

Report to: **Executive**  
Date: **22 April 2021**  
Title: **Corporate Strategy Development**  
Portfolio Area: **Council – Leader Cllr Judy Pearce**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **Upon the expiry of the Scrutiny Call-in period (5.00pm on Tuesday, 4 May 2021)**

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#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That Executive be RECOMMENDED to instruct the Chief Executive and the Director of Governance and Assurance to develop the Corporate Strategy in line with the timeline and programme set out in 4 below.**

#### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Council adopted its corporate strategy on 17 May 2018 prior to the end of the previous administration. As a result of the pandemic the context and landscape within which we now operate has fundamentally changed.
- 1.2 Whilst elements of the strategy clearly remain relevant and vitally important moving forward, the recovery and renewal planning process, which has involved extensive consultation and engagement with the wider membership, has identified new emerging challenges, priorities and opportunities.

- 1.3 At its meeting of the 17<sup>th</sup> September, the Executive resolved to ask officers to start working on the development of a new corporate strategy with a view to adoption by Full Council in May 2021 (Minute E15/20 refers).
- 1.4 Members will note that, after another extensive and prolonged lockdown period where resources have been focussed on supporting the Community, the planned May date has now been deferred to Council in July.
- 1.5 This report sets out the proposed timeline and process for developing the new corporate strategy together with the resources to support its implementation.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 In recognition of the potential wide ranging and long lasting impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, in early 2020 Members undertook to develop a Recovery and Renewal Plan.
- 2.2 The development of the plan was thorough and inclusive and included a sequence of full member workshops. In order to ensure that the whole membership was engaged with the process and had an opportunity to input, formal reports were also taken to the joint Development Management and Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 4 June 2020 (OSDM.5/20) and 3 September 2020 (OSDM.11/20) and the Executive and ultimately to full Council for adoption on 17 December 2020 (Council Minute CM 27/20 refers)
- 2.3 The development of the plan, by its very nature, identified issues that were directly and indirectly related to the impacts of the pandemic. With the ideas generated by Members covering the full range of Council activity and influence.
- 2.4 In view of this, and prior to adoption, the actions and ideas put forward by Members were collected and triaged into the most appropriate vehicle for development and/or delivery. In the majority of cases this was either the Recovery and Renewal Plan itself or the emerging Climate Change and Biodiversity or Housing Strategies. The report, and appendices, to Council on December 17<sup>th</sup> sets this process out in more detail (Council Minute CM 27/20).
- 2.5 In terms of the strategic context, the Council adopted the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) on 21 March 2019. The JLP establishes an over-arching strategic framework for sustainable growth and the management of change. It provides the statutory development plan for the three partner authorities.

- 2.6 The strategic objectives of the JLP which include meeting the need for new homes, jobs and services, will be key inputs to the new corporate strategy.
- 2.7 As well as articulating the Council's vision and ambitions for the longer-term, it is essential not only that the new strategy contains specific, measurable and time bound targets covering the short-term (next 2 years), but we put in place the skills and resources necessary to ensure these actions can be delivered.
- 2.8 Bearing this in mind a series of reports identifying one-off expenditure to fund specific actions and activities within the emerging corporate strategy have been considered and approved by Council over the past few months.
- 2.9 On 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the Council set its Revenue Budget for 2021/22. As part of the budget proposals, an amount of £500,000 was allocated for funding for the Recovery and Renewal Plan and a further £200,000 funding for the Climate Change Action Plan (Council Minute CM 37/20 refers). In addition Council on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (Minute CM 39/20 refers) also approved to allocate £500,000 under the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Scheme towards strategic economic recovery projects and priorities.
- 2.10 On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021, Council approved an investment of £598,000 to support economic recovery, the major towns and the visitor economy of the South Hams. The funding will support the national roadmap for the easing of lockdown at a local level, as detailed below:
- keeping the streets clean (£130,000)
  - enhanced on street presence (£36,000)
  - supporting business and hospitality (£57,000)
  - improving the business environment in our key towns (£275,000)
  - improving the built/natural environment to deliver local economic improvements within our smaller coastal communities and tourism centres (£100,000).
- The £598,000 will be partly funded by some of the £500,000 ARG funding earmarked for strategic economic recovery projects.
- 2.11 Over the medium to longer-term we will look to generate further efficiencies in the Council's core operating model with a view to supporting the delivery of corporate strategy actions in future years. We will also seek to align the Council's corporate strategy (what we plan to do) to the Council's medium-term financial strategy (how we plan to resource it).

### **3. Outcomes**

- 3.1 The development and adoption of a new corporate strategy will ensure that Council resources are aligned in order to secure the efficient and effective delivery of the ambition and priorities set by Members.

### **4. Proposal for Developing the new Corporate Strategy**

- 4.1 It is clear that there has been extensive and inclusive engagement with the full membership through the processes detailed above. The key inputs to the new corporate strategy have been identified and developed. The next stage is to refine the content and align the resources to confirm deliverability.
- 4.2 Appendix A sets out a broad view of the development process as a whole. Having regard to the tight timescale, it is proposed, during the 'develop strategy' phase, to hold two informal Full Member sessions (dates to be confirmed) based around broad groupings of priority areas identified through the Recovery and Renewal Planning process and existing strategies.
- 4.3 These informal sessions will be led by the Executive Member, with the support of senior officers, and will allow all members to input to the development process.
- 4.4 At this stage there is a clear rationale behind using broad groupings rather than themes or priorities which is to ensure that discussion is not limited or constrained by a preconceived framework and themes are developed through an iterative bottom-up approach.
- 4.5 The broads groupings, which may be subject to change, are:
  - Delivering high quality services for our residents – including communications, customer excellence, digitisation, enhancing our reputation and resources
  - Natural and Built Environment including parks, open spaces, public realm, marine/coastal management, countryside stewardship, AONB, heritage and planning
  - Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment
  - Supporting our local economy, tourism and marine sectors – business support, coastal productivity, connectivity (physical and digital)
  - Homes new and old, housing advice and support, preventing homelessness – as per our Housing Strategy
  - Community Well Being - cohesion, community support, leisure, S.106 supported improvements

- 4.6 The outputs of these meetings will then be used to inform consultation with key stakeholders and then to help refine the strategy itself.
- 4.7 The consultation will be developed in line with the Council's recently adopted Consultation and Engagement Strategy and include early dialogue with key partners, a series of online polls and questionnaires and briefing notes for Members to enable them to engage with their Town and Parish Councils on the development.

## 5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 The report sets out a timeline and process for development and adoption of the new Corporate Strategy in line with resolution of the Executive on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

## 6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Corporate Strategy is one of the plans and policies that comprise the Council's Policy Framework. Consequently, decisions to approve, adopt or amend the Corporate Strategy and themes are decisions of the Full Council.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.  The Council will seek to align the Council's corporate strategy (what we plan to do) to the Council's medium-term financial strategy (how we plan to resource it).
Risk		The key risk relates to the need to have an up to date corporate strategy that reflects the Council's future plans and is suitably resourced. These risks are managed through the process detailed in this report.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Supports all existing six corporate themes.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		There are no direct impacts on climate change and biodiversity however tackling these issues are considered to be central to the development of the new plan.

Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		No direct implications.
Safeguarding		No direct implications.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		No direct implications
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		No direct implications
Other implications		No direct implications

**Background Documents:**

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Corporate Strategy Development Timeline