

Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	16 March 2016
Report Title	Strategic Business Planning 2016/17: Corporate Plan Action Plan and Corporate Performance Targets
Cabinet Member	Cllr Bowles – Leader of the Council
SMT Lead	Abdool Kara – Chief Executive
Head of Service	David Clifford – Policy and Performance Manager
Lead Officer	David Clifford – Policy and Performance Manager
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Forward Plan	Reference number:
Recommendations	<p>Council is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt the Corporate Plan action plan for 2016/17 (§3.2 and Appendix I). 2. Adopt the corporate performance indicator set for 2016/17 and associated ‘hard’ targets for 2016/17 and ‘soft’ targets for the following two years (§3.8 and Appendix II). 3. Give delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance, to amend performance indicators and targets during the course of the year should this become necessary (§3.9).

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 asks members to adopt the 2016/17 version of the plan. The plan has been the subject of extensive internal consultation, which is summarised in Section 5 of the report. The report also asks members to adopt ‘hard’ targets for the corporate performance indicators for 2016/17, together with ‘soft’ or indicative targets for future years.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council’s Corporate Plan, *Making Swale a Better Place*, was adopted by 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’ as overarching aspirations,

under each of which sit five more specific 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:

1. Deliver major regeneration projects;
2. Enhance the borough's economic and tourism offer;
3. Keep Swale clean and tidy;
4. Protect and improve the natural and built environments; and
5. 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:

1. Foster economic growth and prosperity for all;
2. Encourage active communities and support the voluntary sector;
3. Reduce crime and disorder;
4. Use our influence to ensure local skills are matched to local jobs; and
5. 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:

1. Improve residents' perceptions and customers' experiences;
2. Ensure that Swale's internal governance is second to none;
3. Encourage innovation at every level;
4. Strengthen our financial and political resilience; and
5. 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 Council. This action plan functions 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 updated on an annual basis to coincide with the commencement of departmental service planning.

3 Proposals

Corporate Plan action plan

- 3.1 Cabinet members and senior officers have reviewed the action plan and deleted actions which are complete and, in one or two cases, added actions the need for which has arisen since last year. In some cases the wording of actions has also been refined to ensure the action remains properly focused for 2016/17. Policy Development and Review Committee has also reviewed the plan and made some recommendations on it; a complete list of these is available for information in Section 5.
- 3.2 A final version of the high-level action plan for 2016/17 is attached at Appendix I. Council is now **recommended** to adopt this version of the plan.

Target-setting for corporate performance indicators

- 3.3 The ability to manage performance at both strategic and operational levels is fundamental to any effective and successful organisation, whether in the public or private sector. As many of Swale's more transactional services are dependent on quantitative measures for ongoing assessment of their efficiency and effectiveness, it is to be expected that a limited number of the most representative of these will be monitored by the strategic leadership as 'corporate' indicators.
- 3.4 In 2013 a new set of corporate performance indicators and targets was adopted by Council for a period of three years. The set is fundamental to the organisation's performance management mechanisms, including both the monthly SMT performance report and the quarterly balanced scorecards.
- 3.5 In developing the new indicator set, it was acknowledged that management through quantitative target-setting is more appropriate for some service areas than for others. However, the set was developed with a view to ensuring that, taken as a whole, it provided a broadly balanced and holistic overview of the entire organisation's performance to the extent that this is amenable to quantitative analysis.
- 3.6 Ongoing incremental refinement over the last three years has ensured that the corporate indicator set remains fit for purpose, but there is now a need to set targets for these indicators for 2016/17 and beyond.
- 3.7 The targets attached at Appendix II have been developed by heads of service in consultation with relevant Cabinet members, with the aim of setting performance expectations which are genuinely stretching but realistically achievable. This process has taken into account both Swale's own historic performance data and

the performance of other authorities on the same measures where this data exists. The quartile position Swale would achieve within national datasets when targets are achieved is indicated in Appendix II where this information is available.

- 3.8 Council is now **recommended** to adopt the corporate performance indicator set for 2016/17 and associated 'hard' targets for 2016/17 and 'soft' targets for the following two years, all as set out in Appendix II.
- 3.9 Due to unforeseeable changes in either the external or internal environment, on occasion it may be necessary to amend indicators and targets during the course of the year. Council is therefore further **recommended** to give delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance, to amend indicators and targets during the year should this become necessary.

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 sound basis for doing this, and the option of not reviewing the action plan is therefore also not recommended.
- 4.3 With regard to the corporate indicator set, an option would be to dispense with this altogether, but there are a number of major disadvantages to this, including a reduction in corporate self-awareness and a likely deterioration in overall service performance. The lack of a corporate performance regime would be a significant hindrance to the effective functioning of both the political and the managerial leadership of the organisation. It would also stop us publishing monthly performance reports on the website, hence reducing our public accountability. This option is therefore not recommended.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Cabinet members and senior officers have been consulted on an individual basis in preparing the updated high-level action plan at Appendix I. Following this, the draft plan was considered by Policy Development and Review Committee, which made a number of recommendations for amendments. Some of these have been agreed by Cabinet and incorporated into the plan at Appendix I while others have not. These recommendations and the Cabinet response are summarised in Table 1 below.

Action	PDRC recommendation	Cabinet response
<i>Priority theme 1: A borough to be proud of</i>		
1.1	Change the objective to read 'Deliver regeneration projects' instead of Deliver major regeneration projects.	Not agreed.
1.1.3	Delete this action.	Not agreed.
1.2.3	Change this to read 'support and develop the local tourism industry'.	Not agreed.
1.3.1	Change this to read 'Keep the streets and open spaces in the Borough clean and tidy and discourage littering'.	Agreed and incorporated into the plan at Appendix I.
1.4.1	Delete this action.	Not agreed.
1.4.3	Change this to read 'Endeavour to provide and improve excellent stewardship of the countryside, coastline, parks and open spaces'.	Not agreed.
1.5.1	Delete reference to the M2 and the 2014 South-East Local Growth Fund bid, so that it reads 'Lobby for infrastructure improvements in the Borough'.	Partially agreed. New wording based on PDRC recommendation incorporated into the plan at Appendix I.
<i>Priority theme 2: A community to be proud of</i>		
2.1.2	Change the proposed wording to read 'To improve the promotion of opportunities to bid...'	Agreed and incorporated into the plan at Appendix I.
2.2.5	Change this to read 'Help residents and communities to adapt to a changing climate, with a particular emphasis on the preparedness for extreme adverse weather conditions especially risk of flooding'.	Not agreed.

Action	PDRC recommendation	Cabinet response
2.3.1, 2.3.2	Add a new action as 2.3.1 to reflect the need to work to reduce radicalisation and safeguard the population from terrorism – exact wording to be agreed between the Cabinet Member and Officers. Change existing action 2.3.1. to 2.3.2.	Not agreed.
2.4.1	Change this to read ‘ Target lobbying and influencing activity on the need to bring the Borough’s skill profile better than the national and regional averages’.	Not agreed.
2.4.3	Remove the words ‘especially Sittingbourne’ so it reads ‘Press the case for equitable access to further education across Swale and ideally for better provision within the Borough’.	Agreed and incorporated into the plan at Appendix I.
2.5.1	Change this to refer to ‘Boards’ instead of ‘Board’.	Agreed and incorporated into the plan at Appendix I.
2.5.3	Delete this action.	Not agreed.
2.5.5	Keep the original wording and not the proposed update.	Not agreed.
Priority theme 3: A council to be proud of		
3.3.1	Change the wording to read ‘Ensure that staff are supported to experiment and innovate in finding new ways to achieve better outcomes and/or at lower cost’.	Not agreed.

Table 1: PDRC recommendations and Cabinet response

5.2 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 updates to the high-level action plan which sits directly beneath the Corporate Plan and links it to council departments’ operational service plans. The report also proposes performance indicator targets for 2016/17 and beyond, some of which are used to measure progress towards achieving the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan.
Financial, Resource and	The Corporate Plan determines the priorities upon which the Council will focus its efforts given the resources allocated through the budget, albeit that it is focused more on development activity

Property	and innovation than on established and ongoing 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 services.
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. No health and safety implications have been identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	<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 on 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 may require equality</p>

	impact assessments of their own as they are taken forward.
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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: Corporate Plan high-level action plan 2016/17.
- Appendix II: Performance indicators and targets 2016/17 through 2018/19.

8 Background Papers

- *Making Swale a Better Place*: Swale's Corporate Plan 2015-2018, available [here](#).
- Council paper recommending adoption of the Corporate Plan 2015-2018 (includes equality impact assessment), available [here](#).
- Council paper recommending adoption of the corporate performance indicator set, available [here](#).