

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Council

Date **9 October 2014**

Report of: **Director of Finance and Resources**

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 the progress being made in delivering the corporate priorities and to assess the impact of any other influences on the Council's services and initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council accepts the amendments to the strategy document, as set out in paragraph 12 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 will influence the budgets and local service agreements for the next financial year.
2. This is the third 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 under the heading for each priority.

Affecting all Priorities

- The Welborne Plan has been submitted for examination.
- £800,000 of funding has been received from the Government to help with the planning for Welborne.
- The delivery of Welborne requires the upgrading of Junction 10 of the M27 to an all-moves junction. In April 2014 Fareham Borough Council, Hampshire County Council (as Highway Authority) and the Highways Agency approved a note setting out the preferred option for these works. In July 2014 as part of the Solent Growth Deal, the Government committed to invest 'an initial £19.7m to improve transport and connectivity in Fareham and Gosport and some initial enabling work at Welborne (with £6m in 2015/16), and a further provisional allocation of £14.9m for junction 10 M27 starting beyond 2016'.

Protect and Enhance the Environment

- There are early signs to suggest that there has been an improvement in air quality following the implementation of the bus rapid transit system; however it is too early to identify what the sustained impact will be.
- The Council is the lead authority for the clothing and textile recycling framework and four other local authorities have joined the framework, Portsmouth City Council, Havant Borough Council, East Hampshire District Council and Winchester City Council.
- The Council has collected in excess of 150 tonnes of clothing and textiles in the first year of the framework. During 2013/14 16 new sites have been introduced for textile recycling, bringing the total number of sites to 30.
- The Council completed essential repairs to Salterns Promenade including the replacement of the timber edging, resurfacing the entire length of the promenade, installing a cycle path and providing 5 new beach huts.

Maintain and Extend Prosperity

- The development of the Centre of Excellence in Engineering and Manufacturing Advanced Skills Training (CEMAST), a new campus for all Automotive, Engineering

and Manufacturing courses at Fareham College, has been enabled through a proactive planning process.

- Fareham College secured planning permission (April 2014) for an investment scheme on their Bishopsfield Road Campus to provide a new innovative learning environment, providing specialist vocational facilities in the construction, care, visitor and digital economy sectors, as well as providing up to 120 new dwellings and public open space.
- A site and planning approval have been secured for the Innovation Centre and other developments at Daedalus.
- £200,000 has been spent on improvements in Fareham town centre, of which half was secured from central government, with the remainder matched by the Council. The programme of improvements has included a new website; new street furniture including additional seating and cycle racks; and new 'wayfinder' signage boards. Additionally the approach to parking charges has become more flexible with the 5 hour limit in the 'inner' car parks lifted, free parking from 5pm on Thursdays for late night shopping and additional cheaper parking provided in 'outer' car parks. All these changes have been informed by and carried out in dialogue with a range of retailers and other town centre interests.

A Safe and Healthy Place to Live and Work

- The Council successfully delivered Access All Areas, a summer programme of activities, for young people in partnership with the Police and local sports clubs.
- A Taxi Marshall scheme has been introduced in Fareham Town Centre to support the evening economy.
- The Council strives to ensure food and drink for human consumption is prepared, stored and distributed without risk to the health and safety of the consumer. To this end the Council carried out 345 food hygiene inspections in 2013/14.

Leisure for Health and Fun

- Funding and a site have been secured for the construction of a new swimming pool at Coldeast and the planning process has now commenced.
- The needs assessment for Community Centres has been completed and work is now starting on the next phase.
- Swanwick Lane, Sarisbury Green and Abshot Road play areas have been refurbished and upgraded. A new cricket square has been constructed at Bath Lane, a new drainage scheme has been installed at Burridge Recreation Ground and the tennis courts at St Johns Recreation Ground have been refurbished.
- The Council invested £1.5m in the refurbishment and upgrading of Fareham Leisure Centre in partnership with SLM, refurbishing the swimming pools, changing village and renewing the water treatment plant.

A Balanced Housing Market

- The Council has established a Local Housing Company in partnership with a neighbouring local authority and two Registered Providers. The company aims to increase the provision of good quality affordable housing for rent or purchase for low income households in the Borough.
- 41 new affordable homes have been delivered during the 2013/14 financial year.

- The Council is investing £13m in the construction of 100 new affordable homes for rent.
- Construction of Collingwood Court is underway and planning consent has been granted for a new sheltered housing development at Coldeast.
- The Development Sites and Policies Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in June 2014. A number of hearing sessions are scheduled to take place in November before a final report is expected to be issued in Spring 2015.

Strong and Inclusive Communities

- The Fareham Park Fun Day event allocated £20,000 of funding to local community groups.
- The Council is working in collaboration with local youth charities, in a scheme called Clued Up 2 Go, to provide help and advice on a range of issues for young people living in the Fareham Park area.
- The Council secured £13,000 from the Government's "Our Place" funding towards neighbourhood improvements in Fareham Park.
- In 2013/14 the Council awarded 23 grants worth approximately £60,600 in community funding.

Dynamic, Prudent and Progressive Council

- The Residents' Survey was completed in October and November 2013 some of the key headline figures are:
 - Sent to 4,020 households with a 32% response rate (1,291 responses)
 - 89% of people said the Council provides value for money. A 1% increase on the last survey in 2011.
 - 91% of people said they were happy with how the Council runs things. This is a 1% decrease on the 2011 survey.
 - 77% of people felt well informed about the Council's services, an increase of 7% on the 2011 survey.
- The Council has invested £4 million in commercial property to maximise the value gained from assets.
- Following further reductions in Government grants, the Council has achieved a £800,000 efficiency plan.
- The Environmental Health Partnership, between Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council, was formally established on 1 April 2014.
- The Council's element of Council Tax has been frozen for the sixth successive year.

Any matters arising from reviews and/or inspections 2011 Census

5. The 2011 Census data released by the Office for National Statistics shows that the total population of Fareham as 111,600. The most recent figure from mid-2013 estimates the population to be 112,800.

Annual Audit

6. The Council's external auditors Ernst & Young annual audit 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 2013.

7. The Council was overall found to have a good process for producing accounts, including the supporting working papers. The Council was also found to have proper arrangements in place to be financially resilient and for demonstrating how it is efficiently and effectively using its budgets.
8. There are a number of challenges facing the Council. These include:
 - The continuing challenge presented by reduced government funding.
 - Ensuring that significant projects like the development of Welborne and the setting up of a Joint Venture Company to help meet housing needs do not affect the financial resilience of the Council.
9. The assessment for the 2013/14 financial year is expected to be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in November 2014.

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

10. A brief summary of the key points from the 2013 Residents' Survey has been included above. The next survey is due to be carried out in 2015.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. 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

12. Overall, the Corporate Strategy remains on track and it is proposed that the Council approves the following minor changes to the Corporate Strategy document, attached as Appendix A, which incorporates these changes.
 - Amend the fourth paragraph to make it flexible, given that the Corporate Strategy has been in place for several years:

“This strategy contains a reduced number of priorities that will provide a clear focus on the most important issues that need to be addressed by the Council over the life of the strategy.” (Corporate Strategy 2011 – 2017, page 2)
 - Amend the statement about the development at Welborne from “...is due to start...” to “...planned to start...” (Profile of Fareham, page 3).
 - Amend the number of homes that will be built in Welborne from 6,500 to 6,000 in accordance with the Welborne Plan (Profile of Fareham, page 3).
 - Update the population of the Borough, from 111,600 to 112,800, based upon the most recent estimate that is available (Profile of Fareham, page 3).
 - Amend the first paragraph to better reflect the Council's investment in new leisure facilities:

“The Council continues to invest in new leisure facilities approving funding of £7m for the provision of a new swimming pool at Coldeast, investing £1.5m in the refurbishment of Fareham Leisure Centre and funding improvements to a wide range of sports pitches and tennis courts throughout the Borough. The Council funded a new £2m community centre in Portchester and has a programme for refreshing and upgrading the 45 play areas across the Borough; whilst continuing to support a wide

range of cultural and entertainment activities at Ferneham Hall and Westbury Manor.” (Profile of Fareham, page 4)

- Amend paragraph four to reflect that Fareham Borough Council’s element of Council tax has been frozen.

“The Council is considered to manage its resources well, has good leadership, a flexible and adaptable workforce and a strong awareness of its financial position. The Council has frozen its proportion of the Council Tax for the last six years.” (Profile of Fareham, page 4)

- Renumber priority 4 to 4a (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 8)
- Add a new priority 4b:

“Work with partners to deliver an £8.3 million package of investment at Daedalus, to include a new Innovation Centre to support small businesses, new hangar space and £1.5 million of improvements to the runway and airfield.” (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 8)

- Given the successful opening of a new Waitrose store in March 2014 and the progress made on the developing a new swimming pool at Coldeast, remove priority 5b, Development of Locks Heath District Centre to meet the needs of local residents for shopping, community and leisure facilities and to complement neighbouring shopping centre and Fareham Town Centre. The Council will continue to work with interested parties to ensure the continued improvement of the District Centre. Priority 5a will be renumbered to 5 (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 8).

- Split priority 8 into 8a and 8b, separating the development of a swimming pool from the other items discussed (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 9)

“8a Construction of a new swimming pool on land at Coldeast

8b Provide community facilities on land at Coldeast, including a cemetery, allotments, parkland and sports pitches”

- Under priority 12 the reference to Collingwood House has been changed to Collingwood Court (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 9).

- Amend priority 15 by making reference to the acquisition of commercial property:

“Maximise the value gained from assets that are owned by the Council, including the acquisition of commercial property.”

- Add a new priority, numbered 17, relating to the Vanguard Method:

“Using the Vanguard Method, undertake a programme of reviews to improve customer service, across the Council.” (Our Priorities for Improvement, page 9)

- Amend the final paragraph to be more in keeping with the Vanguard Method, by changing the reference to performance indicators to a range of measures (Strategic Framework, page 10).

“The corporate strategy and other strategies and plans are supported by **local service agreements** that bring together and describe the key activities and actions that will be delivered by individual service areas within the Council over the short-term (i.e. three years). They also include a range of measures that demonstrate the degree of success of the Council in meeting customer expectations.”

- Add details of social media contacts to the Further Information and Contacts page (page11).

CONCLUSION

13. 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 Year ending 31 March 2013, Ernst & Young, 25 October 2013

Annual governance report, Ernst & Young, 23 September 2013

Reference Papers:

None

Enquiries:

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