

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to Council

#### 26 October 2023

*Subject:* **Adoption of Corporate Strategy 2023-2029**

*Report of:* **Assistant Director (Democracy)**

#### SUMMARY

The Council's Corporate Strategy is a key document within the Council's Strategic Framework, setting out our Vision and Priorities for the Borough. It influences our medium-term budget planning, day to day service delivery and the large-scale projects that we will undertake in the future.

Our existing Corporate Strategy covers the period 2017–2023. To ensure that we retain a current Corporate Strategy, work has been undertaken to prepare a new Corporate Strategy to cover the period 2023–2029.

On 15 May 2023, the Executive agreed that the draft Corporate Strategy 2023–2029 be circulated for public consultation. As a result of this, a four-week public consultation ran 5 June 2023 – 3 July 2023.

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel considered the consultation responses and draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 at the 18 September 2023 meeting and supported the adoption of the Strategy.

The Executive considered the consultation responses and draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 at the 9 October 2023 meeting and supported the adoption of the Strategy.

The Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 is now presented for adoption by the Council.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) notes the outcomes of the public consultation; and
- (b) agrees the adoption of the Corporate Strategy 2023-2029.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's vision and priorities and shows how we plan to ensure that Fareham remains a prosperous, safe, and attractive place to live and work. It guides the work of the Council, influences our medium-term budget planning, our approach to day-to-day service delivery and the large-scale projects we will undertake in the future.
2. The Strategy functions alongside other key documents and strategies, such as our Local Plan, to make up the Council's Strategic Framework. These documents ensure that the work of the Council is coordinated, consistent and delivers on our Vision for the Borough.

## **BACKGROUND**

3. The existing Corporate Strategy covers the period 2017–2023. To ensure that we retain a current Corporate Strategy, work has been undertaken to prepare a new Corporate Strategy to cover the period 2023–2029.
4. The new draft Corporate Strategy has been developed to ensure that it reflects the views and values of the organisation, management, and staff. The Chief Executive and his management team, as well as the Council's Executive, have been closely involved with the preparation of the new draft Strategy. Additionally, an all-staff survey and senior managers' workshop were undertaken.
5. Feedback received from all staff engagement activities has influenced the new draft Corporate Strategy, including the updated vision, values, and priorities.
6. The draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 was presented to the Executive on 15 May 2023, where it was agreed that the document be circulated for public consultation. A four-week public consultation asking for feedback on the six priorities set out in the draft corporate Strategy 2023-2029 ran 5 June 2023–3 July 2023. The consultation took the form of an online survey, with paper copies also available. It was promoted through the e-Panel, social media channels and at the summer CAT meetings.
7. The Corporate Strategy will cover a period of six years but will be reviewed annually. With a new Senior Leadership Team now in place, and an updated Communication and Engagement Strategy in development, the Council is currently experiencing a period of change. The annual review will be an opportunity to ensure that the Corporate Strategy continues to reflect the values, vision and priorities of the Council.
8. Prior to the consultation taking place, the text colour on the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 was amended to ensure that it passed the online accessibility test. The amended version is included as Appendix A.

## **CONSULTATION OUTCOMES**

9. A total of 74 responses were received in response to the consultation. The consultation asked for residents' reactions to the proposed Corporate Priorities. All the priorities were broadly welcomed and there were no overarching themes or concerns to emerge from the responses. A full analysis of the responses is included as Appendix B.
10. A new Communication and Engagement Strategy is currently being developed to ensure that the Council is engaging with residents in a meaningful and transparent way.

This will ensure that the Council is reassured that we have received a representative response to consultations and that our values, vision and priorities continue to reflect the views of all residents.

11. Residents had the option of recording a 'neutral' or 'don't know' response. These have been excluded from the summary analysis below.

**12. Provides Housing Choices**

- A majority (60%) of respondents answered positively with either 'agree or strongly agree' when asked to what extent they agreed with the approach to priority 1, whilst 20% responded with either 'disagree or strongly disagree'. Of those:
- 7 respondents (9%) expressed concern that there is a lack of infrastructure to support housing developments in the Borough.
- 6 respondents (8%) would like additions to the priority. These included additional infrastructure, increased use of brown sites and abandoned homes and provision of adequate green spaces.

**13. Respond To Climate Change and Protect the Environment**

- A majority (60%) of respondents answered positively with either 'agree or strongly agree' when asked to what extent they agreed with the approach to priority 2, whilst 14% responded with either 'disagree or strongly disagree'. Of those:
- 5 respondents (7%) wanted to see an expansion of the Council's recycling collections, whilst 3 respondents (4%) questioned the pollution created by Solent Airport and how that was justified.
- 6 respondents (8%) would like to see a commitment to expanding recycling in the Borough added to this priority, whilst 3 respondents (4%) would like subsidies for new environmental technologies and 2 respondents (3%) would like to see a commitment to electric vehicle charge points in the Borough added to priority 2.

**14. Strong, Safe and Healthy Communities**

- Almost half (47%) of respondents answered positively with either 'agree or strongly agree' when asked to what extent they agreed with the approach to priority 3, whilst 32% responded with either 'disagree or strongly disagree'. Of those:
- 7 respondents (9%) disagreed with the Longfield Avenue development, and the lack of existing infrastructure was again raised as an issue by 5 respondents (7%).
- A total of 31% of respondents would like additions to this policy. The most common (by 5 respondents, 7%) being that residents would like to see proposals for how infrastructure in the Borough will cope with new housing developments.

**15. Promote Economic Development**

- Almost half (48%) of respondents answered positively with either 'agree or strongly agree' when asked to what extent they agreed with the approach to priority 4, whilst 27% responded with either 'disagree or strongly disagree'. Of those:
- 12 respondents (16%) disagreed with the development of Solent Airport at Daedalus, whilst 9 respondents (12%) noted that there is a need to regenerate Fareham Town

Centre as a priority and 6 respondents (8%) were concerned that the new Osborn Road surface car park would not be large enough.

- 37% of respondents wanted to add to this priority. Responses were evenly split between the development of public transport links, provision of further parking in the town centre and a need to address the number of empty shops and business premises in the Borough.

#### **16. Leisure Opportunities for Wellbeing and Fun**

- Over half (57%) of respondents answered positively with either 'agree or strongly agree' when asked to what extent they agreed with the approach to priority 5, whilst 15% responded with either 'disagree or strongly disagree'. Of those:
- 7 respondents (9%) disagreed with Fareham Live, whilst 5 respondents (7%) disagreed with the development at Longfield Avenue.
- Almost a third of respondents (30%) would add to this priority. The most frequent comment (7 respondents, 9%) was that respondents would like to see an expansion and improvement to the cycle and walking infrastructure in the Borough as part of this priority. 2 respondents (3%) asked that parking charges at green spaces and coastal areas be stopped to support this priority.

#### **17. Responsive, Inclusive and Innovative Council**

- 51% of respondents answered positively with either 'agree or strongly agree' when asked to what extent they agreed with the approach to priority 6, whilst 24% responded with either 'disagree or strongly disagree'. Of those:
- 2 respondents (3%) stated that they did not believe transitioning to a cloud-based server would improve data security, whilst 2 respondents (3%) suggested that the priority needed more detail and transparency.
- 22% of respondents would like to see additions to this priority. These were clarity around the Council's plans to generate additional income and a view that the Council should listen to residents' views, respond, and take appropriate action.

#### **18. Any Further Comments**

- Respondents left a further 10 comments under this question. The most common answers (3 each) related to services provided by Hampshire County Council and concerns that resident's views are not listened to.

### **SUMMARY**

19. There has been a general decline in the number of responses received to online consultation surveys since the COVID-19 pandemic. The consultation on the current Corporate Strategy 2017-2023 attracted 98 responses (25% higher than the draft new Strategy). A new Communication and Engagement strategy is being developed to support effective engagement going forward.

20. Most responses were positive, answering with either 'agree or strongly agree' to four of the priorities. Over 40% of responses were positive, answering with either 'agree or strongly agree' for the other two priorities.
21. Whilst there were no clear overarching themes, several issues were raised across multiple priorities. These are addressed by supporting strategy documents across the Council:
- *Lack of infrastructure to support housing development:* The Fareham Borough Council Local Plan has recently been adopted which sets out the Council's planning strategies up until 2037. In developing the Local Plan, the Council consulted in line with the Fareham Borough Statement of Community Involvement which lists the people, communities and organisations we consult with. Included in the list are statutory bodies, service and utility providers who are responsible for supporting infrastructure in the Borough (for example, Hampshire County Council as the Highways Authority and Southern Water). This ensures that all agencies involved with housing developing are signed up to the same commitment to planning strategies in the Borough.
  - When dealing with planning applications for major development, the Council requires applicants to provide details of any identified infrastructure essential in order to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms. The type and scale of infrastructure provided, or financial contributions towards such infrastructure, will vary on a case-by-case basis but might include, for example, measures to improve school facilities close to a housing site, improvements and upgrades to roads, footpaths and cycleways and affordable housing to help meet the locally identified need for an area.
  - The Council is committed to maintaining open spaces across the Borough. Policy NE10 (Protection and Provision of Open Space) requires that the loss of open space is replaced by at least equivalent or better in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. This includes allotments and community gardens. Strategic Policy TIN1 (Sustainable Transport) in the adopted Local Plan provides that development should contribute to the delivery of cycle, pedestrian and other non-road user routes and connect with existing and future public transport network.
  - *Development of land at Longfield Avenue:* This development remains open for public comment pending a planning decision. The site itself is included in the Local Plan 2037 as a Housing Allocation site. The criteria set out above for planning applications for major developments has been applied at Longfield Avenue.
  - *Continued investment in Solent Airport at Daedalus:* Daedalus is a key employment site within the Borough, with Solent Airport having a critical role to play in attracting businesses and visitors to the site. The Daedalus Financial Strategy was approved by the Executive on 7 March 2022, and incorporated into the Council's medium-term investment plan. In 2015 the Council adopted a Vision and Outline Strategy for Daedalus, which was revisited in 2018 in a report updating on the progress made in

fulfilling the Council's stated objectives for Solent Airport at Daedalus and business parks.

- *Fareham Town Centre*: Town centres across the country have been affected by the collapse of the department store sector, shifts in customers' shopping habits, and many high street brands either moving online or disappearing altogether. Whilst Fareham town centre has much to offer residents and visitors, it has been affected by these national trends. The Council has recently decided to set aside over £30m of funding to support a significant regeneration programme. Major investments are currently being made with the development of Fareham Live, and the forthcoming demolition of Osborn Road multi-storey car park in favour of a new surface car park. Work will be undertaken over the coming months to create a draft Regeneration Framework for public consultation and partner engagement alongside a detailed request for appropriate funding to support a further programme of regeneration work going forward.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

22. The financial implications of the projects listed under each of the Council's Priorities would need to be reflected in the Council's medium-term financial strategy.

## **CONCLUSION**

23. The revised draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2029, attached as Appendix A, has been reviewed and the text adjusted to meet accessibility requirements.
24. Consultation responses to the six priorities which form the basis of the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 were generally positive. The concerns raised by respondents are addressed in detail by the Council in specific Strategy documents.
25. Minor changes to the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 have been made as a result of the consultation. The Corporate Strategy is reviewed annually, and further engagement will be undertaken at each review to ensure that the document continues to reflect the Council's values, vision, and priorities.

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL**

26. The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel considered the report on the adoption of the Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 on 18 September 2023.
27. The Panel recommended that the Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 be approved by the Executive, when it considered the item at its meeting on 9 October 2023.

## **EXECUTIVE MEETING**

28. The Executive considered the report on the adoption of the Corporate Strategy 2023-2029 on 9 October 2023.
29. The Executive recommended the Annual Review of the Corporate Strategy to Council for approval, with the report now presented for adoption by the Council.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

30. 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.

## **CONCLUSION**

31. This report is a key stage in the Council's performance management framework. The Council is invited to consider the results of the consultation and agree the adoption of the Corporate Strategy 2023-2029.

**Appendices:** Appendix A – Corporate Strategy 2023-2029  
Appendix B – Full analysis of consultation responses

**Background Papers:** File of consultation responses

**Reference Papers:** None

**Contact:** For further information please contact Kat Hillman (01329 824443)