

Key Decision: N

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Date of Meeting: 10 November 2020

Report Title: Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan Consultation

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Jill Rhodes, Public Health and Corporate Services

Senior Officer: Jane Burns, Executive Director of Corporate Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The Corporate Plan is a key strategic document for the Council, setting the vision and objectives for the whole organisation. It is a vital part of the Council's performance management framework.
- 1.2. The draft 2020-2024 Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan has been developed by the Cabinet for wider consultation and engagement. The consultation draft is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3. Cheshire East Council has always been committed to listening to local people in shaping their area and the services they receive. Prior to finalising and adopting a new corporate plan, we are keen to seek the views of our residents, elected members, partners, staff and stakeholders.
- 1.4. A formal public consultation was launched on 1 October 2020 and will run for 8 weeks closing on 27 November. In light of COVID-19 restrictions that are in place, consultation activities will be primarily focussed on digital methods supported by the launch of a new 'engagement hub' as outlined in section 5 of this report.
- 1.5. There is a strong commitment for this consultation exercise to be robust and meaningful. All feedback received will be reviewed and considered, with any amendments and changes made as required. A final version of the Corporate Plan will be presented to Cabinet and then full Council in February 2021 for their approval, alongside the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1** Note the content of this report, including the timeline and activities to be undertaken as part of a public consultation on the Council's draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024.
- 2.2** Note the content of Appendix 1.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1.** The draft Corporate Plan will drive and inform the Council's business over the next four years; therefore, it is important that robust consultation and engagement is carried out.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1** There is no obligation for the Council to either to either produce a Corporate Plan or undertake a consultation exercise on it. However, it is good practice to do so. Openness is a key part of the Council's new vision. As a listening organisation, we wish to receive feedback on this important strategic document, as it will drive all Council activity over the next four years.

5. Background

- 1.6.** In April 2020, the Council's Corporate Plan expired, and whilst work was well underway to produce a new one, it was agreed that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the public consultation would be paused.
- 1.7.** Over the last few months, Cabinet members have taken the opportunity to reflect and refine the priorities for the organisation considering the impact of COVID-19.
- 1.8.** On the 1 October an eight-week public consultation was launched on the draft Corporate Plan.
- 1.9.** The primary aims of the consultation on the draft Corporate Plan are:
 - To present the draft vision, aims and priorities and seek views on whether these are the right ones and whether anything is missing.
 - To explore what these mean to residents, partners and stakeholders, Members and staff and what action would they like to see.
 - To provide early insight into activities and initiatives that the Council may undertake over the next four years.
 - To signal a desire for a longer-term conversation across the delivery of the Corporate Plan, linking into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and budget setting.

- 1.10. Given COVID-19 restrictions, the consultation exercise will primarily be through digital methods, and will be promoted internally and externally, supported by a detailed communications strategy.
- 1.11. Resident consultation activities will utilise our 1600 digital influence panel members, an 'engagement hub', survey, and email drop box. There will be hard copies available within local libraries which will include a hard copy survey.
- 1.12. The approach to consultation with partners and stakeholders will include; virtual meetings and presentations, survey, email drop box and the engagement hub.
- 1.13. The approach to consultation with our staff will include utilising the role of our Workforce Champions and an engagement toolkit.
- 1.14. The approach to consultation with Elected Members will include briefings and surveys.
- 1.15. The consultation closes on the 27 November, after which all feedback will be analysed and considered in terms of producing a final version for consideration by both Cabinet and Council in February 2021

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

6.1.1 The consultation on the draft Corporate Plan is not a statutory requirement but is good practice and something we would wish to do.

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1 Funding for a programme of consultation and engagement activity to support the finalisation of the Corporate Plan and Council priorities for 2020 – 2024 will be met from the existing Business Change service budget.

6.2.2 Priorities and activities proposed in the draft Corporate Plan may have financial implications. These will be considered on a case by case basis and as part of the annual budget setting cycle and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1 The draft Corporate Plan will drive and inform Council policy and priorities for service delivery. The priorities and actions listed may have direct policy implications will be considered on a case by case basis.

6.4. Equality Implications

- 6.4.1** An equality impact assessment has been completed for the consultation on the draft Corporate Plan and will be regularly reviewed as we monitor the response rates and feedback received. tackling equality is one of the key objectives in the draft Corporate Plan.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1** We are undertaking engagement with staff on the draft Corporate Plan. Delivery of consultation and engagement activity will be delivered within the existing resources of the Business Change service.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1** There is a risk to the council that a lack of engagement and insight from residents, will increase the risk of challenge to decision making. Efforts should be made to seek feedback from residents and customers in finalising the Corporate Plan and when undertaking activity to support the Council's priorities.
- 6.6.2** Valuable insight can be obtained from residents and customers, which can be used to not only inform the priority setting process but also to evaluate and measure the success of council priorities and strategic activity.
- 6.6.3** A detailed communications and consultation and engagement plan has been developed including pre and post activity narrative and publication.

1.1. Rural Communities Implications

- 6.7.1** The draft Corporate Plan, along with the 'Green' aim and supporting priorities will have direct and indirect implications for our rural communities across Cheshire East. These impacts will be considered and reported through individual work programmes as they are developed.

1.2. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

- 6.8.1** The draft Corporate Plan, along with the 'Fair' aim and supporting priorities will have direct and indirect implications for children and young people and cared for children which will be considered individually and in line with the actions required. These impacts will be considered and reported through individual work programmes as they are developed.

1.3. Public Health Implications

6.9.1 The draft Corporate Plan, along with the 'Fair' aim and supporting priorities will have direct and indirect implications for public health which will be considered individually and in line with the actions required. These impacts will be considered and reported through individual work programmes as they are developed.

1.4. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1 The draft Corporate Plan has a very strong environmental thread throughout with a specific aim for the Council to be 'Greener'.

6.10.2 A number of priorities and activities are listed which will support the Council's commitment of being carbon neutral by 2025, including the delivery of an Environmental Strategy and a Carbon Action Plan.

2. Ward Members Affected

7.1 All wards and all members will be affected and impacted by the content of the draft Corporate Plan and the feedback received throughout the consultation. Elected members have been invited to briefings on the draft Corporate Plan.

3. Consultation & Engagement

3.1. A consultation and engagement plan has been prepared, this clearly outlines the range of activities and provides the opportunity to log the level of reach and feedback received.

8.2 Response levels are monitored on a week by week basis, this provides opportunity for tailored communications and promotion to under-represented groups.

4. Access to Information

4.1. The draft Corporate Plan can be found in Appendix 1.

5. Contact Information

5.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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