

Report to: **Executive**  
Date: **28 June 2023**  
Title: **Setting Priorities for the New Council**  
Portfolio Area: **Cllr Julian Brazil**  
**Leader of the Council**

Wards Affected: **All**

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

Date next steps can be taken:

Author: **Andy Bates** Role: **Chief Executive**  
**Neil Hawke** **Assistant Director Strategy & Organisational Development**

Contact: [Andy.Bates@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Andy.Bates@swdevon.gov.uk)  
[Neil.Hawke@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Neil.Hawke@swdevon.gov.uk)

---

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Executive:**

- 1. Considers and approves the timeline and approach for development of the next iteration of the Council's corporate strategy;**
- 2. Works with the Senior Leadership Team and the Assistant Director of Strategy throughout the Summer to refine priorities for the next four years, with a new draft corporate strategy ready for consideration at the next meeting of the Executive on 21 September 2023; and**
- 3. Notes the intention that, following the meeting on 21 September, a period of consultation be undertaken to inform the final strategy prior to adoption by Full Council.**

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 Following the elections in May 2023 and formation of the new political administration, the Council now needs to begin developing its priorities for the next four years.

- 1.2 It is important that the Council has an adopted corporate strategy in place and that it aligns its staff, budgets and other resources to delivering the agreed priorities and ambitions of the Council in responding to the needs of our residents.
- 1.3 In parallel with the review of strategic plans and priorities, over the summer we will undertake a fundamental review of the Council's capital programme, earmarked reserves and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to ensure these are aligned to the delivery of the new administration's plans.
- 1.4 We will also ensure we take every opportunity to work with the communities and residents of the district, listening to them and putting them first in developing the strategy.
- 1.5 This report sets out an outline timeline for the development of an ambitious and inclusive strategy for South Hams that includes doing more to tackle the housing crisis, taking action to respond on climate and biodiversity while also ensuring our core and statutory council services such as waste and recycling and planning are as good as any.

## 2. Priorities of the New Council

- 2.1 The election delivered a clear mandate for the new political administration to implement its manifesto commitments.
- 2.2 To lead the development and delivery of the commitments, the Leader has appointed Executive Lead Members as follows:

<b>Executive Member</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Cllr Julian Brazil (Leader)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste and Recycling</li> <li>• Strategic Planning (including review of the Joint Local Plan)</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul>
Cllr Dan Thomas (Deputy Leader)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Corporate Performance Oversight</li> <li>• Organisational Development</li> <li>• Community Development</li> </ul>
Cllr John McKay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change and Biodiversity</li> </ul>
Cllr John Birch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development and Commercial Strategy</li> <li>• Governance</li> </ul>
Cllr Denise O'Callaghan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Environmental Health and Licensing</li> </ul>

Cllr Victor Abbott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Services and Operations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Localities</li> <li>- Car Parks</li> <li>- Toilets</li> <li>- Grounds Maintenance</li> <li>- Parks and Open Spaces</li> <li>- Play Parks and Sport Pitches</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Leisure Centres</li> </ul>
Cllr Jacqi Hodgson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste and Community Composting</li> </ul>
Cllr Nicky Hopwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service quality including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer Service and Improvement</li> <li>- IT and Digital Services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

2.3 Meetings have already taken place or are arranged with each of the Executive Lead Members with the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team to discuss their plans and priorities.

2.4 The next stage will be to agree with the Executive how and when new initiatives will be implemented, a number of which will be brought forward ahead of the revised corporate strategy being completed.

2.5 Early examples of this include:

- acting to quickly establish an Advisory Panel of external experts to shape and inform our work on climate change.
- plans to tackle poor quality rented accommodation within South Hams

2.6 These are all schemes that demonstrate the commitment of the Council to act quickly to address issues that we know are of importance to our communities.

### **3. Developing a new corporate strategy**

3.1 The Council adopted its current corporate strategy (Better Lives for All) in September 2021, setting out its priorities for the district, building on our Covid pandemic recovery plans.

3.2 The strategy was accompanied by thematic delivery plans setting out specific actions to underpin the priorities. Having clear delivery plans ensured regular reporting on progress to Members through quarterly performance management reports to the Executive and 'deep-dive' reports on individual themes by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.3 Council agreed the third-year delivery plan (for 2023/24) at its meeting on 30 March 2023 (Minute 75/22 (h)) to ensure that

officers had a clear focus for delivery while the new administration developed its priorities for the next 4 years.

- 3.4 The Council wishes to set ambitious and challenging policies to address the issues facing our communities, working towards a vision for South Hams as a place with the best environment for people and for nature and which is resilient in the face of an increasingly uncertain future.
- 3.5 This report proposes that Executive Lead Members work with the Senior Leadership Team and lead officers during the summer to consider draft priorities for the Council. It will also be an opportunity to engage with key partners and to develop outline proposals for a new Corporate Strategy for consideration by the Executive at its meeting on 21 September 2023.
- 3.6 In parallel with the review of strategic plans and priorities, over the summer we will undertake a fundamental review of the Council’s capital programme, earmarked reserves and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to ensure these are aligned to the delivery of the new administration’s plans.
- 3.7 In developing the strategy, we will ensure that we listen to our communities and enable them to be involved in all aspects of the work of the Council and the journey ahead. It is therefore proposed that following development of the draft strategy, a formal consultation is undertaken with our residents, businesses and key partners with the final strategy being adopted later in the Autumn alongside the budget setting process.
- 3.8 The proposed consultation will be the beginning of ongoing conversations with our communities and partners. Throughout the term of this Council, we will continue to seek views and listen, adapting our plans in response where required.
- 3.9 Finally, while a new corporate strategy is being developed, we will continue to report on progress against the Year 3 delivery plan adopted by Council on 30 March 2023 as well as bringing forward early actions to implement commitments from the new Administration’s manifesto.
- 3.10 A proposed timeline for the development of the Corporate Strategy is set out in detail at Appendix A.

#### 4. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	Ensuring a clearly defined strategy is in place is essential to ensuring good governance and performance within the Council, with officers

		having a clear set of priorities to deliver as set by Members.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	N	There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. In parallel with the review of strategic plans and priorities, we will undertake a fundamental review of the Council's capital programme, earmarked reserves and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to ensure these are aligned to the delivery of the new administration's plans.
Risk	Y	Without a clear and refreshed corporate strategy reflecting the ambitions of the new administration, there is a risk that those ambitions will not be delivered in a timely manner, with a resulting reputational risk.
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	This report sets out the outline for delivering a new Corporate Strategy for the Council.
Consultation & Engagement Strategy	Y	During the summer, Executive Members and Lead Officers will engage with key partners and stakeholders while developing outline proposals. The report to Executive in September will set out the approach to formal consultation on the draft strategy.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	Y	There is a clear commitment for any new corporate strategy to support direct action to address the Climate and Biodiversity crisis, with climate change being one of the key priority areas and Lead Member responsibilities
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
Equality and Diversity	N	No direct implications through this report
Safeguarding	N	
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	
Other implications	N	

## **Supporting Information**

### **Appendices:**

A – Corporate Strategy Development: Proposed Timeline

### **Background Papers:**

Council 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Minute 75/22 (h) refers)