

**North Norfolk Corporate Plan
Review of delivery February 2020 – October 2021 and agreement of priority objectives for the next twelve months**

Summary: Over the past eighteen months much of the Council's corporate focus has been on responding to the COVID pandemic and supporting local recovery, as well as seeking to maintain core service provision. This has meant that there has been less capacity to progress some aspects of the Council's Corporate Plan Delivery Plan as originally proposed in February 2020.

Cabinet therefore reviewed the Delivery Plan objectives and actions in October 2020 at which time it agreed eighteen priority objectives for delivery over the 12 months from October 2020 – October 2021.

This report outlines the progress made in delivering against the revised priorities given the prolonged COVID situation and against some other Corporate Plan objectives where capacity has existed and proposes new priority objectives for the next year.

Options considered: Given the changing context in which the Council has needed to operate over the period since March 2020 due to COVID the Council could have resolved not to progress any of the Corporate Plan objectives because of the need to concentrate resource on the emergency response. The Cabinet therefore considered a number of possible actions before agreeing a revised list of 18 priority actions for the 12 months from October 2020.

The alternative options considered were:-

- do nothing to re-profile the Delivery Plan actions, or
- agree to "pause" all Delivery Plan actions and concentrate on the COVID response and Business As Usual service provision, which was not considered a viable position given the wider land medium-term pressures the Council faces in terms of its budget etc.

Conclusions: The report details a practical and measured response to the Council prioritising its Delivery Plan actions in light of the COVID situation and the achievement made against these revised objectives over the 12 months October 2020 – October 2021.

Recommendations: **Cabinet is asked to review and comment on the progress made against the original and revised Delivery Plan objectives and agree those objectives where they would wish focus to be directed over the**

next twelve months given the continued COVID situation which, although improving, is still commanding some management time in working with partners in responding to local case rates and seeking to relieve winter pressures on local NHS partners.

Reasons for Recommendations:

To reflect the changed circumstances in which the Council has operated over the period since March 2020 in seeking to balance its Corporate Plan priorities against the ongoing COVID situation.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

--

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
Cllr Sarah Butikofer, Leader of the Council	All

Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Steve Blatch, Chief Executive Email:- steve.blatch@north-norfolk.gov.uk Tel:- 01263 516232

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Following the May 2019 District Council elections, the Council adopted a new Corporate Plan, for the period through until 2023, in November 2019. The Cabinet then agreed a detailed Delivery Plan detailing the specific actions which would be undertaken to deliver the Corporate Plan objectives at its meeting of 3rd February 2020.

1.2 The Corporate Plan has six priority themes, with actions proposed in the Delivery Plan under each of these theme headings:-

- Local Homes for Local Need
- Boosting Business Sustainability and Growth
- Customer Focus
- Climate, Coast and the Environment
- Financial Sustainability and Growth
- Quality of Life

In total some 39 objectives were to be delivered through 90 detailed actions over the period through until 2023.

- 1.3 Within a matter of weeks following agreement of the Delivery Plan, the rapidly developing Coronavirus pandemic situation meant that national and local focus turned to responding to this unprecedented event. At that time the Council's focus moved to strategic partnership working and frontline community response in supporting our residents who were shielding and self-isolating and local businesses which had to close during the national lockdown. Subsequently, much organisational capacity was directed to supporting local "recovery" for the 2020 summer season as the economy "opened up" after the first national lockdown. This required a redeployment of Council staff and reduced management capacity which significantly reduced the Council's capacity to deliver against its Corporate Plan priorities and objectives.
- 1.4 The Cabinet therefore undertook a review and re-prioritisation of Delivery Plan actions at its meeting of the 5th October 2020 identifying 18 objectives which would be given most focus over the 12 months to autumn 2021.
- 1.5 This report therefore reviews the progress made over the past twelve months on the delivery of the 18 priority objectives as agreed last October, as well as against the original Corporate Plan objectives. This review will also be set in the context of the wider issue of reporting against the Council's Performance Management Framework which has been raised in recent Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

2.0 The revised(October 2020) Delivery Plan priorities:-

- 2.1 The following objectives were identified by Cabinet under a re-focussed Delivery Plan, for delivery in the period October 2020 - October 2021.

2.2 Local Homes for Local Need

- Progress preparation of the Local Plan (and respond to the Planning White Paper)
- Continued investment in Temporary Accommodation – both as an investment and in terms of reducing the Council's costs providing this service in respect of rising homeless presentations
- Explore through the development of a business model whether the District Council should consider the acquisition of older Victory (Flagship) Housing Trust properties in rural locations and then upgrade and make available for market rent, so as to increase the availability of housing in some of the District's most unaffordable housing areas, due to high property prices fueled by demand for second and holiday homes.

2.3 Business Growth

- Post COVID support for tourism businesses
- Re-purposing the High Street – to include leadership of the North Walsham Heritage Action Zone programme

- Support for existing indigenous businesses / strategic sites, recognising the shortage of serviced and land and premises in the District

2.4 Customer Focus

- Develop and implement a new Customer Service Strategy – to include response times, improved complaints handling and reporting
- Development and implementation of the “Digital by Design” programme to capture the benefits of “channel-shift” seen through COVID through further development of the website to allow greater self-service options for customers to obtain Council services
- Development of new Communications and Engagement strategies

2.5 Climate, Coast and the Environment

- Develop policy and response to our declaring a Climate Emergency including deeper understanding of the Council’s carbon footprint and aspirations to achieve “net-zero” status by 2030.
- Progress and roll-out more rapidly the Council’s programme of tree-planting in support of the stated ambition to plant 110,000 over the four-year term of this Council
- Deliver a programme of Electric Vehicle Charging Points across the District

2.6 Financial Sustainability and Growth

- Implement Zero-Based Budgeting for the 2021/22 financial year
- Update the Council’s Property Strategy to maximize use of assets and return on investments
- Develop and implement a Commercialisation (Income and Savings) Strategy

2.7 Quality of Life

- Undertake a Residents Survey to inform the development and implementation of a new Quality of Life Strategy for the District
- Deliver the new Leisure Centre at Sheringham
- Maintain and develop the quality and offer of our beaches, woodland and open spaces

2.8 The progress made in respect of these 18 priority objectives, as well as the original 39 Corporate Plan objectives agreed in February 2020 is reported in in detail Appendix 1 attached to this report.

3.0 2021/22 priorities

3.1 Having reflected on the progress made against the priority objectives agreed in October 2020 (as per the appendix to this report); Cabinet has proposed the following priority objectives and actions to be pursued in the period November 2021 – October 2022.

3.2 **Local Homes for Local Need**

- Investigate the viability of methods to help reduce fuel poverty amongst vulnerable local residents in the context of rapidly rising fuel prices and the climate change / Net Zero Carbon agenda
- Investigate ways to support and assist affordable housing providers, including the potential for a Council loan scheme for Registered Providers to facilitate a supply of affordable homes for our communities, whilst supporting the Council's financial sustainability.
- Explore ways to help households into owner-occupation, including consideration of mortgage facilitation schemes; lending to allow people to buy their own home, meaning that more local people can remain in the communities that they call home
- Increase the provision of Housing with Extra Care schemes in the District to provide increased choice and better quality outcomes for independent living by older people in the District

3.3 **Business Growth**

- Develop a new Economic Growth Strategy for the District
- Re-purposing the High Street – to include leadership of the North Walsham Heritage Action Zone programme

3.4 **Customer Focus**

- Establish a training and development programme to enable all employees to deliver excellent customer focused services aimed at delivering the Customer Charter. This will give our teams, the skills, abilities and tools to deliver on our service commitment.
- Establish a Youth Council to give a stronger voice for younger people in Council decisions, specifically to:
 - better understand the views of younger people in the community
 - reflect opinions
 - identify actions
 - inform policy development
- Development of an Engagement Strategy to:
 - help define and design local priorities and policies
 - deliver and evaluate services
 - inform council decision-making in areas that impact on our residents lives

3.5 Climate, Coast and the Environment

- Ensure that the carbon impact of all activities are evidenced in all relevant decisions by establishing new processes/procedures for decision making and report writing
- Develop and implement targeted campaigns to educate and influence the consumption and waste practices of residents, communities and local businesses.
- Continue to develop and roll-out more rapidly the Council's programme of tree-planting in support of the stated ambition to plant 110,000 over the four-year term of this Council

3.6 Financial Sustainability and Growth

- Implement the outcomes of the Zero-Based Budgeting process
- Review the Car Parking Policy in order to maximise the revenue generated from car parking income, as an important source of funding for council services
- Explore options to expand Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) pilot following a review of the success of the EVCP pilot and expand it as required, based on the assessment of a business case

3.7 Quality of Life

- Develop a new Quality of Life Strategy for the District
- Deliver a minimum of 4 new Changing Place facilities in the District as part of the Council's objective of inclusion and accessibility for all
- Maintain and develop the quality and offer of our beaches, woodland and open spaces

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

4.1 The Director of Resources and Finance Team are to present an updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy and draft budget papers based on the Zero Based Budgeting exercise to Cabinet at its December meeting.

4.2 These key reports will describe the progress made in delivering the Corporate Plan objectives over the past 18 months against the Delivery Plan Reserve and the anticipated costs involved in financing new / additional Delivery Plan proposals in the context of the Council's wider financial position in relation to COVID, inflation and local government funding.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 Risks

- 6.1 Given the continued uncertainties which exist globally, nationally and locally around “building back” from the COVID pandemic in the coming months, it would have to be recognised that there might be some risks about the capacity of the Council to deliver against the Delivery Plan objectives proposed moving forward
- 6.2 However, as outlined in this report, the Cabinet has carefully assessed delivery against the Corporate Plan objectives agreed by Full Council in February 2020 and which were then re-focussed in October 2020 to reflect the capacity issues experienced during 2020 through the Council responding to the COVID pandemic. Despite an expectation that COVID will continue to present ongoing challenges over the next 12 months it is believed looking forward that by retaining focus on key project delivery and regular reporting of performance that continued progress will be able to be demonstrated against the Corporate Plan objectives over the next 12 months.

7.0 Sustainability

- 7.1. This report does not in itself raise any issues in respect of sustainability. However, it does detail the priority actions of the Council in seeking to respond to climate change issues within the Climate, Coast and the Environment theme within the Corporate Plan.

8.0 Equality and Diversity

- 8.1. This report does not in itself raise any issues in respect of equality and diversity. It does however identify key themes of housing, the economy, quality of life and customer service, all of which seek to address equality and diversity issues across the District and within the Council’s delivery of services.

9.0 Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

- 9.1. This report does not directly raise any issues relating to Crime and Disorder.

10.0 Recommendation:-

Cabinet is asked to confirm the revised Delivery Plan priorities as detailed in Section 3.0 of the report.