

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

11 July 2023

Developing a New Corporate Plan

Report of: Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive

Report Reference No: CP/14/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed process and timescale for development of a new strategic plan for Cheshire East Council. The Council's current Corporate Plan ends in 2024/25 and therefore there is need to commence the consultation and engagement activities to inform a refreshed plan during 2023/24.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Corporate Plan is the council's overarching strategic document. The current plan was approved in February 2021 and covers the period April 2021 to March 2025. Consultation and engagement on a new plan therefore needs to take place in 2023/24, in order that there are no gaps in strategic direction and the council can drive forward.
- 3 The new plan aims to be challenging but deliverable within available resources. The plan aims to reflect manifesto commitments made to the electorate to ensure that they are delivered and should be identifiable as relating specifically to Cheshire East. The plan should be co-created in line with the council's approved consultation and engagement toolkit. A performance management framework will be developed alongside the plan to ensure that results can be measured, and successful implementation can be reviewed and evidenced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the proposed process for the development of the new Corporate Plan
2. Approve the outline development timescale
3. Agree to receive the draft Corporate Plan on 8 February 2024

Background

- 4 The Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan is the council's overarching strategic document, setting out the vision and priorities for the council. The current plan was approved in February 2021 and covers the period April 2021 to March 2025. By prioritising a clear set of commitments and actions, the Corporate Plan helps residents to hold the council to account for its performance and allows all to see where the council strives to improve.
- 5 The Corporate Plan is the "umbrella" strategy that sits above all other strategies and plans. All strategies that the council produce should link to, and support the achievement of, the Corporate Plan. All members of the council workforce should be able to see the "golden thread" of their day-to-day activities contributing to the achievement and success of the corporate plan.
- 6 The current Corporate Plan has a short vision statement, "an open, fairer, greener Cheshire East", three strategic priorities and 20 priorities. It supports the cultural values of the council through the "FIRST" values: we are flexible, we innovate, we take responsibility, we deliver the service that customers need, and we use effective teamwork.
- 7 The current Corporate Plan was developed in an unusual operating period for Cheshire East Council, when the council was still responding to the coronavirus pandemic and there had been a fluctuation in senior managers. This meant that the development of the plan had limited consultation and engagement, which has meant that both internal and external stakeholders have not been as familiar with the aims and aspirations of the plan. Over the past 18 months a performance management framework has been put in place to report against the achievement of the outcomes of the plan. This has supported officers

and members to become more familiar with the details of the priorities within the plan and activities being undertaken to achieve the plan.

- 8 The new Corporate plan is proposed to be developed to meet the following design criteria: to be challenging but achievable, to reflect manifesto commitments to ensure that they are delivered to the electorate, to be co-created by a diverse range of stakeholders including members, officers, residents, and partners, to be recognisable as uniquely Cheshire East and to have an outcomes framework that will allow measurement of results and review of success.
- 9 The new Corporate plan will be developed over three phases, detailed in the following table:

Phase	Title	Dates	Aims
1	Visioning and Pre-Consultation	15 June – 14 July 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop the vision and mission statement To confirm the timeframe of the new plan To confirm the scope of the new plan To understand the latest data and intelligence to form evidence-based priorities To confirm the priority themes To agree the consultation and engagement process
2	Consultation and Engagement	24 July – 27 October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure co production of the plan To ensure that the plan is uniquely Cheshire East
3	Post-Consultation and draft Plan agreement	20 November 2023 – 21 February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop the plan in line with the outcomes of the Consultation and Engagement programme To agree the wording of the priorities and content of the plan To agree the performance management framework To agree the launch of the Plan

Consultation and Engagement

- 10 Consultation and engagement will be conducted in accordance with the council’s best practice toolkit and will take place from the 24 July – 27 October 2023.
- 11 Findings from consultation and engagement activity will then used to develop the draft new Corporate Plan.

- 12 The proposed consultation and engagement activity will be conducted with both internal (members and officers) and external stakeholders.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 13 The recommendations have been made in order to ensure that a new Corporate plan can be co-produced in a timely and proactive manner. This supports the current Corporate Plan strategic objective of openness.

Other Options Considered

- 14 The other option is to roll over the current Corporate Plan and extend its timeframe. This option was discounted as the operating context of the council is significantly different to the environment in 2020/21 when the current plan was produced. The council is always looking forward and considering new policies, innovations and priorities and therefore a refresh of the Corporate plan offers opportunities to create new priorities and set out new actions.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 15 The new Corporate Plan will be produced in accordance with legislative requirements and will be ultimately subject to approval by Full Council.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 16 There is a budget to support the surveying and engagement of residents to support the development of the Corporate Plan. The total available budget is £20,000. This budget sits within the Policy and Change department.

The consultation and engagement activity will also support the development of proposals to achieve a balanced budget within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

This section should be drafted by the report author and reviewed and signed-off by a senior member of the Finance Team.

Policy

- 17 The development of a new Corporate Plan supports the policy framework cited within the Council's constitution. It also supports the current Corporate Plan, particularly in relation to the "Open" strategic theme and the priority to "listen, learn and respond to residents".

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 18 The process to develop a new Corporate Plan will ensure that it is as accessible as possible. This will include consideration of different channels and methods of consultation and engagement. The process will also have due regard to ensuring that our diverse communities can support the co creation of the plan. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed alongside the new Corporate Plan.

Human Resources

- 19 The workforce will be engaged within the development of the new Corporate Plan using the existing staff engagement networks.

Risk Management

- 20 No risk management implications have been identified at this stage.

Rural Communities

- 21 The process will ensure that it is accessible to those living in rural communities to ensure that their views are taken into account in developing the new Plan.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 22 Children and Young Peoples groups, and representatives of children and young people will be included as stakeholders in the co creation of the new Corporate Plan.

Public Health

- 23 The process of developing the new Corporate Plan will ensure that public health priorities are supported and reflected in the plan. The plan will have due regard to the Marmot principles and the priority to reduce health inequalities across Cheshire East.

Climate Change

- 24 The new Corporate plan will be developed to reflect local priorities across Cheshire East, including supporting the council to reduce its carbon footprint and achieve environmental sustainability by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Access to Information

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Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Developing a new Corporate Plan powerpoint presentation
Background Papers:	Not applicable