

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: 2 DECEMBER 2021

TITLE: CORPORATE STRATEGY 2021-2023

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR RUSSELL PERRIN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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This is a Key Decision

It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number: I012619

The decision is not subject to Call-in Procedures for the following reason:

The decision stands as a recommendation to Full Council

This decision will affect no ward specifically.

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:

- A** A new Corporate Strategy for 2021- 2023 attached at Appendix A to the report, is adopted.
- B** Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make minor and consequential amendments to the Corporate Strategy following strategic stakeholder consultation.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** The new Corporate Strategy provides the Council with important context for decision making and the allocation of its resources following changes to the Administration. Approval of the Corporate Strategy is reserved to Full Council.

BACKGROUND

1. As was envisaged when officers last reported to Council in February this year, new arrangements have been applied to the new Corporate Strategy. A new business planning period is envisaged during the autumn/winter period, to better align to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Risk.

2. There has also been a refresh of the Council's priorities now called Strategic Themes. The four Key Strategic Themes that reflects the priorities of the new Administration are:
 - a) Economic Growth;
 - b) Social Cohesion;
 - c) Safeguarding the Environment; and
 - d) An Efficient Council
3. These Strategic Themes will guide the focus of the Strategy and position the Council to be a vehicle to "extend opportunity and prosperity to all".
4. The Corporate Strategy is part of the annual corporate and budget planning process. The Strategy gives direction to the Council so that it continues to focus on the right themes for Harlow to take forward for the next three years.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

5. The Corporate Strategy 2021-2023 attached at Appendix A:
 - a) Sets out the Council's strategic ambitions for the next three years to March 2024 within the financial resources available;
 - b) Provide a firm link to the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and;
 - c) Sets out how the Strategic Themes will be achieved through the Ambitions set out on Appendix A to this report.
6. Overall, the Strategy represents some continuity of the priorities that have gone before, but also signals significant change, including:
 - a) More emphasis on strategic growth and regeneration, climate action and sustainability;
 - b) Investment in our neighbourhoods, our housing and maximising opportunities in our new housing programme;
 - c) A financially efficient, low tax Authority that maximises income; delivers value for money and protects its discretionary services;
 - d) Focus on a community agenda that promotes community and business resilience; social inclusion and is a customer centric organisation;

- e) Setting Harlow on track to be a successful place to work and do business at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor, attracting new investment and businesses; and
 - f) A platform for HTS Group, through its developing Business Plan, to become a greater provider of local authority services.
7. It is proposed that, once the Strategy is approved by Cabinet, the following key activities will be undertaken:
- a) Further engagement with strategic partners;
 - b) Alignment with the MTFS and Risk during the autumn and winter period of 2021;
 - c) Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) undertaken at a later stage when implementation is recommended to Cabinet; and
 - d) The final Strategy brought back for adoption at Full Council later in the year.
8. A 'Delivery Plan' to be developed once the Strategy is approved which will outline the key actions to meet the Ambitions over the life of the Strategy. The Plan will form the basis for future performance reporting to Members and provide an opportunity to refresh the delivery proposals on an annual basis.
9. Subsequent service plans and team plans will be drawn up which will feed into the Personal Performance Plans (PPP's) of staff from April 2022.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)

As contained within the report.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration

Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)

The resources earmarked for delivering the 2021 - 2023 Corporate Strategy will be detailed the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and presented to a future meeting of Cabinet

Author: Simon Freeman, Deputy to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance

Housing

As contained within the report.

Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing

Community Wellbeing

As contained within the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment

Governance (Includes HR)

As contained within the report.

Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Support

Appendices

Appendix A – The Corporate Strategy 2021 - 2023

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

EIA - Equality Impact Assessment

MTFS – Medium-Term Financial Strategy

PPP's – Personal Performance Plans