

COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND CORPORATE PLAN 2015 - 2019

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What is the Commission being asked to do?

- To review the proposed Council priorities, ambitions and sought high level outcomes to 2019 and recommend any changes through to Cabinet on 16 November 2015.

Executive Summary

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out the ambitions and priorities for the next four years to meet both the challenges and opportunities facing the Council, focusing on: regeneration and infrastructure (our place priority); cohesive communities (our people priority) and value for money services (our pounds priority).

This is the third Corporate Plan that the Council has developed and, although primarily an internal working document, it is a key reference point for the public and stakeholders. It also provides an important part of the golden thread from a performance management point of view to enable staff to see how their actions contribute to the wider Council agenda. The work programme element of the plan will be reviewed and refreshed annually. Progress made will be reported each year as part of the Council's Annual Report.

The three priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 will form the Council's contribution to achieving the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Wycombe District.

The Corporate Plan was shared with Councillors at the Members Seminar on the 4 November 2015.

Background and Issues

The Council Corporate Plan 2011-2015 was completed in March. The new Corporate Plan sets out the direction and improvement path for the Council to 2019.

The key challenges that the Council faces over the next four year period fall into three areas.

- I. The continuing reduction in our Government financial settlement and the need for us to become financially self-sufficient: looking for new ways to generate revenue streams to support delivery of our services.
- II. Facilitating the delivery of required new home growth in our district and the infrastructure to support this: having robust plans in place to ensure this development is sustainable (including future proofing for climate change and in particular flooding) and of high quality so as not to compromise the quality of our valued natural environment.
- III. The need to continue to engage and work with our residents, of all ages: shaping what we do, wherever possible on local need and remaining as a safety net for those in most need.

In responding to these challenges the Cabinet is proposing three priorities:

- I. Regeneration and infrastructure (a priority focusing on 'place')
- II. Cohesive communities (a priority focusing on 'people') and
- III. Value for money services (a priority focusing on 'pounds').

A series of ambitions to 2019 have been set under each priority area. Key projects and activities have also been identified to deliver against these ambitions over the next four year period. A number of the activities listed will produce outcomes that contribute to the achievement of more than one ambition under the different priorities and demonstrate the synergy between the priorities to work to address the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of our District.

Corporate and Financial Implications

Corporate implications will be addressed as part of the existing processes in place as the project and activity workstreams developed for each ambition in Corporate Plan are developed, taken forward and implemented. The main corporate implication is that the Corporate Plan, upon approval, becomes the key strategic document for the Council driving action and future resource allocation and is the framework against which the Council's progress and performance, as reported in the Annual Report will be judged by stakeholders.

Corporate planning is incidental to the discharge of the Council's various functions and as such is authorised under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Cabinet will be receiving an item on the Major Projects programme on the 16 November and this will support the implementation of the Corporate Plan.

Next Steps

Corporate Plan to be approved by Cabinet on 16 November 2015, Council on 14 December 2015 with formal publication in January 2016.

Corporate Plan Outline

The following table sets out the skeleton content of the Corporate Plan 2015-2019:

Section	Content
1	Introduction from the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive
2	Corporate Plan Quick Guide A one page overview of vision, priorities and organisational core values
3	Our Priorities This will set out information on each of the three priority areas. It will set out why this is a priority, what our ambitions are to 2019 and flagship activities and projects that will help deliver these. It also includes an overview of the outcomes that will be achieved. Case studies to bring some of the key projects to life will also be included, such as Handy Cross and the Public Sector Hub for example.

Section	Content
4	<p>Delivering our Priorities</p> <p>This will set out the way we work as a Council (including partnership working) to deliver our priorities. This will also acknowledge some of the wider requirements that are considered as part of service and project delivery, such as safeguarding, sustainability and climate change for example.</p> <p>This section will also include links to related policies and plans and how we will monitor and report our progress.</p>
5	<p>Getting in touch</p>
6	<p>Glossary</p>

Our priorities: Place, People and Pounds

We have set ourselves three priorities to 2019:

- Regeneration and Infrastructure – our ‘place’ priority.
- Cohesive Communities – our ‘people’ priority.
- Value for Money Services – our ‘pounds’ priority.

Regeneration and Infrastructure: Our Place Priority

This priority focuses on investing in our District and enabling regeneration through the use of the Council’s assets and capital - and where possible, external funding. In this way we are also helping to ensure we have the appropriate infrastructure to support sustainable growth.

Our approach is to use our assets and capital in such a way that not only delivers regeneration and growth in a sustainable way, but also generates annual revenue to support our services to the public thus contributing to our projected funding shortfall in future years. In this way the Council can make sure essential services continue to be provided and help to provide jobs, as well as retail, leisure and other facilities for local people to enjoy.

This priority is also about making sure that we have plans in place to facilitate the wider delivery of required growth in our district. Our residents have told us that the provision of affordable homes, jobs for local people and other infrastructure is important to them. They have also told us that they value the beautiful landscape setting that we enjoy in this district meaning that a balance has to be sought.

Our plans, such as the new Local Plan, will help us to work with developers to make sure that new developments are sustainable and of high quality: future proofing them for climate change and in particular flooding. Development is not just about the built environment and we want, through this planning process to investigate opportunities to facilitate the creation of a wide range of solutions for economic, environmental and social benefit - which is not only be good for people, but will help safeguard wildlife too.

Our ambitions	Key workstreams
<p>Deliver our major regeneration and development projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports and Leisure Centre, Coachway Park and Ride and Waitrose store completed and open in 2016 with hotel and commercial space provision to follow in 2017/18. • Hughenden Quarter development (fully completed 2018). • Cressex Island (2016/17). • Desborough Area Renewal. • Extend Risborough Springs Swim and Fitness Centre. • Determine the future of Court Garden leisure complex. • Use our Regeneration Fund to acquire property interests to facilitate regeneration. <p>Outcome: Using regeneration as a catalyst in the widest sense of place: new job opportunities, improved leisure offer, shopping choice and transport facilities for residents and visitors to our district.</p>
<p>Ensure a sustainable balance between homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure so we can accommodate required growth without compromising the quality of our valued natural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Local Plan to 2031 produced, approved and successfully adopted by 2018 to guide and shape future development in a sustainable way: future proofing for climate change and in particular flooding. • Progress delivery of the reserve sites released in 2014 for development. • Support the work of Parish Councils in preparing neighbourhood plans • Ensure any Government required Green Belt reviews are technically robust and transparent to enable us to defend our distinctive settlements from merging together • Work with the Bucks Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and Bucks County Council on infrastructure priorities. • Lobby for Westhorpe interchange improvements on the A404 in Marlow. <p>Outcome: High quality sustainable development supported by appropriate infrastructure provision, maintaining the beautiful landscape setting of the Chiltern Hills.</p>
<p>Improve the vibrancy of High Wycombe town centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement the High Wycombe Town Centre Master Plan (HWTCMP) that includes the alternative route; public realm improvements and exploring ways to make the return of the River Wye through the town a reality. • Explore options to revitalise the Chiltern Shopping Centre and develop ways to reanimate Frogmoor in the interim

Our ambitions	Key workstreams
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support High Wycombe Business Improvement District and other partners to maintain Purple Flag status and improve the night time economy offer. • Plan for future enhancements to the town centre – a Phase 2 HWTCMP. <p>Outcome: A town centre that is more economically vibrant, people friendly and greener and increasing footfall, particularly in Frogmoor. Improving the perception some people have of the town: making it more inviting to all who spend time here.</p>
Facilitate opportunities for business growth and job creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market and promote of our district to help attract inward investment and boost the visitor economy. • Pursue appropriate inward investment opportunities such as the Public Sector Hub in High Wycombe town centre. • Support small businesses to grow through managed workspace provision such as Grange Farm • Work with others to explore provision of starter units / incubator space. • Use our Regeneration Fund to acquire property interests to facilitate regeneration and bring empty properties back in to use • Support High Wycombe Business Improvement District through its re-ballot in 2017 • Support the Globe Park Business Improvement District in Marlow and investigate off-street parking options for Globe Business Park. • Continue to investigate future land use opportunities for economic activity as part of the new Local Plan work, such as Wycombe Airpark. • Explore the promotion of Wycombe’s [national] sports facilities and events to help business growth, and increase local participation in sports. <p>Outcome: New high quality office premises and business space to retain current and create new job opportunities for local people, helping new businesses to develop and become sustainable.</p>

Our ambitions	Key workstreams
<p>Identify opportunities enhance our green space offer to benefit both people and wildlife</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use required housing development and future economic land use development as identified in new Local Plan as a catalyst to consider new green infrastructure provision such as new cycling corridors and potential country park options at Westhorpe for example. • Continue to work with the Chilterns Conservation Board to maintain the beauty of the AONB and Chiltern Hills • Continue to promote our current green space offer • Retain Green Flag status for Higginson Park (Marlow) and The Rye (High Wycombe) and pursue new Green Flag status for Hughenden Park • Deliver our Open Places Strategy <p>Outcome: Quality green space leading to better health opportunities, safeguarding wildlife and increasing biodiversity.</p>

Cohesive Communities: Our People Priority

This priority focuses on people and communities. We want to maintain and improve people’s quality of life by engaging and working with them to ensure we have more cohesive communities and can shape our plans and provision based on local need.

We want everyone in the District to enjoy a safe, healthy and active life and are committed to provide and promote community safety and cohesion, access to clean green open spaces, and good quality leisure services.

We also want to ensure that we remain a safety net for those that need us most and effectively signpost people on for specialist help and advice should this fall outside of our remit as a district council. With the major reforms to the benefits system through Universal Credit being introduced from November 2015 this will be key.

We also want to do all we can to ensure more affordable and safe housing is available for local people and will explore a series of options to help improve this.

Our ambitions	Key workstreams
<p>Engage with younger people to help meet their needs and aspirations locally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop our links with educational establishments in the district. • Continue to provide a networking forum for local youth service providers. • Work with others to support young people to fulfil their potential and find employment. • Engage and include young people within the wider community. • Increase access to facilities and spaces for all young people. <p>Outcome: Young people engaging more with the Council and having a say on what the Council does.</p> <p>Facilities and leisure spaces for young people/ youths (link to new leisure centre)</p>
<p>Enable local residents and communities to shape their local area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively encourage and support neighbourhood plans to be prepared. • Support, listen and respond to the views of the liaison groups for our reserve site developments. • Continue programme of active engagement on new Local Plan • Conduct our biennial residents' survey and associate focus group work as required (next in 2016) <p>Outcome: A range of opportunities for residents to be able to shape local future development and determine community benefits.</p>
<p>Encourage safe and supportive communities with strong social cohesion</p>	<p>Work with the police and others to take and promote community safety and behaviour measures.</p> <p>Support the voluntary sector through our grants programme.</p> <p>Continue our inter-agency safeguarding work to protect vulnerable children and adults</p> <p>Continue our partnership approach to the PREVENT agenda to tackle violent extremism</p> <p>Outcome: Increase public confidence and improve feelings of safety and cohesion.</p>

Our ambitions	Key workstreams
<p>Work on projects and schemes which benefit local communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the extended Connected Counties programme to roll-out of superfast broadband in our rural areas • Support the implementation of noise barriers at appropriate locations along the M40 motorway. • Expansion of the Councillors' annual ward budget scheme. • Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) used to invest in the area and improve infrastructure to reflect the growing needs locally. • Deliver our Community Facilities programme. <p>Outcome: More support and financial help for projects and schemes which benefit the local area and communities and improve quality of life.</p>
<p>Ensure targeted and affordable help for those in most need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out homelessness prevention work and provide temporary accommodation for those in genuine need in line with our statutory responsibilities. • Implement Government's welfare benefit reforms • Continue working with the County Council on new advice and information 'apps' for help with Universal Credit. • Promotion and awareness-raising about the new Credit Union. • Act as a signpost to direct people to the right agency for specialist help and advice <p>Outcome: Help and advice provided for those in genuine need.</p>
<p>Ensure standards of private rented housing are safe and acceptable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider additional licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation (HMO) • Assess options for Saunderton Lodge <p>Outcome: Increased safety for tenants</p>
<p>Help address the affordability gap by exploring innovative housing solutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pooling developer contributions through the planning system to provide subsidy to RSLs for affordable housing • Consider social lettings agency and assured short-hold tenancies as interim housing options for people in need • Identify opportunities and develop options for the Council to become more active in enabling the provision of homes. <p>Outcome: Help more people to have a home.</p>

Value for Money Services: Our Pounds Priority

This priority focuses on our organisation - Wycombe District Council. It is about what we do and how we do it. We want to make sure that we continue to work to maintain our services and make sure they are responsive to meet the needs of our residents. This means investigating different ways of providing services (this could be on our own or jointly with others) to ensure that they evolve with the needs of our residents whilst offering the best value for our Council tax payers.

We want to make sure that we provide customer-focused, targeted and affordable services to our residents. Our organisation continues to grow leaner and more efficient and we receive less money from the Government. In response, we are continuing to explore new ways of working to deliver the same or more with less.

We will continue to look at what other authorities are doing to deliver value for money and learn from them so as to sustain a sound financial footing. One way is to focus on the principle of the “user-pays”, striking a balance between those universal services provided to everyone from the Council tax and those services where it is considered appropriate for the user to pay.

This Council believes devolved powers and pooling of resources presents the best and most deliverable opportunity to improve services not just from local councils but, potentially across all public services, rather than expensive structural reform. We will keep abreast of opportunities under this agenda and when appropriate work up the Wycombe offer.

Our ambitions	Key workstreams
Continue to innovate and transform our services to provide them in the most efficient and accessible way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify opportunities to deliver our services in new ways • Implement Bucks-wide CCTV control room provision. • Continue green space devolution opportunities. • Deliver our open data and transparency programme to enhance the way we share information • Investigate new IT technology and software solutions, such as Office 365 to enable more efficient agile and collaborative working. <p>Outcomes: Seamless and continual provision of value for money services irrespective of the provider.</p> <p>More accessible and improved self-service options, including access to information making it easy to see how we are performing as a Council.</p>
Consider new devolution opportunities and how this could benefit public services across our district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep abreast of new opportunities under this agenda which will be of benefit to the District. <p>Outcome: Confidence that public money is being spent wisely.</p>

Our ambitions	Key workstreams
Investigate the user-pay principle for services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review services based on the user pays principle. <p>Outcome: Maintaining an appropriate balance between paying to use services and those provided by Council taxpayers.</p>
Generate new annual revenue streams for the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful delivery of our regeneration and development programme as set out in our 'place' priority earlier in this document. • Continue work to be free of central Government rate support grant funding by 2019. <p>Outcome: Greater self-sufficiency for the Council so we can plan ahead with greater certainty.</p>