

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Full Council
Date: 17 October 2023
Reporting officer: Chief Executive
Subject: Corporate Plan: 2023-27

Purpose and summary of report:

To present Council with the draft Corporate Plan 2023-27 for approval and adoption into the authority's Policy Framework.

Recommendations:

1. Council adopt the proposed Corporate Plan 2023-27 and provide delegated authority for any final amendments to be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Executive.

Key Implications:	
Item	Implications
Legal	The Corporate Plan is an integral part of the authority's policy framework as defined by the Constitution. Approval of the new Plan will ensure the council has in place a structure with which to effectively plan and resource the delivery of its stated policy commitments and statutory responsibilities, measured and monitored by a PMF aimed at securing best value for residents.
Finance and Value for Money	<p>There are no significant costs associated with the council's Corporate Plan. The plan itself provides a policy context and framework from which future council activities should be based and which therefore should be accounted for as part of on-going financial planning processes.</p> <p>Adoption of the Corporate Plan is likely to result in some direct communication-based activities and minor publication costs as the plan is designed and subsequently promoted to stakeholders.</p>
Corporate Plan	The council's adopted Corporate Plan sets the strategic ambition and objectives for the authority over an elected administrative period. By its nature, end adoption of the draft plan will see all future committee reports presented in direct consideration.
Climate Change	Climate change as a strategic theme underlines the projects, initiatives and work involved in the delivery of the council's Corporate Plan. As such, climate change forms a core thematic consideration within the new document.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan presents the council's ambition for the borough over a four-year administrative period. Alongside a suite of corporate objectives and associated policy commitments, the draft Corporate Plan (Appendix 1) sets the tone and guiding principles from which all council activity will be based over the 2023-27 period.
- 1.2 Operationally, the Corporate Plan enables the council to effectively plan and prepare the resources required to deliver set objectives and, equally, provides a framework for future service business plans and corporate strategies to work towards and be measured against.
- 1.3 Members will be aware that the council's current Corporate Plan ran for the 2019-23 period. Work has therefore been carried out by officers over the last year to prepare a new plan reflective of; community needs and aspirations, the key ambitions of the elected administration for the borough over the 2023-27 period and, ultimately, the financial position of the authority.

2. Process

- 2.1 To commence the project, a 12-week public consultation was delivered between October and December 2022, with the core activity to the process an online survey hosted via the council's website.
- 2.2 The end result saw over 1,600 Gravesham residents, businesses and community groups take part, providing over 6,400 individual pieces of information and intelligence relating to community requests for council provision and priority intervention. The exercise also enabled participants the opportunity to rank each of the council's key services in terms of their individual level of perceived importance.
- 2.3 The information obtained from this process was collated and analysed and has acted as a sound baseline throughout the development of the policy commitments on which the draft Corporate Plan is based. The core findings of the community consultation are presented at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 2.4 In addition to this consultative exercise, the draft Corporate Plan has been prepared in full consideration of a base of intelligence relating to community needs, as detailed in the council's Gravesham Community Profile. This comprehensive research study comprises a variety of themes, including information outlining core public health outcomes for the local population and socio-economic material detailing the position of the economy and scale of resident inequality within the borough.
- 2.5 Of equal importance, alongside identified community need and priority areas for service intervention, the Corporate Plan has been drafted in full consideration of the key manifesto pledges of the elected administration for the 2023-27 period.

- 2.6 Working within the context of the council's strategic Gravesham 2040 programme, and in full consideration of core policy positions (e.g. Climate Change Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy), this source material has formed the foundation of the proposed three new corporate objectives:
- **One Borough:** a safe, clean, and attractive living environment, enhanced by a sustainable and increasingly energised local economy.
 - **One Community:** an active, engaged and culturally enriched population, built on the foundations of an affordable and quality local housing offer.
 - **One Council:** a well-run and innovative authority, defined by its skilled and valued workforce, committed to developing its local social impact.
- 2.7 On adoption, each objective will have its own individual portfolio of resourced activities and initiatives but, crucially, they are designed to work with and support each other for the benefit of the Gravesham community.
- 2.8 Collectively, these draft objectives form the heart of the council's Corporate Plan 2023-27, providing for the ambition of realising a borough where residents are; *Together - Proud to be Gravesham.*

3. Performance

- 3.1 To evaluate if we are effectively achieving against our stated objectives and delivering consistently high quality services at the required level of impact for local residents, the council needs to have in place a sound performance management process. Through the development of this draft Corporate Plan a full review has therefore been undertaken into the existing Performance Management Framework (PMF).
- 3.2 The review process identified that a significant number of new and refined indicators would be required in order to directly and transparently evidence the delivery of the suite of policy commitments set out in the draft Corporate Plan. These proposed changes are largely driven by;
- **Comprehensive coverage:** since the existing PMF was established in 2019, alongside some services not previously covered, a number of new services have been established, or have perhaps received a greater focus in response to evolving community and social demand. Performance management should be embedded throughout the organisation and, in developing our corporate governance and working practices, it is essential therefore that the PMF is adapted to be inclusive of all council services.
 - **New business activities:** the council's activities have evolved since 2019 and, through the manifesto pledges of the elected administration, are set to further develop in the 2023-27 period. To keep pace, a number of changes are therefore proposed to the existing PMF; e.g. the council's climate change pledge which, given the corporate nature of our efforts in this agenda, has required a number of broader service-based indicators be established to fully measure our local impact.
- 3.3 On its adoption, the PMF will form the basis of corporate performance reporting to Members during the 2023-27 period. As determined by the Leader of the Executive, this will primarily be delivered through a commitment to a quarterly performance reporting process involving Cabinet and portfolio-based Cabinet Committees.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Following Council approval, the Corporate Plan will be adopted into the authority's constituted Policy Framework. The plan will subsequently be officially designed and launched through a programme of associated products, including a formal press release, coordinated by the council's Communications Team, with the new performance reporting process for the authority commencing in January 2024.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: Corporate Plan 2023-27 – Draft

Appendix 2: Corporate Plan 2023-27 – Consultation

6. Background papers

- Gravesham Borough Council: [Corporate Plan 2019-23](#).
- Gravesham Borough Council: [PMF 2019-23](#).

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Secondary Implications	
Risk Assessment	As a core element of the council's corporate governance arrangements, without a Corporate Plan that outlines a clear strategic platform the authority would increase the risk of its resources not being directed in the most effective way to tackle community need and secure best value. Absence of an adopted Plan would also provide a lack of transparency and accountability in strategic service planning.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i>
	<p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data?</p> <p>A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links.</p> <p>No.</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer.</p> <p>No.</p>
	<p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer.</p> <p>Yes. In preparing this plan, a 12-week community consultation was carried out which was fully representative of the borough's demographic profile, as based upon the Census 2021. Through that process, Appendix 1 has a declared commitment to strengthen Gravesham's social fabric with a view to promoting equality - activities that support the ethos of a borough where we are; <i>'Together – Proud to be Gravesham'</i>.</p> <p>Internally, the proposed Corporate Plan also includes the monitoring of gender pay as part of its revised PMF, further emphasising a commitment to the equality agenda.</p>
	<i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i>
Crime and Disorder	<p>In view of the council's statutory duties, community safety as an agenda is an integral theme of the draft Corporate Plan. Work by the council in this area, alongside its key partners, will go towards delivering corporate objective #oneborough through the specific policy commitment;</p> <p>Safer Gravesham: <i>deliver stronger neighbourhoods and a more secure living environment through a portfolio of initiatives, delivered with Kent Police and key partner agencies.</i></p>
Digital and website implications	<p>On its adoption, the Corporate Plan will be published and promoted via the council's website. In terms of direct operational commitments, digital activity is a formal commitment within the proposed #onecouncil objective;</p> <p>Digital transformation: <i>through dynamic IT platforms that provide intelligent customer insight, overhaul working processes and support service efficiencies whilst delivering a quality digital experience for all.</i></p>
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	See crime and disorder.