

UPDATE FOR POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 9 JULY 2021

OPTIONS FOR NEW CORPORATE PLAN, PRIORITIES AND VALUES

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Background:

The Council's previous Corporate Plan covered the period 2016-2019. The priorities for that plan were:

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Clean and Safe Environment
- Financial Sustainability

Around the end of 2019/early 2020 when Cllr Harvey was still Leader, he indicated that he wanted to keep the above priorities. Work was therefore undertaken to start drafting an updated plan with some slight amendments to these priorities to cover some of the new challenges we faced since the previous plan was published, e.g. it was proposed that:

- a. The Clean and Safe Environment priority should be adapted to become 'Clean, Safe and Sustainable Environment', to take account the increased emphasis on tackling climate change.
- b. The 'Financial Sustainability' priority should be adapted to 'Investing in our Future', to reflect both the importance of our investments to deliver sustainable income streams and the need to invest in our staff and future service delivery.

DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED NEW PRIORITIES

The previous administration under Cllr Boughtflower came into being in the midst of COVID, which meant that work on development of a new Corporate Plan had to be put on hold whilst the Council focused on the enormous task of responding to the pandemic. Work was subsequently undertaken on developing a number of emerging ideas for a new set of priorities for the Council, working with IESE (previously Improvement and Efficiency South-East). These were based around a number of key themes: The Borough's recovery from the effects of the pandemic, the need for more affordable housing, the need to tackle climate change, and an overriding desire to make sure that our communities were at the heart of everything we do.

These were developed into the **CARE** priorities outlined below, which were announced by the previous administration and included in the Council Tax leaflet in March 2021. These are also due to be published in the next Borough Bulletin:

Community
Affordable Housing
Recovery
Environment (Climate Change)



DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED NEW VALUES

The work with IESE also included a discussion around options for a new set of corporate values for the Council to replace the previous ASCOT values. IESE highlighted how the best performing public and private sector organisations have a clear set of values and behaviours and how these could assist in defining who we are and the underlying context to the way we do our work. Using the options discussed, it was proposed to base the Council's new values around a relevant acronym '**PROVIDE**'. In so doing it was felt that this would potentially fit well with the CARE priorities (as a Council we CARE and PROVIDE) and that this would assist in the process of embedding these with staff and Councillors. The proposed values were therefore proposed to be:

Pride in our Council, communities and borough
Responsive and flexible
Open and accountable
Value for money
Integrity
Dependable
Empowering

Although the above priorities and values were announced by the previous administration, it was not possible to formally adopt these through a new Corporate Plan, approved by Full Council, before the introduction of the new Committee system. With the Council now in COVID recovery mode, there is a need to progress the development of the new Corporate Plan, priorities and values. We are therefore seeking guidance from the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee as to how Members wish to take this forward.

OPTIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

In developing a new Corporate Plan there are a number of options which could be considered by the Committee in relation to the proposed priorities and values. Assuming the Committee agrees that it is important to have some clearly defined Council corporate values, in addition to the priorities under a new Corporate Plan, Members could:

- i. Continue with development/implementation of the proposed CARE priorities and PROVIDE values.
- ii. Modify the CARE priorities and/or PROVIDE values to include any areas that the Committee feels are not adequately covered.
- iii. Develop an entirely new set of priorities and/or values.
- iv. Implement an alternative approach.

Following some initial discussions with Councillor Nichols it has been suggested that one aspect lacking from the proposed CARE priorities is any mention of the importance of service delivery to our residents and businesses. If the Committee were minded to modify the proposed CARE priorities this could therefore be added as a fifth priority. In considering the above options there are some additional matters to consider:

- **The lifespan of the new Plan** – Our previous Corporate Plans have generally each covered a 3-year period. However, the next Borough elections will be held in May 2023, under two years away. By the time any new plan is drafted and goes through the Committee and Full Council approval process, this may therefore only have around 18 months to run before any new post-election administration is formed. In view of this shorter lifespan, it is important to progress the development and implementation of a new Plan in a timely manner in order to be able to make meaningful progress on actions to deliver the Council's new priorities.
- **Continuing threat of COVID** – The effects of COVID-19 are likely to be around for many months to come. The Council is still having to undertake a significant volume of additional work helping to prevent the spread of the virus and implementing a comprehensive Recovery Plan, whilst some services also face a significant backlog of their core work. Capacity to deliver any additional priorities will therefore remain stretched throughout this period.
- **The number of priorities** – It is important to limit the number of priorities to a manageable number which can be given sufficient focus to deliver tangible results over the life of the Plan. Up to a maximum of 5 priorities would normally be sufficient (fewer if possible). Priorities can always be changed to reflect a new problem/threat. The COVID pandemic was a perfect example of this.

The Committee are therefore asked for their views on:

1. How Members wish to progress with the development of the proposed priorities and values.
2. How Members wish to work with officers on the development of a new Corporate Plan.