

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Council Meeting | |
| Meeting Date | 3 April 2024 |
| Report Title | Corporate Plan 2023-2027 |
| EMT Lead | Larissa Reed – Chief Executive |
| Head of Service | Philip Sutcliffe – Communications & Policy Manager |
| Lead Officer | Janet Dart – Policy & Engagement Officer |
| Classification | Open |
| Recommendations | 1. To adopt the Corporate Plan 2023-2027 at Appendix I. |

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report recommends the final corporate plan 2023-2027 to council for adoption. The plan was endorsed by Policy & Resources Committee on 20 March 2024.

2 Background

- 2.1 Since the May 2023 borough election, the new administration have been meeting to discuss their vision and ambition for the borough and to consider what their priorities for the Council should be for the period 2023-2027. Committee chairs and vice-chairs have been working with senior officers to develop a new corporate plan which is a living document setting out the vision of the council and the strategic, corporate priorities.
- 2.2 The council's corporate plan establishes the political and managerial priorities on which the organisation will focus over a medium-term period. Without attempting to cover in any detail all of the objectives to be pursued by every department, it sets the tone for future resource allocation, establishing which activities and objectives are priorities.
- 2.3 In an era of constrained and diminishing resources, it is important to have a plan that is linked to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which should inform the key decisions of the council.
- 2.4 The plan is central to the strategic framework which links to departments' operational service plans and to individual officers' objectives. It establishes clear priorities while also providing a steer for all teams to link their work to the overall ambitions of the council.
- 2.5 The draft plan has been the subject of a public consultation exercise, the results of which are outlined in section 5 below.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Council is recommended to adopt the final version of the corporate plan at Appendix I.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Not have a corporate plan. There is a legal requirement for councils to have a definite policy framework, but there is no specific requirement for a corporate plan. However, the absence of a plan is likely to result in a lack of clarity about the organisation's priorities and less coherent decision-making by members, and is therefore not recommended.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Swale Borough Council members, town and parish councillors and members of the public were consulted at the September 2023 round of Area Committee meetings to seek feedback on the five priorities and their definitions.
- 5.2 The detailed objectives within each priority were taken to all-staff briefings and the staff engagement group in October 2023. A workshop was held with external partners to seek their feedback on the priorities and the proposed vision statement. Political group leaders were also consulted to seek their views.
- 5.3 The administration met to consider the feedback and used it to finalise the draft corporate plan.
- 5.4 An 8-week public consultation was conducted on the draft version of the corporate plan ending on 25 January 2024. This was predominantly by means of an online survey, but key stakeholders were written to individually, including all of Swale's parish councils. The consultation was advertised on social media and through channels such as the business bulletin, as well as internally through staff communications.
- 5.5 The consultation generated 29 responses. The first part of the consultation survey asked if responders agreed with each of the objectives under the 5 priorities and the vision statement. The majority of responses were supportive of all.
- 5.6 The second part of the consultation was a free-text box for responders to provide any comments. The majority of responses included only general indications of support or the opposite, some included specific suggestions for changes. An analysis of responses has been carried out and classifying responses as supportive, unsupportive or neutral, six can be read as supportive, four as unsupportive and 23 as neutral.
- 5.7 Following discussions with the administration, the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee considered the consultation responses and recommended

some minor amendments to the text and images, as at Appendix I, be made to the draft corporate plan which were agreed at the Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 20 March 2024.

6 Implications

| Issue | Implications |
|--|--|
| Corporate Plan | The draft plan at appendix I will replace the existing plan on adoption by council. |
| Financial, Resource and Property | The corporate plan complements the MTFP, in that it sets out in broad terms what the council aims to achieve given the resources established by the MTFP. It is anticipated that the activities required by the plan will generally be funded within the resourcing framework established in the MTFP. |
| Legal, Statutory and Procurement | The legal status of the corporate plan as a component of the statutory policy framework originates from the Local Government Act 2000 and regulations subsequently made under it. No specific procurement implications have been identified at this stage. |
| Crime and Disorder | The draft plan at appendix I includes some specific points of relevance to crime and disorder, particularly under priority 1 – Community. |
| Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency | The draft plan at appendix I includes some specific points of relevance to the environment and to the climate and ecological emergencies, particularly under priority 3 - Environment. |
| Health and Wellbeing | The draft plan at appendix I includes some specific points of relevance to health and wellbeing, particularly under priority 4 – Health & Housing. |
| Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults | The draft plan at appendix I includes some specific points of relevance to safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, particularly under priority 1 – Community and priority 4 – Health & Housing. |
| Risk Management and Health and Safety | No specific implications have been identified at this stage. |
| Equality and Diversity | The public sector equality duty requires decision-makers to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity right throughout the decision-making process. A preliminary equality impact assessment is attached at appendix II. The corporate plan is in general at too high a level of abstraction for the aims of the equality duty to be relevant in any concrete way, although they are likely to be much more relevant to many of the pieces of work which will flow from it, which |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | will all need to be subject to individual impact assessments. The impact of the plan itself on the aims of the equality duty, without reference to these more detailed pieces of work, is at this stage considered to be low, and nothing requiring the mitigation of adverse impacts has been identified. It is believed at this stage that the plan involves no unlawful discrimination. |
| Privacy and Data Protection | No specific implications have been identified at this stage. |

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix I – Draft corporate plan 2023-2027

Appendix II – Equality impact assessment

8 Background Papers

None.