

Report to: **Executive**

Date: **16 September 2021**

Title: **Better Lives for All – Draft Strategy**

Portfolio Area: **Leader – Councillor Judy Pearce**

Wards Affected: **All**

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

Date next steps can be taken: Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> September

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#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

##### **That the Executive:**

- 1. NOTES the results of the consultation on the draft ‘Better Lives for All’ Strategy**
- 2. RECOMMENDS to Council to adopt ‘Better Lives for All’ and the thematic delivery plans at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021**
- 3. NOTES the allocation of existing funding as set out in para 7.2; and**
- 4. RECOMMENDS to Council to approve the additional £110,000 of cost pressures for 2022/23 and 2023/24.**

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

- 1.1 At its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021, Council approved the draft strategy ‘Better Lives for All’ (Appendix A) and resolved to commence a consultation on its draft priorities and longer term vision for the district.
- 1.2 The consultation commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> July and continued for six weeks, closing on 6<sup>th</sup> September. It consisted of engagement with the public, key partners and neighbouring councils.

- 1.3 This report summarises the responses to the consultation and recommends adoption of the 'Better Lives for All' Strategy.
- 1.4 The report also sets out the resource requirements to deliver the plan (Section 7)

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council's previous corporate strategy was adopted 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.
- 2.2 In recognition of the potential wide-ranging and long lasting impacts of the pandemic, in early 2020 Members undertook to develop a Recovery and Renewal Plan.
- 2.3 The development of the Recovery and Renewal plan, by its very nature, identified issues that were directly and indirectly related to the impacts of the pandemic. The ideas generated by Members during this process covered the full range of Council activity and influence.
- 2.4 This process has enabled the Council to develop a draft vision and strategy for the South Hams, which was considered by Executive at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Following consideration, the Executive recommended that Council approve commencing consultation on the draft 'Better Lives for All' Strategy.
- 2.5 'Better Lives for All' sets out an ambitious vision for the future of the South Hams as a place and puts the wellbeing of our residents, business and our beautiful natural environment at the centre of our plan.
- 2.6 Now supported by costed, thematic delivery plans over the next three years, the plan also sets a longer-term strategic direction of travel for the next twenty years. The intention is that the strategy should be a living document, with the delivery plans kept under regular review to ensure it remains focussed on the key needs and ambitions of our community.

## **3. Outcomes**

- 3.1 The adoption of a new corporate strategy will ensure that Council resources, its service plans and the work programme of its officers are aligned in order to secure the efficient and effective delivery of the ambition and priorities set by Members.

## 4. Consultation

- 4.1 A consultation on the Better Lives for All strategy formally commenced on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021, running for six weeks to 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
- 4.2 During the consultation period, we undertook a number of different methods to ensure a wide engagement. This included:
- On-street and online surveys of residents, businesses and visitors to understand their priorities for South Hams
  - Public and partner surveys on the draft priorities and specific actions
  - A series of online polls focused on the specific actions within the plan; and
  - Conversations with key partners and neighbouring local authorities
- 4.3 The consultation was widely publicised through media, social media and newsletters to town and parish councils, businesses and key partner organisations.
- 4.4 The engagement levels for the activities are as follows:

Public and Partner survey about the Better Lives for All Strategy Document and high level priorities	69 responses
On-street and Online survey about priorities for the area	Residents – 432 responses Businesses – 139 responses Visitors – 128 responses
Online 'Quick' polls on individual priorities	1460 responses

- 4.5 On the whole, the responses indicate that the Better Lives for All Strategy has been welcomed and that the areas identified by the Council to focus on for the next three years are broadly supported.

### Public and Partner Survey

- 4.6 The public and partner survey which focused on the strategy document and high-level focus areas, received 69 responses of which 90% of respondents found the strategy easy to read and understand. Furthermore, 88.41% recognised the South Hams and challenges faced, as set out within the document.

### On Street and Online Survey about priorities for the area

- 4.7 From previous experience, we know that detailed surveys on strategies do not tend to attract a significant level of engagement and so we also ran a survey asking our residents, businesses and visitors for their own views on the South Hams and what they considered the main challenges facing the area.
- 4.8 This engagement consisted of both face-to-face surveys and an online survey which in total attracted 699 responses.
- 4.9 One of the key questions within this survey for our residents was 'What bothers you the most about living in South Hams' with each participant being able to select three options.
- 4.10 It is clear from the responses from our residents that lack of affordable housing, poor transport and low paying jobs are of concern to them. These all have a specific focus within 'Better Lives for All' and are allocated specific actions within our thematic delivery plans.

#### Businesses

- 4.11 We also asked our businesses a series of questions to understand their views and to inform our final priorities. A total of 139 businesses responded to the survey. Of those, almost 70% felt optimistic about the future of their business in the South Hams. Furthermore, around 50% commented that they had identified post pandemic opportunities for growth.
- 4.12 Among the largest areas of concern for businesses within the South Hams was the ability for businesses to hire the right people – with over a third of respondents highlighting this as a concern.

#### Feedback from partners

- 4.13 Discussions have been held with many key partners and neighbouring authorities to understand their thoughts on our key priorities.
- 4.14 Again, on the whole, partners have been supportive and agreed with the need for a longer-term vision underpinned by shorter term, specific deliverables.
- 4.15 The full responses and comments are being collated and a copy will be made available to Members. All feedback will be subject to review and help inform further iterations of the thematic delivery plans.

## **5. Thematic Delivery Plans**

- 5.1 The Strategy sets out our longer-term ambition. To support this ambition, we have developed thematic delivery plans, which set

out the priorities for each area. This will enable us to ensure our resources are aligned to supporting Members' priorities.

- 5.2 The delivery plans have been developed by Lead Members in consultation with officers from across the Council for each of the coming three years. Although it has not always been possible to detail actions beyond the first year, for example where the year one action is a feasibility or development of an action plan.
- 5.3 Wherever possible SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) targets have been developed but, as set out in 5.2 above this has not been possible in all cases, and 'proxy' measures have also been used.
- 5.5 The Executive is asked to consider the thematic delivery plans as set out in Appendix B and make any suggestions for amendment before they are considered by Council.
- 5.6 Once adopted by Council, the delivery plans will be subject to regular monitoring, annual updates and reporting through the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **6. Performance Management**

- 6.1. Alongside 'Better Lives for All', we have developed an enhanced Performance Management Framework for the Council, as set out within the thematic delivery plans.
- 6.2 The 'Better Lives for All' performance management framework sets out how the Council plans and organises its resources to achieve its vision and priorities.
- 6.3 The framework also sets out how we will monitor progress against delivering the plans and ensures that there is clear accountability and clarity on corporate performance reporting.
- 6.4 Monitoring will be through a broad bundle of measures including:
  - the timescales and measures of success set out in the thematic delivery plans
  - an updated suite of service key performance indicators (KPI's)
  - an updated suite of customer KPI's
  - A formal review process and oversight by the Executive; and
  - Thematic updates to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.5 The performance reporting will be underpinned by an updated and robust objective setting regime across the Council. All staff will have a clear understanding of their role in delivery against

'Better Lives for All' and performance against their objectives will be regularly monitored.

## 7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 The delivery of 'Better Lives for All' over the next 3 years represents a commitment of £1,371,500 delivered primarily through the refocussing and re-alignment of existing resources. The vast majority of the financial commitment, 84%, comes either from this realignment or from pre-identified funding sources including the Climate Change reserve, recovery plan funding and existing revenue budgets (such as the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) business grant scheme).
- 7.2. The content of the plans will utilise £221,500 of the Recovery Plan Earmarked Reserve of £500,000 and £46,000 of the Climate Change Earmarked Reserve of £600,000. There will also be further one-off funding of £30,000 from the Housing Earmarked Reserve (for a Housing Needs assessment) and £30,000 from the IT Earmarked Reserve (for a new website).
- 7.3 The cost pressure is £110,000 for 2022/23 and 2023/24 (a total of £220,000), which represents 16% of the total of £1,371,500.
- 7.4 The pre-identified funding sources are detailed in this paragraph for reference. Council on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (Minute reference CM37) approved an allocation of £500,000 for the Recovery and Renewal Plan and a further £200,000 allocation for the Climate Change Action Plan. In 2020/21, Council had previously approved an allocation of £400,000 for Climate Change (Minute reference CM71/19, Council 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020). In addition, Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (Minute reference CM49/20) approved funding of £598,000 for Investing in South Hams Economic Recovery.

## 8. Proposed Way Forward

- 8.1 That the Executive consider the outcome of the consultation, the final draft of 'Better Lives for All' and the thematic delivery plans, making any suggestions for amendments prior to recommending to Council for adoption.

## 9. 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 or amend the Corporate Strategy and themes are decisions for the Full Council.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	The financial commitment for delivering against the aims contained within the Better Lives for All strategy is £1,371,500 over the period 2021-2024 in total. The majority of this expenditure is from pre-identified funding sources including the Climate Change reserve, recovery plan funding and existing revenue budgets (such as the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) business grant scheme).  The cost pressures for 2022/23 and 2023/24 are envisaged to total an additional £110,000 each year if Members approve the content of the Thematic Delivery Plans for 'Better Lives for All'.
Risk	Y	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 Section 5 of this report.
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	This report proposes adoption of a new Corporate Strategy – Better Lives for All. Additionally the report sets out the thematic delivery plans, which will be monitored by Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	N	There are no direct impacts on climate change and biodiversity however tackling these issues are considered central to the development of the new plan.
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
Equality and Diversity	N	No direct implications
Safeguarding	N	No direct implications
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	No direct implications
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	No direct implications
Other implications		None

### **Supporting Information**

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – 'Better Lives for All'

Appendix 2 - Thematic Delivery Plans and Performance Management Framework

#### **Background Papers:**

None