



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

**to
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
28 JANUARY 2021**

CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE 2021 - 2023

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the progress that has been made to update the Maldon District Council Corporate Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) that the progress made on developing the update to the Corporate Plan be noted;
- (ii) that a Corporate Plan Task and Finish Working Group be established to review and validate the updated Corporate Plan prior to its referral to the Council in March 2021; and
- (iii) that six Strategy and Resources Committee Members be appointed to serve on the Corporate Plan Task and Finish Group.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan is the Council's top-level strategy; setting out its strategic direction by providing a framework for the resourcing and delivery of service priorities.
- 3.2 The Council approved a Corporate Plan for the period 2019 - 2023 on 14 February 2019 (Minute No. 871 refers). It established an impact and outcome focused approach setting 32 strategic outcomes that sought to establish medium to long term consequences that the Council wanted to secure for the District.
- 3.3 A Thematic Strategy for three outward facing strategic themes of Place, Prosperity and Community were prepared later during 2019, providing further interpretation and detail on activities the Council would work on, which was to be linked back to Service Plans, Project Programmes and staff personal SMART objectives. Underpinned by an organisational focus of Performance and Value, collectively, these have helped the Council allocate resources, apply for grant funding and determine capital expenditure priorities.

- 3.4 As reported to the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee on 21 September 2020 (Minute No. 1215 refers), the Council's approach to service delivery and its corporate priorities has had to change in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the Council offices have been closed to most staff, digital solutions have enabled staff to work remotely to ensure services that the Maldon District communities rely on continue to be provided. Some resources have however had to be redeployed or reprioritised to respond to both the pandemic's restrictions and the District's residents' and businesses needs, as well as supporting community and healthcare partners meeting new or increased demands for their own services. This activity was not forecast to be a Council priority when the Corporate Plan 2019 - 2023 was approved.
- 3.5 As the Committee will be aware, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to evolve and the socio-economic and health and well-being impacts of lockdown cycles, tourism and hospitality restrictions, education delivery, employment, businesses and healthcare continue to be felt across our residential and business communities. Whilst it is hoped that the new vaccinations will, in time, enable the cessation of restrictions, there remains uncertainty as to when and to what extent this might be.
- 3.6 These challenges mean the Council needs to continue to adapt to the changing environment and it is therefore considered that now is an opportune time to update the Corporate Plan to ensure it remains relevant to the challenges faced.
- 3.7 **Emerging Corporate Plan Update**
- 3.7.1 Officers have completed a review of updated legislation, national policy and strategies to ensure the Corporate Plan's context is up to date. There has also been a review of updated strategies, programmes and initiatives from public sector partners such as Essex County Council, Highways England and the NHS (National Health Service). In addition, using data from the Corporate Performance Framework and key performance indicators relevant to Maldon District, further appreciation of what is happening in our communities has taken place.
- 3.7.2 A review of the existing 32 outcomes has shown that many of the areas the Council has been focusing on through the Corporate Plan, remain relevant locally and should be retained; although some outcomes could be merged or condensed through rewording, so they remain focused and relevant.
- 3.7.3 This distilling process has led to an overall reduction in the number of proposed outcomes to make the Corporate Plan more manageable. All new outcomes have been mapped against a justifiable rationale, whether they help deliver statutory / non-statutory obligations, links to supporting evidence and the identification of Key Success Factors. Each outcome has also been expanded to consider the work priority areas and projects that would be deployed to deliver the outcome, including stakeholder and partnership mapping and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- 3.7.4 The new proposed external facing outcomes are:
1. Promoting civic pride and maintaining the District's environmental quality;
 2. Reducing the impacts of waste disposal and pollution on the environment;

3. Work with partners to maintain and improve resilience to the effects of climate change on our waterways and coastline;
 4. Delivering the District's housing needs;
 5. Delivering sustainable growth and new infrastructure through development;
 6. Enabling future economic investment and new jobs;
 7. Supporting existing local businesses;
 8. Enhancing and promoting the District's visitor economy;
 9. Working with our communities and partners to improve the physical health and well-being of our residents;
 10. Working with our communities and partners to improve the mental health and well-being of our residents;
 11. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all vulnerable children, adults and families;
 12. Building on the strengths of our diverse communities to enable them to support themselves and help each other thrive; and
 13. Working with our communities, schools and partners to improve our children's and young people's health and wellbeing, so they get the best start in life.
- 3.7.5 Work remains underway to finalise a suite of internal focussed outcomes that shape and embed common organisational values, deliver good governance, use partnerships to aid delivery, operate within financial means and support a more flexible workforce.

3.8 Engagement

- 3.8.1 It is important that the development of the Corporate Plan does not happen in isolation. To this end, engagement with the public, businesses and staff to determine what others feel the Council should focus its resources on is important. The results of resident, business, staff or partner engagement carried out during 2020 will therefore be useful to inform the Corporate Plan update.
- 3.8.2 Specifically, in relation to the Corporate Plan update, a Member Engagement Survey was sent to all Councillors on 4 January 2021 seeking views on the existing Corporate Plan; whether there were any particular areas of the Council's work focus which Members felt the Council's resources should be deployed to serve the District better; and for views on selecting and adopting common values to embed into the organisation.
- 3.8.3 Given this engagement, it is proposed that a six-member Task and Finish Working Group be established by the Committee to distil the feedback received and ensure the Corporate Plan update has adequately considered the input made.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Updating the Council's Corporate Plan is critical to ensure the Council is focusing on delivering the most relevant outcomes via its direct services and when engaging with

partners. It is intended that a report will be presented to the Council in March 2021 seeking approval of the Corporate Plan update.

5. **IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES**

- 5.1 The Strategic Themes of Place, Prosperity and Community and the organisational focus of Performance and Value are to be strengthened through updating the Corporate Plan to ensure it is responsive to the issues facing the District's residents, businesses, Council partners and staff. The Place, Prosperity and Community Strategies would be updated following the update to the Corporate Plan 2021 - 2023.

6. **IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Service Planning and performance management is about agreeing and achieving objectives and priorities, monitoring our performance against agreed targets and timescales, identifying opportunities for improvement and delivering quality public services to our residents, businesses and partners.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – The Council aims to understand the needs of staff and customers and making sure that our policies and services are designed to meet those needs and are implemented appropriately. Maldon District Council (MDC) is committed to providing equal opportunity of access to services and ensuring communities are positively inclusive and free from discrimination.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Without agreed and clearly stated priorities, the Council will be at risk of not effectively focussing its work and, in turn, efficiently directing limited resources. Those risks that may prevent the Council from achieving priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan will be identified and reviewed annually through a Corporate Risk Register, together with the monitoring of the effectiveness of controls and whether further actions should be taken forward to mitigate the risks as much as possible.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – The strategic planning process includes the agreement of budgets by Members. Service Planning can be prepared based on the budget available, accounting for the outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Service Planning can be prepared based on the resources available, accounting for the outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – The importance of protecting and enhancing the local environment is fully recognised in the Corporate Plan; with the update seeking that specific local effort is expended in developing an Environment and Climate Change Strategy, alongside other Place, Prosperity and Communities Strategies.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** - The importance of strengthening communities is fully recognised in the Corporate Plan; with the update seeking

that the Council's resources be deployed to help communities thrive with support where it is necessary.

Background Papers: None.

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