

NON EXEMPT

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

Full Council

26 February 2020

Corporate Strategy Policy Framework

FOR DECISION

Report of Cllr Wilson

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Havant Borough Council must have a corporate strategy document which sets out the ambitions and proposed approach to delivery of the services of the Council. Constitution Article 3.2 a) iv)
- 1.2 The corporate strategy is the key policy framework document that should articulate at a high level the Council's aims for the provision of services for residents and businesses in its area. This provides the policy framework to Cabinet and any matters within that policy framework are matters solely for Cabinet and do not need to return to full council. SO 57.1
- 1.3 Conversely any matters falling outside of the policy framework or the budget framework will require approval at full council. Standing Order 61. It is important the document covers all the proposed endeavours that the council wishes to undertake through the executive function of cabinet over the next 4 years. This allows Cabinet the freedom to pursue goals on behalf of the Council in a timely and directed way.
- 1.4 The draft presented to Council is for approval for this year. It represents the initial approach being adopted by the council for the future. This document must be refined and developed over the next 12 months to reflect the needs of the whole community. Council Standing Orders sets out a minimum engagement process (SO.58) and it is proposed that process is complimented by additional engagement with the residents and business.
- 1.5 The Corporate Strategy as agreed by Council informs how the budgets and resources are allocated. It is important that the Corporate Strategy links to the budget and the refining of the strategy during the next

financial year will inform the budget development. The budget should become the financial representation of the Corporate Strategy.

- 1.6 The refining of the Strategy will be achieved through the engagement proposals set out at appendix 3. Council will be asked to reconsider the Corporate Strategy following the full consultation which may suggest alterations to any element of the plan.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 Agree the draft for developing the Corporate Strategy as the core of the policy framework and to commence the process set out in standing order 58
- 2.2 Agree the additional future engagement in the development of the Corporate Strategy during 2020.
- 2.3 Require the Corporate Strategy as developed to be considered by Council as soon as reasonably practicable.

3 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Corporate Strategy is the document which captures the essence of the Havant Borough Council future proposals. This document forms the key part of the core policy framework and is approved by Council. The policy framework sets out the ambitions and approach of the Council to the delivery of its services to the residents and businesses of the area. The document is designed to guide the approach of the council to local issues for the next 4 years.
- 3.2 The policy framework set the parameters which empowers the Cabinet (Executive) to deliver those ambitions. The strategy document is the top level and is designed to recognise and provide a route to deliver the changes.
- 3.3 For example: The Corporate Strategy gives clarity to the Councils stated aim of redeveloping and supporting town centres. It need only specify that regeneration is a Council priority. The supporting plans are for Cabinet to decide and will identify the town centre, the over arching regeneration proposal and set out the relevant governance structures, delivery boards etc. This detail will be informed by the public and business engagement which will be undertaken on each planned project. Council decides regeneration is a priority and Cabinet decides how that regeneration will be delivered.
- 3.4 All councils have limited resources. The Councils priorities are set by Council. These priorities are to be delivered by Cabinet on behalf of the Council. The strategy document acts as the anchor which holds Cabinet to the aims of the Council, protects against ad hoc ideas, or politically expedient and hopeful promises. This document allows

Cabinet the freedom to act within the policy framework. It is therefore important that the totality of the ambitions of the Council are articulated.

- 3.5 The Strategy also gives important clarity to when the deviation from the Councils objectives are becoming sufficiently marked to require the Cabinet to return to full council and justify the new approach.
- 3.6 The Scrutiny function is the primary method for holding the Cabinet to account. Moving forward through 2020 Scrutiny must engage with and assist in refining the Corporate Strategy. Constitution Article 6.4. It should also be expected that Scrutiny may wish to consider, advise and influence the development of the underlying corporate delivery plans.
- 3.7 The Scrutiny function is required to remain alert to when the direction of travel is departing from the Corporate Strategy and Scrutiny may call in that decision, if the Committee considers may fall outside of the Policy Framework. After a decision has been scrutinised and if the committee conclude the decision falls outside of the policy framework, they may refer the matter to full council.
- 3.8 This policy document provides the back bone upon which the strategies for the delivery of every service rests. If a new priority arises that falls outside of the framework it will, subject to some constitutional mitigations, require consideration at council. The business plan documents and ancillary strategies support the delivery of the corporate strategy are hugely important and fall to cabinet to decide.
- 3.9 The proposal requires Scrutiny to be fully engaged with the development of the final document as the effective policing of the policy framework falls to them.
- 3.10 The importance of the Corporate Strategy is the way it sets the direction of travel and the restriction it places around Cabinet. The Executive and Officer core are greatly empowered by the setting of a direction and the ability to identify any proposal that falls outside of the Council's priorities. This becomes a key method to ensure the limited resources of the authority are applied in sufficient quantity on appropriate projects to achieve the Councils objectives.
- 3.11 A full engagement on the policy framework with the public, businesses, outside bodies is required to ensure those voices are heard and reflected as the strategy is developed and crystallised in the perfected version of the document. This engagement externally and internally with members and Scrutiny will occur over several months.

4 Additional Budgetary Implications

- 4.1 The Corporate Strategy makes no budgetary commitments but informs the budgetary framework and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5 Background and relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Directorate Business Plan/s

5.1 This document will replace the existing corporate strategy and will form the basis of the engagement.

6 Options considered and reasons for the recommendation

6.1 **Option 1:** To remain with the current Corporate Strategy.

6.2 **Option 2:** Delay the adoption of the development plan to revise the Corporate strategy pending a full consultation and engagement programme over the next 12 months. This will mean the current strategy continues until superseded.

6.3 **Option 3:** Adopt the development of a new Corporate Strategy and grow and refine that strategy through engagement with the public and business as matters begin to crystallise. This allows the strategic aims of the authority to be subject to review and it is anticipated the Corporate Strategy will be refreshed and updated.

6.4 Officer recommendation is to adopt **option 3**

7 Resource Implications

7.1 **Financial Implications:** None

7.2 **Human Resources Implications:** None

7.3 **Information Governance Implications:** None

7.4 **Other Resource Implication:** The Strategy does not commit resources in itself but provides the framework and should influence the budgetary framework.

7.5 Additional resource of the insight team and communication teams is essential if the strategy is to fully engage the public in its development.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 This approach is designed to facilitate a more modern flexible approach. A clear strategic document that is fully up to date, comprehensive and includes all key elements of the objectives will give a high degree of 'future proofing' and clarity on decision making forum. This is designed to be simpler for Members and Officers with much clearer Council objectives which allow Cabinet and Scrutiny a high degree of certainty in decision making.

9 Risks

- 9.1 The do-nothing option means the Corporate Strategy becomes more and more dated and less relevant.
- 9.2 The Council is looking towards a new and vibrant active future to meet the challenges around development regeneration and business growth, health and wellbeing. This frames how those ambitions will be delivered. The operational delivery will be supported by more detailed strategies, plans and procedures.
- 9.3 This is not the final or definitive document and the wider review and engagement is essential.

10 Consultation

- 10.1 This is a recommendation from Cabinet. The policy framework document may be described as a living document and this review may be seen as the start point in SO 58. It is proposed the initial recommendations of cabinet are approved at full council and this form the basis of a wider engagement with the public and business in the borough. The proposed engagement and review timetable is set out in Appendix 3

11 Communication

- 11.1 The Corporate Strategy will be developed and eventually published on our website and 2020 will be used for further refinement and consultation. The initial document is not the definitive strategy but becomes the first stage of a living document that is subject to annual review.

12 Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Draft Corporate Strategy
- Appendix 2: Exempt Legal Advice
- Appendix 3: Consultation and review timetable
- Appendix 4: Synopsis of Evidence.

Agreed and signed off by:

Monitoring Officer:
S151 Officer:

Portfolio Holder: (date) 9 February 2020

Contact Officer: David Brown
Job Title: Head of Legal Services
Telephone: 02392 446524
E-Mail: david.brown@easthants.gov.uk