

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee



27 November 2023

Title	Corporate Plan 2024-28
Purpose of the report	To make a recommendation to Council
Report Author	Lee O'Neil, Deputy Chief Executive Jennifer Medcraff, Head of Communications & Customer Experience
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	
Corporate Priority	This report outlines the proposed updated priorities for the Council
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Recommend that Council adopts the proposed Outline Corporate Plan for 2024-28 (as appended to this report) which specifies the priorities, key themes and values for the Council for the next five years.
Reason for Recommendation	The Corporate Plan is a key policy document which outlines the proposed strategic priorities for the Council for the period of the Plan, and the values the Council will abide by in conducting its activities.

1. Summary

1.1 This report outlines a proposed Outline Corporate Plan for the Council for 2024-28, specifying the proposed priorities, key themes and values for the Council for the next five years.

2. Key issues

2.1 The purpose of this report is for the Committee to agree an Outline Corporate Plan for 2024-28 ('the Outline Plan') specifying the updated priorities, the key themes under each priority area and our values, and to recommend its adoption by Council.

2.2 Spelthorne's previous Corporate Plan covered the period 2021-23. Following election of a new Council in May 2023, with a new Leader, the administration has been discussing and formulating its ideas for a refreshed set of priorities based around the previous CARES acronym. Officers have been working with the administration Group Leaders throughout that period, including a Group Leaders/senior managers group session, to develop those ideas into an Outline Corporate Plan.

2.3 Progress with this work was discussed with the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge Team during their revisit on 16 November 2023 and a number of further iterations of the Outline Plan made to take into account the feedback received.

Priorities

2.4 The proposed Outline Plan in **Appendix 1** of this report specifies five priorities which are areas where the Council will target some of its resources during the term of the Plan. Some changes have been made from the 2021 - 2023 set of priorities: the previous 'Affordable housing' priority has been amended to 'Addressing housing need' reflecting our new approach to housing delivery, how we can work with partners and how we can best support residents to live independently in their own homes. The 'Recovery' priority has been changed to 'Resilience' and incorporates the financial resilience of the Council, the economic resilience of the Borough and ensuring our preparedness for the effects of climate change. Finally, 'Service Delivery' has been amended to 'Services' with an emphasis on community focused and accessible services. The proposed updated priorities are therefore:

- **Community**
- **Addressing housing need**
- **Resilience**
- **Environment**
- **Services**

2.5 The Outline Plan outlines the key themes for each priority, with some sub-themes under each of those areas, outlining what the Council is planning to deliver under each priority.

2.6 The Council, like most local authorities across the country, faces a particularly challenging budget setting process for the next few years due to a combination of factors including inflationary pressures and the cost-of-living crisis. Officers have therefore been working with the administration on separately mapping out the detail behind each of the priority themes (together with some suggested measures of success) which will be finalised in parallel with the budget setting process. The administration is taking this measured approach to ensure that the Council does not commit to actions that cannot be funded and to enable budgets to be adapted where there is some flexibility to align with the priority areas. It is proposed that this additional detail will be presented in a detailed version of the Corporate Plan (the 'Detailed Plan') at Council in February when the budget for 2024/25 is set. This Detailed Plan will also specify a range of short, medium and longer term objectives over its term.

2.7 In view of the ongoing challenges all local authorities are likely to face over the coming years, the Council's priorities and actions under them may need to be adapted to take account of the changing environment and economic circumstances in which the Council operates, as well as the changing needs of Spelthorne's communities. It is therefore proposed to undertake an annual review of progress with the Detailed Plan at the same time as the Council's Annual Report is produced.

Values

2.8 The Outline Plan also proposes a slightly amended set of values, which outline to our staff, Councillors and external stakeholders how the Council intends to undertake its functions and activities. Two changes have been made: the previous 'Empowering communities' value has been amended to 'Empowering and inclusive' and 'Responsive and flexible' has been amended to 'Responsive and respectful'. The proposed updated values are therefore:

- **Pride** in our Council, communities and Borough
- **Responsive** and respectful
- **Open** and accountable
- **Value** for money
- **Integrity**
- **Dependable**
- **Empowering** and inclusive

3. Options analysis and proposal

3.1 It is proposed that the Committee agree the Outline Corporate Plan for 2024-28, including the priorities, key themes and values as appended to this report and recommend its adoption by Council (**Preferred Option**).

3.2 The Committee could, however, recommend that changes be made to the Outline Plan. Should this be the case and any significant changes be required, the adoption of the Plan by Council may need to be deferred until the new year to enable these changes to be made.

4. Financial management comments

4.1 The Corporate Plan outlines the priority areas where some of Spelthorne's resources will be targeted to achieve the key actions listed. These priorities are therefore closely linked to the Council's future budget planning process.

5. Risk management comments

5.1 There is a risk that the Council may not be able to deliver all the desired outcomes specified in any new Corporate Plan due to budgetary and resourcing pressures. This risk will be minimised by taking a staged approach in developing the Detailed Plan, first setting out what the administration stands for in terms of its priorities and key themes under each of these, and then developing the proposed actions under each priority in parallel with the budget setting process.

5.2 Progress with the new Corporate Plan will be monitored and reported to this Committee on an annual basis and this can then be adapted as necessary to ensure that the Plan remains relevant to the changing environment and financial pressures that the Council operates in.

6. Procurement comments

6.1 There are none.

7. Legal comments

7.1 There are none.

8. Other considerations

- 8.1 The Council's new priorities will be used to inform the individual and team objectives for staff through the appraisal and service planning process, and the values outline the desired behaviours for officers and Councillors in undertaking their roles.

9. Equality and Diversity

- 9.1 The proposed Outline Plan outlines how the Council will ensure that we continue to deliver services that cater for all sections of our communities, how we will ensure that individuals and sections of the community are not excluded, and how we will support those most in need.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 10.1 One of the priorities outlined in the Plan is 'Environment'. The Plan will outline Spelthorne's own journey to Net Zero 2030 and the actions the Council will take to protect and enhance the wider borough environment.

11. Timetable for implementation

- 11.1 If agreed by Committee, the Outline Plan will be presented to Full Council on 14 December 2023 for adoption.
- 11.2 If adopted by Council, the Outline Plan will be used to formulate the Detailed Plan in parallel with the budget setting process and this will then be recommended for adoption at the February 2024 Council.
- 11.3 Progress with the Detailed Plan would then be reported on an annual basis when the Annual Report is published.

12. Contact

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Background papers:

There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Proposed Outline Corporate Plan for 2024-28