

Policy Development and Review Committee	Agenda Item: 5
Meeting Date	20 January 2016
Report Title	Corporate Plan Action Plan Update for 2016/17
Cabinet Member	Cllr Bowles – Leader of the Council
SMT Lead	Abdool Kara – Chief Executive
Head of Service	David Clifford – Policy and Performance Manager
Recommendations	<p>The committee is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and comment on the proposed changes to the Corporate Plan action plan for 2016/17, with a view to assessing their overall appropriateness (§ 3.2). 2. Consider and comment on whether, taken as a whole, the updated Plan will provide sufficient linkage between the organisation’s medium-term strategic objectives and its developmental activities at an operational level during 2016/17 (§ 3.2).

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report reminds members of the purpose of the high-level action plan which supports the delivery of the four-year Corporate Plan, and invites views on the updates for 2016/17 which have been proposed by senior members and officers. The intention is that the updated plan will go to full Council for adoption in early March.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council’s Corporate Plan, *Making Swale a Better Place*, was adopted by full Council in February 2015. The Plan sets out the Council’s strategic direction for the period to 2018, focusing on areas of change and development for the organisation. It establishes three ‘priority themes’, under each of which sit five medium-term strategic objectives, as outlined below.

2.2 **Priority theme 1: A borough to be proud of**

This priority theme sets out the Council’s aspirations for the Borough as a physical place. It includes the following medium-term strategic objectives:

- Deliver major regeneration projects;
- Enhance the borough’s economic and tourism offer;
- Keep Swale clean and tidy;
- Protect and improve the natural and built environments; and

- Lobby for better roads and transport.

2.3 ***Priority theme 2: A community to be proud of***

This priority theme sets out the Council's aspirations for the people and communities of Swale. It includes the following medium-term strategic objectives:

- Foster economic growth and prosperity for all;
- Encourage active communities and support the voluntary sector;
- Reduce crime and disorder;
- Use our influence to ensure local skills are matched to local jobs; and
- Work collaboratively to improve health and mental health.

2.4 ***Priority theme 3: A council to be proud of***

This priority theme sets out the Council's aspirations for developing its own organisational capacity and culture. It includes the following medium-term strategic objectives:

- Improve residents' perceptions and customers' experiences;
- Ensure that Swale's internal governance is second to none;
- Encourage innovation at every level;
- Strengthen our financial and political resilience; and
- Enhance our capacity for achieving outcomes collaboratively.

2.5 In order to ensure that the objectives set out in the Plan are delivered, a 'high-level action plan' was also adopted by full Council. This action plan acts as a mechanism for linking the 15 medium-term objectives to departments' annual service plans, with the clear understanding that every action on the high-level plan must be reflected each year in at least one service plan.

2.6 Some of the actions on the action plan are at a greater level of detail than others, and there is also a range of likely durations, with some actions expected to be achieved within a single year and others expected to range over a longer term. In view of this, the high-level action plan is intended to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to coincide with departmental service planning.

3 Proposals

3.1 Cabinet members and senior officers have reviewed the action plan to determine whether actions should be deleted (either as complete or as no longer relevant), retained as they are, or retained but with updated wording. Cabinet members and officers have also been asked to propose any new actions they wish to see included in the action plan for 2016/17. The result of this exercise is the version of the plan at Appendix I: this is essentially the 2015/16 action plan annotated to show the updates which have been proposed.

- 3.2 PDRC is now **recommended** to review the proposed changes to the action plan with a view to assessing their overall appropriateness, and to consider whether, taken as a whole, the updated action plan will provide sufficient linkage between the organisation's medium-term strategic objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan on the one hand, and its developmental activities at an operational level during 2016/17 on the other.
- 3.3 One action for which no update is currently proposed is action 3.4.2 ('Assess and pursue options for generating revenue to reduce dependence on government-controlled funding streams'). As originally conceived last year, this action is intended to increase the Council's independence from all funding sources the parameters of which are susceptible to interference from Whitehall, including both central government grants and local taxes such as CT and NNDR.
- 3.4 It is acknowledged following announcements in the Autumn Statement and the local government settlement about changes to government grant funding that this action may need to be strengthened and/or given greater prominence prior to the plan's final adoption in March. Discussions on this between Cabinet members and relevant officers are currently ongoing.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Alternative options to agreeing a Corporate Plan were considered when the Plan was adopted a year ago. It would be possible to keep the Corporate Plan but remove the high-level action plan, but this would reduce the linkage between strategic and operational decision-making, thereby reducing the likelihood that the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan will actually be achieved.
- 4.2 It would also be possible to maintain the high-level action plan as it is without reviewing it over the lifetime of the Corporate Plan. However, while the broad strategic objectives of the Corporate Plan are not expected to change over the remaining three years of its life, changes to the environment within which the Council is seeking to achieve those objectives will result in new risks and new opportunities, requiring a reassessment of how the objectives can best be achieved. Reviewing and updating the high-level action plan provides a reasonably sound basis for doing this, and the option of not reviewing the action plan is therefore also not recommended.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Cabinet members and senior officers have been consulted in preparing the updated high-level action plan at Appendix I. A full public consultation was undertaken on the draft Corporate Plan as it was being developed towards the end of 2014. It is not proposed that further public consultation will now take place on the updated high-level action plan.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The report proposes amendments to the high-level action plan which sits directly beneath the corporate plan and links it to council departments' operational service plans.
Financial, Resource and Property	The Corporate Plan determines the priorities upon which the Council will focus its efforts given the resources allocated through the medium-term financial strategy, albeit that it is focused more on development activity and innovation than on established 'day-to-day' operational processes. It is generally expected that the actions in the high-level action plan will be delivered within resource allocations as established by the annual budget-setting process.
Legal and Statutory	The Council is under no statutory duty to prepare or adopt a corporate plan. However, section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) does impose a general duty, known as the 'Best Value Duty', to "secure continuous improvement in the way in which [the council's] functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". One of the purposes of the corporate plan is to provide clear strategic direction on agreed medium-term priorities in order to facilitate optimal and equitable resource allocation, thereby improving the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of council functions.
Crime and Disorder	The Corporate Plan includes an explicit medium-term objective to 'Reduce crime and disorder' (Objective 2.3). This is picked up in more detail in the action plan at Appendix I. No further specific implications have been identified at this stage.
Sustainability	The Corporate Plan includes an explicit medium-term objective to 'Protect and improve the natural and built environments' (Objective 1.4). This is picked up in more detail in the action plan at Appendix I. No further specific implications have been identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	The Corporate Plan includes an explicit medium-term objective to 'Work collaboratively to improve health and mental health' (Objective 2.5). This is picked up in more detail in the action plan at Appendix I. No further specific implications have been identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The Corporate Plan is a key component of the Council's efforts to manage risks, particularly those of a more abstract or 'strategic' nature. Together with the high-level action plan at Appendix I, the current Plan addresses all of the risks on Swale's current strategic risk register, with the exception of safeguarding, which while a 'strategic' risk in terms of its impact, is more operational in terms of the actions which are taken to reduce its likelihood. No health and safety implications have been identified at this stage.

<p>Equality and Diversity</p>	<p>Decision-makers are reminded of the requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the need to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper could directly impact on end users.</p> <p>The differential equality impact of the Corporate Plan was analysed in some detail as it was being drafted, and at this level of abstraction was considered not to vary between groups of people. This is also the case for the high-level action plan, although individual actions contained within the plan are likely to require equality impact assessments of their own as they are taken forward.</p>
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7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: High-level action plan 2015/16 annotated to show proposed updates for 2016/17.

8 Background Papers

- *Making Swale a Better Place: Swale's Corporate Plan 2015-2018:*
http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies-2014/Corporate-plan-2015-2018_2.pdf
- Council paper recommending adoption of the Corporate Plan 2015-2018 (includes equality impact assessment):
<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1290/Public%20reports%20pack%2018th-Feb-2015%2019.15%20Council.pdf?T=10>

Ref	Action	Preferred option	Proposed update to wording OR explanation for cancelling action (where applicable)
1	PRIORITY THEME 1: A BOROUGH TO BE PROUD OF		
1.1	Objective 1.1: Deliver major regeneration projects		
1.1.1	Encourage regeneration investment, job creation and urban renewal across the Borough.	Retain as is	
1.1.2	Work with Spirit and other partners to deliver the regeneration of Sittingbourne Town Centre.	Retain as is	
1.1.3	Ensure that sufficient short-term car-parking spaces are created in Sittingbourne Town Centre to offset spaces lost to redevelopment.	Retain as is	
1.2	Objective 1.2: Enhance the Borough's economic and tourism offer		
1.2.1	Promote Swale for business investment and expansion.	Retain as is	
1.2.1	Continue to support the success of key employment locations including Eurolink, Port of Sheerness, Kent Science Park, Kemsley Fields and Neatscourt.	Retain as is	
1.2.3	Support the local tourism industry.	Retain as is	
1.2.4	Support partners in the roll-out of fibre-based broadband within the Borough.	Retain as is	
1.3	Objective 1.3: Keep Swale clean and tidy		
1.3.1	Keep the streets and open spaces in the Borough clean and tidy and encourage reduced littering.	Retain as is	
1.3.2	Continue to develop a waste collection service which encourages greater levels of recycling and reduced levels of household waste.	Retain as is	
1.4	Objective 1.4: Protect and improve the natural and built environments		
1.4.1	Publish, submit and adopt the Local Plan.	Retain but update wording to...	Undertake any required modifications and adopt the Local Plan.
1.4.2	Consult, finalise, adopt and implement CIL, including its governance and administrative requirements.	New action	
1.4.3	Continue to provide excellent stewardship of the countryside, coastline, parks and open spaces.	Retain as is	
1.4.4	Continue to mitigate against the causes of climate change.	Retain as is	
1.5	Objective 1.5: Lobby for better roads and transport		
1.5.1	Lobby for infrastructure improvements to the M2 in the Borough as set out in the 2014 South-East Local Growth Fund bid.	Retain as is	
1.5.2	Continue to press the case for the completion of the Sittingbourne northern relief road.	Retain as is	
1.5.3	Work with partners to ensure Swale has a public transport network which enhances work and leisure opportunities and is an attractive alternative to car use.	Retain as is	

Ref	Action	Preferred option	Proposed update to wording OR explanation for cancelling action (where applicable)
2	PRIORITY THEME 2: A COMMUNITY TO BE PROUD OF		
2.1	Objective 2.1: Foster economic growth and prosperity for all		
2.1.1	Continue to provide tailored packages of support to local businesses and start-ups.	Retain as is	
2.1.2	Promote opportunities to bid for Council contracts among local businesses, and use social value criteria when assessing tenders to ensure fair competition.	Retain but update wording to...	Continue to promote opportunities to bid for Council contracts among local businesses and voluntary/community organisations, use social value criteria when assessing tenders, and monitor contracts' delivery of social value commitments.
2.1.3	Work with partners to support residents through welfare reform and encourage greater independence where appropriate.	Retain as is	
2.1.4	Continue to support initiatives to help troubled families across Swale.	Retain as is	
2.2	Objective 2.2: Encourage active communities and support the voluntary sector		
2.2.1	Continue to transfer responsibility for assets and services to parish/town councils and voluntary/community groups.	Retain but update wording to...	Continue to assess options for the ownership and management of council assets with a view to maximising their value to their local community and the borough more generally.
2.2.2	Ensure the aims of the volunteering strategy are delivered.	Retain but update wording to...	Continue to support voluntary service in the Borough, and undertake a review of the Council's overall strategy for supporting the local voluntary and community sector.
2.2.3	Promote opportunities to bid for Council contracts among local voluntary/community organisations, and use social value criteria when assessing tenders to ensure fair competition.	Delete: action complete	Note: See also 2.1.2 above.
2.2.4	Commemorate the 1914-1918 centenary.	Retain as is	
2.2.5	Help residents and communities to adapt to a changing climate.	Retain but update wording to...	Help residents and communities to adapt to a changing climate, with a particular emphasis on preparedness for unprecedented adverse weather conditions.
2.3	Objective 2.3: Reduce crime and disorder		
2.3.1	Continue to tackle crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour.	Retain as is	
2.4	Objective 2.4: Use our influence to ensure local skills are matched to local jobs		
2.4.1	Target lobbying and influencing activity on the need to bring the Borough's skills profile up to the national and regional averages.	Retain as is	
2.4.2	Continue to encourage the creation of opportunities for young people to enter employment and learning, particularly apprenticeships.	Retain as is	
2.4.3	Press the case for equitable access to further education across Swale (especially Sittingbourne), and ideally for better provision within the Borough.	Retain as is	
2.4.4	Work to facilitate an improvement in linkages between employers and skills providers so that training provision more accurately reflects employers' needs.	Retain as is	
2.5	Objective 2.5: Work collaboratively to improve health and mental health		
2.5.1	Continue to use the local Health and Wellbeing Board to influence the local health and public health agendas.	Retain as is	
2.5.2	Support partners to improve health and reduce hospital admissions through effective home adaptations and by improving conditions in privately rented homes.	Retain as is	
2.5.3	Pilot and roll out an identification and initial assessment service among frontline staff to ensure appropriate referral of apparent mental health needs.	Retain as is	
2.5.4	Implement <i>Move Ourselves</i> , the sport and physical activity framework for Swale.	Retain but update wording to...	Continue to enable healthier lifestyles and physical activity through the implementation of the sport and physical activity framework for Swale and the indoor sports strategy 2015-2025.
2.5.5	Support the development of shared routes for cycling and walking.	Retain but update wording to...	Support lead partners wherever possible in the development of shared routes for cycling and walking.

Ref	Action	Preferred option	Proposed update to wording OR explanation for cancelling action (where applicable)
3	PRIORITY THEME 3: A COUNCIL TO BE PROUD OF		
3.1	Objective 3.1: Improve residents' perceptions and customers' experiences		
3.1.1	Implement the corporate Communications Strategy.	Retain as is	
3.1.2	Identify and address the factors with the strongest influence on residents' perceptions of the Council.	Retain as is	
3.1.3	Provide a choice of access to our services through a balance of cost-effective and convenient options, and pursue initiatives to improve customer service at reduced cost.	Retain but update wording to...	Provide a choice of access to our services through a balance of cost-effective and convenient options, and pursue initiatives to improve customer service at reduced cost, including self service options where appropriate.
3.2	Objective 3.2: Ensure that Swale's internal governance and decision-making are second to none		
3.2.1	Use the annual budget-setting process to produce balanced budgets and ensure maximum value for money, and closely monitor expenditure against budgets during the year.	Retain as is	
3.2.2	Continue to undertake robust performance management of Swale's services and regular benchmarking with other top-performing councils.	Retain as is	
3.2.3	Improve the Council's understanding of its appetite for risk and ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to manage risks at all levels.	Retain but update wording to...	Implement the revised risk strategy to improve the Council's understanding of its risk appetite and provide appropriate mechanisms for managing risks at all levels.
3.3	Objective 3.3: Encourage innovation at every level		
3.3.1	Ensure that staff are supported to experiment and innovate in finding new ways to achieve better outcomes at lower cost.	Retain as is	
3.3.2	Continue to be proactive in learning about 'what works', whether from our own experiences or from those of other organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors.	Retain as is	
3.3.3	Work with MKIP partners to deliver Transformation Challenge Award-funded telephony and digitisation projects and ensure the Council and its residents are able to benefit from big data applications.	New action	
3.4	Objective 3.4: Strengthen our financial and political resilience		
3.4.1	Ensure that income from government sources over which the Council has some control (e.g. New Homes Bonus and retained NNDR) is maximised.	Retain as is	
3.4.2	Assess and pursue options for generating revenue to reduce dependence on government-controlled funding streams.	Retain as is	
3.4.3	Work to develop a preferred outcome to secure the best arrangements for Swale's residents in the event of local government reorganisation.	Retain as is	
3.5	Objective 3.5: Enhance our capacity for achieving outcomes collaboratively		
3.5.1	Strengthen further our ability to work in partnership with other agencies, whether at strategic, tactical or operational levels.	Retain as is	
3.5.2	Work to improve our capacity for systematic and concerted lobbying.	Retain as is	