

Cheltenham Borough Council
Council – 25th March 2019
Draft Corporate Strategy 2019-2023
Report of the Leader of the Council

Accountable member	Leader of the Council, Cllr. Steve Jordan
Accountable officer	Strategy and Engagement Manager, Richard Gibson
Accountable scrutiny committee	All
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	No
Executive summary	The draft corporate strategy 2019-23 was endorsed by Cabinet on 5 th March 2019. It is now put before Council for approval
Recommendations	Council approve the draft corporate strategy 2019-23 (appendix 2) and uses this as a basis for monitoring the Council’s performance over the next three years.
Financial implications	None as a direct result of this report. The corporate strategy has been developed alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure that there are sufficient budgets in place to deliver the priorities as proposed. In addition, the corporate plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to take into account our changing budgetary position. Contact officer: Paul Jones, Executive Director Finance and Assets E-mail: paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk Tel no: 01242 775154
Legal implications	The corporate strategy 2019-23 is the “corporate strategy” for the purposes of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations 2000. The Executive is responsible for preparing the strategy which must then be submitted to and approved by council. Contact officer: Peter Lewis E-mail: Peter.Lewis@tewkesbury.gov.uk Tel no: 01684 272012
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	Capacity to deliver the strategy will remain a key focus for the Executive Leadership Team. Effective forward planning, use of project management techniques, re-prioritising work streams are some of the tools available to ensure that there is adequate resource available to deliver the strategy. Contact officer: Julie McCarthy HR Manager – Operations Publica E-mail: Julie.McCarthy@publicagroup.uk Tel no: 01242 264355

Key risks	<p>We recognise that if the council does not establish prioritised, realistic and achievable ambitions there will be continued pressure on organisational capacity and staff to maintain core services, and a risk of a perception of poor performance due to over ambitious or ill-informed planning.</p> <p>The Executive Leadership Team is responsible for the management of the risks associated with the delivery of the corporate strategy and where appropriate, risks are included on the corporate risk register.</p> <p>Elected members will have oversight of the corporate risk register through Overview and Scrutiny Committee and through Audit Committee.</p> <p>Risks associated with the delivery of specific projects will be managed as part of our programme and project management arrangements.</p>
Corporate and community plan Implications	The corporate strategy sets out the framework for our corporate priorities.
Environmental and climate change implications	The corporate strategy sets out the council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

1. Background – the LGA Peer Challenge

1.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) undertook a peer challenge review of the council in November 2018. The review took place between 13 and 16 November. The Peer Challenge Team spent 4 days on-site and spoke to more than 100 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external stakeholders. The team gathered information and views from more than 50 meetings, focus groups and phone calls, plus additional research and reading. They collectively spent more than 260 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending nearly 7 weeks in CBC. Their recommendations are below:

- Be clear what you want and prioritise.
- Strengthen contract management arrangements.
- Devise a coherent programme around regeneration and deprivation with nominated leads.
- Strengthen governance and project management arrangements for the Cyber Park.
- Continue to invest in and further improve the relationship with Gloucestershire County Council.
- Sustain the momentum that has been generated by the modernisation programme.
- Housing delivery will need focus and capacity.
- Review inherent financial risks and build levels of reserves to withstand future uncertainty.
- Develop an economic growth / skills strategy; engaging in this with local businesses and linking with business marketing.
- Strengthen the role of members.
- Strengthen Place Governance.

1.2 The peer challenge report has now been circulated to participants and is also now available on the council's website.

2. Draft Corporate Plan 2019-2023

2.1 Following on from the Peer Challenge feedback, this year we are proposing a new look for our plan that reflects the intentions to be clearer about what we are going to focus on and the reasons why.

- 2.2** The starting point for the new plan is Cheltenham's place vision; this is the collective commitment to ensure that Cheltenham is a place where everyone thrives supporting by a thriving economy, a thriving cultural offer and thriving communities. We have made sure that the commitments in this plan support this vision.
- 2.3** We have taken stock of our organisation and involved a wide range of staff, elected members and external partners in discussions about the purpose of our organisation and how we want the organisation to look and feel.
- 2.4** As part of this, we have taken time to consider our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats whilst also reflecting on our external environment.
- 2.5** With our better understanding of the council, we have been able to develop a new corporate plan that will guide us over the next three years through defining what we are trying to achieve - our purpose, how we will go about our work – our principles, and what we are going to focus on over the next three years – our priorities.

3. Proposed purpose

We want to make Cheltenham an even greater place for all; a place that is celebrated for its strong economy, its vibrant cultural offer and a place where our communities benefit from inclusive growth.

4. Proposed Principles

- We will achieve inclusive growth so all our communities can benefit and prosper from investments made in the borough.
- We will be commercially focused where needed and become financially self-sufficient to ensure we can continue to achieve value for money for the taxpayer.
- We will use data and technology, including insight from our customers, residents, businesses and visitors to help us make the right business decisions.
- We will provide strategic co-ordination across Cheltenham's agencies, partnerships and networks to drive the delivery of the Place Vision.
- We will work in ways that encourage equal collaboration at all levels and we will take time to listen, understand and respect each other to ensure what we do is appropriate and empowering.
- We will invest in and develop our people so they can continue to provide excellent services to residents and are prepared to meet the opportunities and challenges ahead.

5. Proposed priorities

- Making Cheltenham the Cyber-Capital of the UK.
- Continuing the revitalisation and improvement of our vibrant town centre and public spaces.
- Achieving a cleaner and greener sustainable environment for residents and visitors.
- Increasing the supply of housing and investing to build resilient communities.
- Delivering services to meet the needs of our residents and communities.

5.1 We will also supplement the 3 year longer-term plan with a specific 1 year plan that will set out the details of the projects that will contribute to the delivery of the priorities and their supporting performance indicators.

5.2 In addition, each Service Manager will be asked to produce a service plan that will illustrate the link between service delivery and the corporate priorities.

6. Consultation and feedback

6.1 The draft action plan was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny committee on 11 February 2019. The following observations were made.

Observation	Response
Cllr. Parsons would like to a more explicit link in the plan to the need for Cheltenham to retain and attract young people	<p>The plan contains many commitments that the council will that will help retain and attract young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A priority on becoming the cyber-capital of the UK • More affordable housing • The ongoing revitalisation of the town centre • Developing a cultural strategy • A focus on cycling and walking • A focus on modernising the council and embracing new technology solutions.
Cllr. Parsons would like to see more reference to council's role in promoting healthy lifestyles	<p>The council has a very important role in promoting healthy lifestyles; this is delivered both strategically through its role in shaping and delivering the Gloucestershire health and wellbeing strategy, and operationally through the work of various teams including public protection, enforcement, and the strategy and engagement team. Much of the activity will be included in these team's service plans. There is now a specific reference to our work improve local air quality and health in the town.</p>
Cllr. Willingham suggested that the council could be more ambitious about the wording of the cyber park priority and not limit our ambitions to Cheltenham just being cyber capital of the UK.	<p>Noted, but no change proposed currently to the wording of the priority.</p>
Cllr. Sudbury suggested that the council's approach to growth should not just be about cyber and that other parts of the economy need to be nurtured as well.	<p>Whilst prioritising cyber investment, the council will also retain its balanced approach to the local economy and will nurture a wide range of sectors. The plan itself references the need to focus on retail and cultural sectors.</p>
Cllr. Sudbury suggested that the plan should include a measure about our work on homelessness prevention.	<p>Now included</p>
Cllr. Sudbury suggested that the plan should include reference to the importance of Friends of groups	<p>Now included</p>

7. Next Steps

- 7.1 The corporate strategy sets out our priorities, key areas of work and how success will be measured and provides the basis for monitoring the council's performance over the next three years.
- 7.2 To promote accountability, the Executive Leadership Team will receive quarterly performance reports that will set out progress made against corporate strategy milestones.
- 7.3 Monitoring reports will be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and it is suggested that this is done at least half-yearly. In addition, the annual report detailing performance from the previous financial year will be brought in June to Council for consideration.

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Appendices	1. Risk assessment 2. Draft Corporate Strategy action plan 2019-23

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk			
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	I	L	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer
CR75	CR75 - If capacity to deliver key projects is achieved by diverting necessary resources away from either core services or other provider commitments, then there is a risk of not being able to deliver all of the business as usual expectations including a failure to comply with internal controls that could in turn impact on our reputation and finances.	Pat Pratley		4	5	20	Reduce	The risk score remains high and continues to be a focus for the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The ELT is now at full complement following the review in 2017/18 having successfully recruited to the Exec Director People and Change post. The modernisation programme #wearecbc includes for a review of the staffing structure below the ELT level. That review will take account of the Council's key priorities, together with the skills, capacity and capability needed to deliver so as to inform the most appropriate operating model for the Council going forward. That review is timetabled to be completed by April 2020.	31.3.19	Pat Pratley