

REFRESH OF OUR CORPORATE PLAN (2015-2019)

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What is the Commission being asked to do?

To assist in the refresh the Council's Corporate Plan by helping inform key focus areas to 2019. The Commission will have the opportunity to consider the draft version of the refreshed plan at its 8 November meeting and feed comments through to Cabinet to be incorporated into the final version submitted to Cabinet on the 5 February 2018.

Executive Summary

1. The Corporate Plan sets out the priorities, ambitions and high level outcomes to 2019 to meet both the challenges and opportunities facing the council. Our priorities are focussed on the 'three Ps': regeneration and infrastructure (our place priority); cohesive communities (our people priority) and value for money services (our pounds priority) which is our organisational or 'way we work' priority. The Corporate Plan is the key policy framework document for the Council and any changes made need to be approved by Full Council.
2. This is the first 'refresh' that has been carried out on the Corporate Plan since its publication in January 2016. Members of the Commission are invited to assist with the refresh process by way of a short workshop activity. This will be held as a private session prior to the open meeting.
3. The output from the refresh will be a more focussed and punchy 'plan on a page' that can be communicated in a simpler and more accessible way than the current 20 page document. The Corporate Plan will have associated strategies beneath (existing and new) and resourced work programmes to drive delivery.

Background

Our current 2015-19 Corporate Plan (approved by Council in December 2015) has been in place for 18 months. Within the 'delivering our priorities' section it is recognised that as the environment and circumstances that we work in change and new opportunities (or challenges) arise there is a need to periodically 'pause' and review the ambitions and activities. This is to ensure that we remain focussed on what is going to make the biggest difference - and can be delivered within the resources that we have.

5. Since our current Corporate Plan was written the council has seen change. Activities that were seen at that time as 'on the horizon' elevated. For example in collaboration with the other district councils in Bucks, we developed and submitted a business case to Government to modernise local government in Bucks. Although a decision from the Secretary of State is unlikely to happen soon, the enabling work streams identified, such as the digital agenda, the importance of the preventative agenda and building resilience in our communities will remain areas to address.

6. Our local plan work has progressed and we are more aware now of the scale and scope of development required for Princes Risborough. It has also been recognised that the market is very unlikely to deliver all of the homes that we need in our district – especially those that are affordable and the ambition of “help address the affordability gap by exploring innovative housing solutions” including whether the Council becomes more active in this sector has risen up the agenda. We also recognise the continuing change in our demographics with the increase of older people and the implications for the preventative agenda (including keeping people active and independent) and housing provision.
7. Our regeneration and major projects work continues apace – even with some post Brexit challenges at Handy Cross. In 2015, adopting the regeneration theme in our Corporate Plan led to the decision not to develop a new Economic Development Strategy to 2019 – our stance on this has now changed and one is in the process of development. The ambitions within this – and the proposed digital strategy need to be adequately reflected in our Corporate Plan going forward.
8. This refresh process offers an opportunity to revisit the focus of our ambitions in light of the journey we have taken since 2015 – and where we are now. It is also an opportunity to identify where we have gaps in delivery to so that these can link into this years’ budget setting process for resource allocation and have activities programmed as part of our service planning process.
9. Members of the Commission are invited this evening to assist with the refresh by way of a short workshop activity. This will be held as a private session prior to the open meeting.

Corporate and Financial Implications

10. Corporate implications will be addressed as part of the existing processes in place as the project and activity work streams 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.
11. 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.

Next Steps

12. Outputs from the discussion will be included with the feedback received from Cabinet and Officers to inform the refresh of the Council’s priorities and ambitions to 2019 and the creation of the underpinning delivery plans.
13. A draft refreshed Corporate Plan will be shared with IRC on 8 November 2017 and Cabinet on 13 November 2017. The final version to be considered by Cabinet 5 February 2018 and Council 22 February 2018 with publicity and awareness raising through March 2018 and a formal re-launch on 1 April 2018.

Background Papers

Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019:

<https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/pages/About-the-council/Council-policies/Our-corporate-plan.aspx>

Modernising Local Government Business Case:

<https://www.modernisingbucks.org/our-submission/>

Presentation: What is the Corporate Plan for?

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