

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 01 November 2021

Portfolio:	Policy and Resources
Subject:	Annual Review of the Corporate Strategy 2017-2023 and Local Service Agreements 2020-2021
Report of:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Priorities:	All Corporate Objectives Apply

Purpose:

The Council's performance management framework requires the Executive to undertake an annual review of the corporate vision and priorities. The purpose is to confirm future priorities, update the wording where necessary and to provide an overview of the Council's performance for the 2020/21 financial year. The outcome of the Corporate Strategy review will influence budgets and local service agreements for the next financial year.

Executive summary:

The Corporate Strategy provides a clear focus on the most important issues that need to be addressed for the 2017-2023 period. This annual review is an opportunity to consider progress made in delivering corporate priorities and to assess the impact of any other influences on the Council's services and initiatives.

The Council's strategic framework includes Local Service Agreements to provide details of actions delivered by individual services. Local Service Agreements provide an overview of how the Council is performing alongside the Corporate Strategy. This annual review is an opportunity to consider how well the Council is, as a whole, performing, as well as in key service areas.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) agrees the amendments to the strategy document, as set out in paragraph 16 of this report;
- (b) recommends the Annual Review of the Corporate Strategy to Council for approval, subject to any further amendments; and
- (c) notes the Council's performance for the 2020/21 financial year.

Reason:

To meet the requirements of the Council's performance management framework and to provide details of Fareham Borough Council's performance for the 2020/21 financial year.

Cost of proposals:

The financial implications of amending any of the Council's priorities would need to be calculated and reflected in the Council's medium-term financial strategy.

Appendices:

A: Corporate Strategy 2017-2023

B: Local Service Agreements April 2020-March 2021

Background papers: None

Referent papers: None

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BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	01 November 2021
Subject:	Annual Review of the Corporate Strategy 2017-2023 and Local Service Agreements 2020-2021
Briefing by:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Portfolio:	Policy and Resources

INTRODUCTION

1. The Council's performance management framework requires the Executive to undertake an annual review of the corporate vision and priorities. The purpose is to confirm future priorities and update the wording where necessary. The outcome of the review will influence the budgets and local service agreements for the next financial year.
2. This is the fourth review of the Corporate Strategy 2017-23, which was adopted by the Council on 14 December 2017. A copy of the current document is attached as Appendix A.
3. Any proposed changes to the wording will need to be approved by the Council, because the Corporate Strategy falls within the Council's policy framework under the Constitution.
4. The Council's strategic framework includes Local Service Agreements to provide details of the actions delivered by individual services. The Local Service Agreements provide an overview of how the Council is performing alongside the Corporate Strategy. This report is the eighth update since the Local Service Agreements were implemented in 2012 (Local Service Agreements review did not take place for the 2019-20 year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic).
5. A copy of the Local Service Agreements document updated with the details for the 2020/21 financial year is attached as Appendix B.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY 2017-2023

6. The Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's priorities for the next few years, from 2017 to 2023, and shows how we have planned to ensure Fareham remains a prosperous, safe and attractive place to live and work.
7. The Strategy contains a number of Corporate Priorities for improvement. Progress on

each priority is listed below:

Providing Housing Choices

- Planning permission was granted in Spring 2020 to deliver a new sheltered housing scheme at Station Road, Portchester. The scheme will comprise of sixteen apartments and will be age restricted to those over 55 years of age.
- Council approved the Publication Local Plan in October 2020, which was followed by a six-week public consultation, held virtually for the first time as Government restrictions prevented public meetings. This updated version of the Local Plan had significantly fewer homes allocated across the Borough than previous versions, following a reduction in the minimum number of homes that Fareham was required to deliver.
- Since the Local Plan consultation in November 2021, Government guidance unfortunately changed again, and Fareham is now required to deliver 541 new homes per year. A consultation on the Revised Publication Plan version of the Local Plan was therefore scheduled to take place in Summer 2021.
- In April of last year, and in accordance with Government guidelines, all known rough sleepers in Fareham were moved into fully equipped self-catering accommodation to keep them safe and socially distanced during the coronavirus pandemic. Residents were asked to inform the Council of the whereabouts of any rough sleepers not known to us, to enable them to also be accommodated.
- Construction was completed on five new properties at Oak Tree Close, Park Gate in Summer 2020. The two three-bedroom properties are being provided at the most affordable Social Rent, with the remaining two-bedroom homes being provided at an Affordable Rent.
- In January 2021, a consultation was carried out on revisions to the planning application for Welborne Garden Village. New proposals surrounding the funding of the new 'all-moves' junction 10 of the M27 were considered, after funding by the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership was reallocated to other projects, due to time constraints. This new approach means that the developer, Buckland Development Ltd, will contribute £40m to the new junction rather than £20m, alongside an anticipated further £30m of government funding.
- The development of eighteen one and two-bedroom flats at Rose Court, the former Hampshire Rose site, was completed in Spring 2021, with all flats being provided at Social Rent.

Protect and Enhance the Environment

- Coastal Partners (previously the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership) had previously developed outline design options as part of a study to reduce the risk of flooding and erosion along the shoreline from Portchester to Paulsgrove. The completed study identified that the scheme relied heavily on significant contributions being provided by a private developer. Unfortunately, as a result of this the planned coastal defence scheme is unlikely to progress in its current form, until a mutually agreeable method for securing the contribution has been

identified. Both Fareham Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council remain committed to trying to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk and will investigate alternative delivery options for the future.

- In October 2020, the Executive considered a report setting out the results of the carbon footprint calculation for the Council's services. The Council's total carbon emissions for service delivery for 2019/20 was 3661.44 tCO₂e, which was calculated by gathering data from all of the Council's services and includes litres of fuel used by the Council's vehicles and the amount of heating and electricity used in its buildings.
- A Climate Change Working Group is now in place and in June 2021, the Executive agreed to adopt the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, to enable the Council to progress its commitment to carbon neutrality.
- In early 2021, the Council launched a new Solar Together scheme to provide cleaner, greener and more sustainable power for Fareham residents, working with independent experts in group-buying schemes.
- Coastal Partners, as part of Fareham Borough Council, secured £556,000 from Defra Grant in Aid to commence a two-year study focusing on the future management of Hook Lake, part of the Hook with Warsash Nature Reserve, and opportunities to create new habitat at the site.
- The new aviation themed play area at Daedalus Common was opened in December 2020, together with an 18-space car park next to the play area. There have, however, been some issues with flooding which has prevented the surrounding open space being opened to the public and work is ongoing to implement potential solutions.
- Work progressed on the new public open space and play area at Abbey Meadows. Running adjacent to Southampton Road in Titchfield, Abbey Meadows has around 20 hectares of land comprising footpaths, wildflower meadows, dog-walking areas and educational wildlife areas and the new play area, modelled on the nearby Titchfield Abbey, was officially opened in Summer 2021.
- Fareham in Bloom was unable to go ahead in its usual form due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, the competition took place virtually, with entrants being judged solely on the photograph submitted. This proved to be very successful, with around 100 entries submitted across the six various categories.

Strong, Safe, Inclusive and Healthy Communities

- During 2020/21, the Council worked with local charitable organisations and volunteers across the Borough in its response to the pandemic. This work involved providing food parcels to those that needed them, collecting prescriptions, and phoning those self-isolating for a friendly chat. We also worked with Citizens Advice Fareham to provide support and advice to those faced with financial worries as a result of the pandemic.
- Whilst events planned to mark the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day

in May 2020 had to be cancelled due to lockdown restrictions, the Council encouraged residents to take part in the festivities at home by providing a Stay-at-Home Street Party Pack which included a quiz, word search, war-time recipes, a Spotify playlist and a bunting design competition. VE Day home schooling packs with lesson plans and supporting resources to help young people in the Borough learn about VE Day were also provided.

- The Council carried out a comprehensive review of its community safety measures. The review resulted in the investment of thirteen high-quality CCTV cameras to replace old equipment, with other rarely used or out of use cameras being removed. These will be replaced with mobile CCTV camera systems that can be deployed to deal with anti-social behaviour hot spots. The Council was also able to recruit two additional permanent Enforcement Officers to tackle anti-social behaviour across the Borough.
- In partnership with Hampshire County Council and the Department of Health and Social Care, the Council delivered a successful COVID-19 rapid community testing facility. This enabled those with no coronavirus symptoms who needed to leave home for work and were not covered by an existing workplace testing scheme to get tested regularly to help in preventing further spread of the virus.

Maintain and Extend Prosperity

- Outline plans for a £5.5m refurbishment of the Osborn Road multi-storey car park was agreed by the Council in September. The project will bring the building up to modern standards, both in terms of its structural integrity and its appearance. Drivers will also benefit from wider spaces and improved lighting.
- The construction of four new dedicated business units is underway at Faraday Business Park at Daedalus. Due for completion in Autumn 2021, the new buildings will comprise more than 55,500 square feet of employment spaces.
- A range of Government grant schemes became available for eligible businesses feeling the financial strain of the pandemic. The Council worked hard to encourage businesses to apply, process applications and allocate funds. Around £56m was distributed in COVID-19 business grants and reliefs.
- The Council received funding from the Reopening High Streets Safely and Welcome Back Funds, which will be used to support the safe return to our high street and coastal areas following the lifting of COVID restrictions.
- As part of the Council's plans to safely reopen the high streets, we commissioned a fully funded programme of support for businesses within the Borough, which included a variety of topics to help businesses survive and thrive following the pandemic.

Leisure Opportunities for Health and Fun

- With events being cancelled in light of COVID restrictions, we were unfortunately unable to run our usual Christmas Lights switch on event. We still marked the start of the festive season with the Mayor switching on the lights from home. The Council also promoted local traders on our website with an online market.

- In May 2020, the Council's Planning Committee approved plans for a new community arts and entertainment venue to replace Ferneham Hall. Later that year, we ran a consultation for the public to vote for their favourite name, with the new winning name of Fareham Live announced in October.
- The Fareham Live project was placed on hold and will be reviewed in light of the pandemic. Pausing the project will enable the Council to understand any long-term financial implications as a result of the pandemic and, if necessary, revise the business plan accordingly.
- During Autumn 2020, the Council consulted on improvements to four more play areas in the Borough, as part of the five-year plan of works. These improvements are anticipated to be completed during early Autumn 2021.
- A new aviation themed inclusive play area at Daedalus Common was opened in December 2020, in a small socially distanced event attended by the Mayor and Mayoress and some pupils from a nearby school.
- Work commenced on a £6.8m investment to improve the facilities at Fareham Leisure Centre. The refurbishment will result in some exciting new features including a climbing wall, soft play area, gym extension and improvements to the café. Works are due to be completed in Autumn 2021.
- The new public open space and play area at Abbey Meadows opened in Summer 2021, with around 20 hectares of land comprising footpaths and wildflower meadows.

A Dynamic, Prudent and Progressive Council

- The Coronavirus pandemic has increased financial pressures and the Council was left with a £1.14m shortfall, with an emergency mid-year budget being approved in September 2020. This has placed great emphasis on the work of the Opportunities Plan, looking at new ways to make savings and bring in revenue.
- In January, the Council held a 'Balance the Books' consultation, giving residents the chance to have their say on how it pays for vital public services in light of reduced government funding and the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. The survey asked questions about potential ideas for cost saving and income generation.
- A Parking Service review was previously undertaken and in September 2020 the Executive approved a series of proposals to the Council's parking service, including upgrades to existing car parks. The Executive agreed to the introduction of parking charges in all coastal car parks within the Borough. The new parking machines should be in place for August 2021, with charges of £1 per hour between the hours of 10am and 6pm. There will also be the option to purchase an £80 season ticket for use in all chargeable coastal car parks.
- Plans for a new chargeable garden waste collection service were approved in October 2020. The new opt-in scheme will start in February 2022 with residents paying a one-off bin purchase charge and an annual subscription charge. To

encourage residents to subscribe, an early bird discount for a half-price bin will be offered for a limited time. The Council will also work with Hampshire County Council to further promote home composting of garden and food waste.

- Fareham Community Lottery was launched early in the year, with the first draw taking place in March 2021. The lottery was set up by One Community and raises funds for local good causes such as charities and community groups.

EXTERNAL IMPACTS

8. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on both the services and the finances of the Council and work on some of the priorities contained within the Corporate Strategy will have stalled during the pandemic.
9. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Council has had unforeseen costs with its COVID-19 response whilst also seeing declines in income as a result of:
 - Lockdowns throughout the year has seen a decrease in car park income, due to the temporary closure of non-essential shops, restaurants, and pubs
 - Demand for trade waste collections reduced
 - Concessionary payment terms for commercial property tenants
 - Suspension of market pitch fees
 - Treasury investment income affected by adverse cash flows and reduced interest rates.
10. The pandemic left the Council with a £3.66m shortfall. Government grants and other financial support was only expected to cover around two-thirds of that shortfall, leaving the Council with a £1,143,700 deficit.
11. In September 2020, the Council's Executive considered an emergency mid-year budget to manage the predicted £1.14m shortfall.
12. A number of measures, including charges for both garden waste collection and parking in the Borough's coastal car parks are being implemented to bridge the funding gap for future years.

ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM REVIEWS AND/OR INSPECTIONS

13. The mid-year figure published by the Office for National Statistics in June 2020 estimates the current population of Fareham to be 116,338 (results of the 2021 Census are currently being analysed). Between 2017 and 2023 Fareham's population is projected to increase from 116,000 to 118,000.
14. The Annual Review letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman set out the number of complaints and enquiries received and decided during the financial year 2020/21. During 2020/21 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman received twelve complaints/enquiries and made decisions on ten of these. No complaints were upheld against Fareham Borough Council in 2020/21. This meant that there were no remedies that the Council needed to implement.

ANNUAL AUDIT

15. The Council's external auditors, Ernst & Young, provide an annual Audit Results Report which covers the Council's accounts for the previous year. The Audit for the year ended 31 March 2021 has been postponed until October 2021, therefore we are not expecting the Audit Results until much later in the year. The Annual Audit Letter and Governance Report are being replaced with a new Annual Auditor's Report which is not expected until December 2021 at the earliest.
16. The results of the audit for the previous year, ending 31 March 2020, showed that Fareham Borough Council was found to have put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CORPORATE STRATEGY DOCUMENT

17. Overall, the Corporate Strategy remains on track and it is proposed that the Executive recommends that the Council approves the following minor changes to the current Corporate Strategy document, attached as Appendix A:
 - Amend the 'Reviewed date' to December 2021, when Council has approved the changes (front page).
 - Add a new paragraph to reflect the Council's work with local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic to read:
 - 'We helped local businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and paid out £56 million in business grants and reliefs as part of a package of measures announced by the Government. Our Environmental Health team were also on hand to provide guidance to businesses to enable them to operate safely' (Open for Business, page 4).
 - Add a new paragraph to reflect the new business units at Faraday Business Park, to read:
 - 'Four new business units are currently under construction at Faraday Business Park and are due for completion in Autumn 2021' (High Flying Plans, page 5).
 - Amend the third paragraph to reflect the recent investment at Fareham Leisure Centre to read:
 - 'We have invested significantly in facilities such as the multi-million pound Holly Hill Leisure Centre which opened in 2016, with £6.8m recently invested to improve facilities at Fareham Leisure Centre' (Safe and Healthy, page 6).
 - Update the number of play areas to 45 and also include the number of skate parks and outdoor gyms in the Borough:
 - 'There are also 17 outdoor recreation sites, 45 children's play areas (with a new area at Abbey Meadows due for completion this year), 6 skate parks and 5 outdoor gyms' (Safe and Healthy, page 6).

- Amend the third paragraph to include the name 'Fareham Live' to reflect the new name of Ferneham Hall to read:
 - 'We have also produced a vision to remodel Ferneham Hall into Fareham Live, a new arts and entertainment venue, with the building currently closed for refurbishment' (Safe and Healthy, page 6).
- Replace the visitors to Westbury Manor jigsaw graphic with data relating to the percentage of adults considered to be active:
 - '66% of adults aged 16+ in Fareham are considered to be active (defined as doing at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week)' (Safe and Healthy, page 6).
- Amend the first paragraph, to read:
 - 'More than 86% of homes are owner occupied, which is much higher than the county and national averages' (Home is Where the Heart is, page 7).
- Amend the fourth paragraph to reflect the changes to Fareham In Bloom:
 - 'The COVID-19 pandemic meant that we couldn't hold our annual Fareham In Bloom competition in the normal way. We did, however, run it as a successful virtual competition, where we received over 100 entries across six categories' (The Great Outdoors, page 8).
- Add a new paragraph after the second one, to reflect the virtual exhibitions and consultations that were carried out in the year:
 - Whilst we have been unable to hold the usual CAT meetings with residents during the COVID-19 pandemic, we successfully ran our first virtual exhibitions for the Local Plan and Balancing the Books consultations, ensuring our residents still had the opportunity to comment on the things that matter to them' (Tell us What Works and What Doesn't, page 9).
- Amend the number of children's play areas in the jigsaw graphic from 43 to 45 (It's the Little Things that Matter, page 13).
- Add the words '(Hill Head complete December 2017. Portchester proposal currently on hold awaiting funding solution)' to the fourth bullet point concerning coastal defence schemes' (Protect and Enhance the Environment, page 15).
- Amend the wording of the final bullet point to reflect the fact that a climate change action plan is now in place, to read:
 - 'Deliver and develop our Climate Change Action Plan to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change in Fareham' (Protect and Enhance the Environment, page 15).
- Add the words '(Complete November 2020)' to bullet point three to reflect the completion of the community safety review (Strong, Safe, Inclusive and Healthy

Communities, page 16).

- Add the words '(Complete January 2020)' to the final bullet point regarding delivery of the four sustainable measures supported as part of the Let's Clear the Air campaign (Strong, Safe, Inclusive and Healthy Communities, page 16).
- Add a new bullet point to reflect the proposed works to the Osborn Road multi-storey car park:
 - 'Implement much needed refurbishments to the Osborn Road multi-storey car park, bringing the building to more modern standards, both in terms of its structural integrity and customer experience' (Maintain and Extend Prosperity, page 17).
- Add a new bullet point to reflect the Reopening High Streets Safely and Welcome Back funding:
 - 'Use funding from both the Reopening High Streets Safely and Welcome Back Funds to support the safe return to our high street and coastal areas following the lifting of COVID restrictions' (Maintain and Extend Prosperity, page 17).
- Amend the wording of the final bullet point regarding the provision of A Level courses to read:
 - 'Encourage a broader choice of Further Education provision in the Borough, including T Levels' (Maintain and Extend Prosperity, page 17).
- Add the name Fareham Live to reflect the new name of Ferneham Hall, to read:
 - 'Transform Ferneham Hall into a new arts and entertainment venue, Fareham Live, with a community focus' (Leisure Opportunities for Health and Fun, page 18).

18. After the report has been presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel and the Executive, it will be presented to Council for adoption, including any additional recommendations. The proposed changes to the Corporate Strategy document will be clearly identifiable throughout the document when it is presented to Council for approval. All proposed changes will be highlighted in the form of an asterisk in the top right-hand corner of each page containing an amendment, with the amended wording also being shaded.

LOCAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS 2020-2021

19. The Council's strategic framework includes Local Service Agreements to provide details of the actions delivered by individual services. The Local Service Agreements provide an overview of how the Council is performing alongside the Corporate Strategy.
20. Overall, performance across the indicators is comparable to previous years, although there have been some significant changes in some areas:
- The average time taken to complete a housing repair increased from 7.5 days to 9.05 days, as a direct result of limited in-house and contractor resources due to

the pandemic.

- Visitors to our two leisure centres and Westbury Manor Museum have decreased, as they were all closed for a large proportion of the year. In addition, when they have been permitted to reopen, the numbers of people allowed entry were restricted due to social distancing measures.
- During 2020/21, the Council paid out 16 community grants worth £39,993, which is around the same value as 2018/19, however an additional 6 grants were paid this year.
- Turnout at the Local Elections was 41% this year, 4% higher than the last local election in 2018.

21. Appendix B shows a copy of the Local Service Agreements document updated with the details for the 2020/21 financial year. The document contains simplified text and infographics to feel more engaging.
22. An additional section on the COVID-19 pandemic has also been included this year, which includes details of some of the challenges we have faced as well as some key achievements that were implemented in response to the pandemic.
23. A separate section has been added to each priority, highlighting any challenges that the Council is currently faced with.

10/10 SURVEYS

24. It was agreed at a meeting of the Executive on 7 December 2015, that the 10/10 surveys would replace the then biennial Resident's Survey as the main method for measuring resident satisfaction.
25. The quarterly 10/10 customer service surveys enable individual service areas to collect high quality feedback in a timely and less resource intensive way. The 10/10 surveys have so far focused on customer facing service areas that have worked through a systems thinking intervention.
26. The 10/10 survey approach involves Heads of Service/Intervention Leads telephoning a random selection of customers and asking three questions regarding what good service looks like, together with a rating from 1 to 10. Due to the increased workload and pressures placed on services during the COVID-19 pandemic, 10/10 surveys have been placed on hold temporarily. There is, therefore, no 10/10 survey data available for the 2020/21 year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

27. Whilst there are no anticipated financial implications associated with the Local Service Agreements, any cost implications of amending any of the Council's priorities would need to be calculated and reflected in the Council's medium-term financial strategy.
28. An emergency mid-year budget was drawn up in September 2020 to manage a predicted £1.14m shortfall as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

29. This report is a key stage in the Council's performance management framework. The Executive is invited to consider the proposed amendments to the Corporate Strategy 2017-2023 and recommend these changes to Council, so that the Council's priorities can be reflected in the budgets and local service agreements for the next financial year.
30. The Council's performance across most Local Service Agreements is broadly comparable or better than in previous years, with some of the measures being impacted as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
31. The 10/10 surveys have been placed on hold temporarily, whilst services deal with the additional workload and pressures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that this will recommence towards the end of 2021.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Annette Rickman, Customer Service Manager (Ext 4418).