

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Council

Date: 10 October 2013

Report of: Director of Community

Subject: ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY 2011-2017

SUMMARY

The Corporate Strategy provides a clear focus on the most important issues that need to be addressed for 2011 – 2017. This annual review is an opportunity to consider progress being made in delivering the corporate priorities and to assess the impact of any other influences on the Council's services and initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council accept the amendments to the strategy document, as set out in paragraph 44 of this report, along with any other amendments arising from the review.

INTRODUCTION

1. As per the Council's performance framework the Executive has undertaken an annual review of the corporate vision and priorities. The purpose of the review is to confirm future priorities and update the wording where necessary. The outcome of the review influences the budgets and local service agreements for the next financial year.
2. This is the second review of the Corporate Strategy 2011 - 2017, which was adopted by the Council on 23 June 2011. A copy is attached as Appendix A.
3. The proposed wording needs to be approved by the Council, because the Corporate Strategy comes within the Council's policy framework under the Constitution.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Progress in delivering corporate priorities

4. The Strategy contains a number of priorities for improvement for each of the Corporate Priorities. Progress on these items is listed below:

Affecting all Priorities

5. A draft plan for Welborne, the New Community North of Fareham, has been published, accompanied by an outline plan for funding infrastructure.

Protect and Enhance the Environment

6. The Council has let a four year contract to provide and service textile and clothing recycling banks on Council land to the European Recycling Company Ltd. Fifteen new sites have been added, making it more convenient for residents to recycle. This will help divert some of the 750 tonnes of clothing that is currently placed in domestic waste bins. The vast majority of the proceeds from the sale of the recycled material will go to the charities that previously had banks on Council sites, and into the Council's community fund.
7. Solar panels have been installed on a number of Council properties, including the Depot.
8. The Council has been rated as a top performer in assisting 1,080 homes to benefit from the Hampshire Area Insulation Scheme.

Maintain and Extend Prosperity

9. Outline planning consent has been granted for the Solent Enterprise Zone at Daedalus. A framework of Business Rates has also been agreed and jointly implemented with Gosport Borough Council for this area.
10. The Council is working with retailers to develop a short-term action plan for Fareham town centre.
11. The Fareham Town Centre Parking Strategy has been updated following a fundamental review of parking arrangements in the Borough.
12. The Council has consulted on options to improve the district centre at Locks Heath.

A Safe and Healthy Place to Live and Work

13. A new Executive Portfolio for Health and Housing has been introduced with responsibility for Health and Wellbeing. As part of this the Executive Member for Health and Housing has been appointed to join the Governing Board of the Fareham and Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group.
14. Recorded crime in Fareham has reduced by 34% in the last five years and 14% in the last year.
15. The Community Safety Partnership has been ranked as the third best within Hampshire.
16. The Council has worked with a number of partners to respond to the flooding in Wallington as well as the other severe weather experienced over the past year.

Leisure for Health and Fun

17. Outline planning consent has been granted for the Coldeast site and the land transfer required for the swimming pool and cemetery is expected to be completed imminently.
18. The Council has delivered a new community centre for Portchester and a new sports pavilion at Wicor Recreation Ground.
19. Four playing fields have been recognised under the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge and the Jubilee Play Area was opened in West Street Fareham.

A Balanced Housing Market

20. Planning permission and funding have been secured to demolish and replace the sheltered housing scheme at Collingwood House.
21. 77 new affordable homes have been delivered within the Borough during the 2012/13 financial year.

Strong and Inclusive Communities

22. The Fareham Park Steering Group has been established to tackle the underlying causes of deprivation in this area.
23. Fareham Community Savers, a local Credit Union, has been established.
24. The Council has provided an extra £30,000 of funding to Fareham Citizens Advice Bureau to provide additional money advice.
25. A new website for the Council was launched on 28th January.
26. The Council has awarded approximately £55,600 in Community Grants.
27. The Council designed and implemented a new, local, council tax support scheme, providing around £500,000 of financial assistance to those in need.

Dynamic, Prudent and Progressive Council

28. The Council's proportion of Council Tax has been frozen for the fifth consecutive year. Fareham's Council Tax is the 6th lowest out of the 201 district councils.
29. The Council maintained its council tax collection rate at one of the best in England (98.9%).
30. The cumulative savings made by the Council since 2010 have now reached £3,000,000. In line with this work, the way the Council manages sickness absence has been recognised by the Department of Communities and Local Government, in its document "50 ways to save" and the Audit Commission's document "Work in progress – Meeting local needs with lower workforce costs".
31. A new approach to acquiring commercial property has been agreed to improve returns on investments and help minimise council tax increases.
32. In March 2012, the Health and Safety Executive carried out an audit of the Council's refuse and recycling services. Their report recognised the very high standard of control and monitoring that are in place and indicated that they're among the best in the sector.
33. In 2012 the Council joined the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership, which is now preparing coastal strategies for the Fareham Borough.
34. The Fareham and Gosport Environmental Health Partnership has been established and builds upon the existing partnership working between the two Councils through the Building Control Partnership and the Fareham and Gosport CCTV Partnership.
35. The average speed of processing benefit applications improved by 25% reducing to 5.6 days, as compared to last year.
36. The shared legal service with Southampton City Council is now entering its third year, having started in April 2011. The provision of services has continued to evolve providing the Council with a comprehensive range of legal services to ensure that the Council makes the best use of resources available.

Any matters arising from reviews and/or inspections 2011 Census

37. The 2011 Census data released by the Office for National Statistics shows that total population of Fareham as 111,600. The 2011 data is the most up to date information that is available.

Annual Audit

38. The Audit Commission's annual audit and inspection letter and annual governance report provide an overall assessment of the Council. Both documents cover the Council's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2012.
39. The Council was found to have a sound culture of financial governance in place and a track record of delivering savings. The Council is considered to have a stable financial position for the foreseeable future.

40. There are a number of challenges facing the Council. These include:

- (a) The level of funding available due to the local government resource review
- (b) The self-financing of the Housing Revenue Account and managing the debt incurred as part of the settlement sum required by the Department for Communities and Local Government
- (c) Delivery of the savings set out in the Council's financial strategy

41. The assessment for the 2012/13 financial year, produced by the Council's external auditors Ernst and Young, is expected to be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in September 2013.

Any matters arising from consultation with local residents, partners or interest bodies

42. The Residents' Survey is carried out bi-annually with the next one scheduled to take place in October 2013. Any matters arising from the survey will be covered in next year's report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

43. The financial implications of delivering the Council's priorities have been recognised within the budget planning process. Any significant changes to the Corporate Strategy 2011 – 2017 will need a financial appraisal to identify resources.

PROPOSALS

44. Overall, the Corporate Strategy remains on track and it is proposed that the Council approves the following minor changes to the Corporate Strategy document (Appendix A of this report refers):

- (a) Amend the second paragraph to reflect that the strategy has been adopted:
"The Corporate strategy was adopted in 2011 and carefully considers what residents, service users, partners and others say is important to them. We have looked at our performance and service delivery to see how it compares with other similar Councils." (Corporate Strategy 2011- 2017, page 2)
- (b) Update references to the new community north of Fareham to refer to Welborne (Profile of Fareham, Our Priorities and Our Priorities for Improvement, pages 3, 6 and 8)
- (c) Amend the number of homes that will be built in Welborne from 7,000 to 6,500 (Profile of Fareham, page 3).
- (d) Amend priority 4 to:
"Work with the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership and landowners to deliver a thriving aviation-led employment area at the Solent Enterprise Zone at Daedalus, which is supported by a viable airfield." (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 8)

- (e) Update the numbering of priorities 5 and 5a to 5a and 5b for consistency (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 8).
- (f) Update priority 8 to refer to the Western Wards to reflect the Council's plans (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 8)
- (g) Update priority 9 to reflect the next objective, following the completion of the Portchester Community Centre:

"Implement the findings of our review of community centres and sports pavilions and modernise buildings as appropriate giving priority to Fareham Town." (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 9)
- (h) Update priority 12 to include a specific objective:

"Modernise and improve sheltered accommodation across the Borough, including the replacement of Collingwood House as a priority." (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 9)
- (i) Amend priority 13 to:

"Improve the wellbeing of people living in the Fareham Park area." (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 9)
- (j) Delete the reference to the Local Development Framework and substitute with the Local Plan (Strategic Framework, pages 10 and 12).

RISK ASSESSMENT

45. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report

CONCLUSION

46. This report is a key stage in the Council's performance management framework. The Council is invited to report the Corporate Strategy 2011-2017 so that the Council's priorities can be reflected in the budgets and local service agreements for the next financial year.

Appendix A: Corporate Strategy 2011 - 2017

Background Papers:

Annual Audit Letter 2011/12, Audit Commission, 27 September 2012

Annual governance report, Audit Commission, September 2012

Reference Papers:

None

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Christopher Cotmore (Ext 4552).