **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 Medium Term Financial Strategy Executive report and the March 2016 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 5.1.5 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 direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

### **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  
<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/87812/88269/88273/Executive-25-June-2013-Item-5.pdf>
- Council report Stevenage Borough Council Sharing the Dividends July 2013  
<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/87812/87816/87820/Council-17-July-2013-Item14.pdf>
- Executive Report Future Town future Council October 2015  
<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/139616/139705/139725/Executive-13-October-2015-Item-4.pdf>
- Executive Report Future Town Future Council Outcomes and Resources March 2016.  
<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/139616/139705/139725/Executive-8-March-2016-Item-7.pdf>

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Draft Corporate Plan Future Town Future Council