



Strategic Plan

Thursday 16 February 2017

Report from Leader of the Council

Purpose of this Report

The report sets out the latest position on the Strategic Plan 2017/18 to 2020/21.

Background

The Strategic Plan sets out the overall direction of the County Council. It explains how the work of the Council fits together, with its partners, to make a difference to the lives of local residents, businesses and communities.

The current Strategic Plan 2013 – 17 is focused around three key themes:

- Safeguarding Our Vulnerable
- Creating Opportunities and Building Self Reliance
- Keeping Buckinghamshire Thriving and Attractive

These Strategic Plan priorities have been used by the Cabinet in developing its budget proposals, both in terms of identifying areas of service delivery that it wishes to protect and identifying options for delivering savings.

The Strategic Plan, and the aligned commercial business plans which underpin it, constitutes the Council's key planning framework. They aim to clearly identify to residents, partners and staff the Council's priorities and deliverables.

The Council carries out an annual review of the strategic plan to take account of local and national developments and ensure that it remains fit for purpose. Reflections on the Strategic Plan began with the County Council debate at the Annual General Meeting in May. Since then work has continued to analyse the Council's important issues, the results of public consultation with residents and local organisations along with the changing national policy. A Member workshop was held on the 18th January to explore findings.

2017 will bring unprecedented challenges in terms of public finances, our democracy and delivering local services. Local government must rise to those challenges and may well be the key to overcoming them.

Nationally there have been significant changes with a new Prime Minister, new legislation and changes proposed in legislation where the impacts for the local government role are yet to be clear, for example in relation to education. Alongside these changes is a reduction in budgets for public services together with significant infrastructure developments that will affect the county.

Locally we are seeking to modernise local government. We have substantial growth anticipated as people live longer and levels of disability increase. There is increasing demand for services such as children's and adults' social care, supported transport, school places, apprenticeships, housing and health services. Businesses highlight the skills gap and skills shortage and we have an aspiration for young people to be prepared for the world of work and adult life. The way the public communicate and transact is changing at a rapid rate. The take up of mobile technology creates an opportunity to change our model of service and information for the public.

The Draft Strategic Plan

The Council's refreshed Strategic Plan for 2017-2021 will need to acknowledge these local and national changes. The plan should demonstrate the Council's ability (with its key partners) to be an active place shaper and at the forefront of driving through positive change in order to ensure Buckinghamshire is a prosperous, thriving and attractive place for all residents to live and work in.

In terms of the content of the plan, feedback during the review process has confirmed that the three key themes remain relevant and these are therefore unchanged in the proposed draft at Appendix A. Some change in emphasis is proposed however in order to more directly reflect the Council's ambitions in relation to the development of the county, economic growth and increasing independence.

In terms of format, the proposal is to publish the plan as a web based document that would allow links to strategies, other key plans and localised 'real life' examples of the impact the Council and its partners have for residents and business. In order to inform the annual refresh process going forward, it is proposed that we produce an annual report that allows others to see the direction of travel, key achievements and reflections on key issues for the Council.

A new County Council will be elected in May 2017 which will be able to take its own decision in relation to the Strategic Plan. It is recommended that the draft plan attached at Appendix A is approved by this County Council, and is subject to an early review by the new County Council in May.

RECOMMENDATION

Council is asked to AGREE the Strategic Plan set out at Appendix A

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**