

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 16 September 2024
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: No
Title of Report: **Southend-on-Sea City Council
Refreshed Corporate Plan 2024-2028**

Executive Director: Claire Shuter – Executive Director Strategy & Change
Report Author: Suzanne Newman, Head of Corporate Strategy
Executive Councillor: Councillor Cowan, Leader of the Council

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Our Corporate Plan is the principal corporate strategy of Southend-on-Sea City Council. It recognises our primary role in delivering good quality local government services in the city. It sets out our areas of focus in four overarching priorities. It details the outcomes we wish to achieve, the actions we will take to deliver them and how we will resource the necessary activity. It covers the council's priorities and is an important tool to help focus our effort and resources on the right things. This is even more important in the context of reducing budgets and rapid change.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1. Recommends approval of the draft Corporate Plan 2024-28 (**Appendix 1**) to Council with responsibility for any final changes prior to publication delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

3. Background

- 3.1. The intention of the Corporate Plan is to communicate to residents and employees, our strategic objectives, the activity we will undertake, how we will align our resource, and the outcomes we aim to achieve. It is shaped by a number of influences, including: the political administration's priorities; our statutory responsibilities; responses to inspections and audits, including feedback from the Local Government Association Peer visit; and national policy change.
- 3.2. Our Corporate Plan provides an essential narrative to direct the work we will take to achieve a set of common goals. It provides a place to knit the

council's key objectives together in a way that makes sense to everyone. It aims to:

- provide clarity and direction in a 4-year business plan through clear articulation of what is important
- ensure efficient use of resources
- provide a way of measuring success
- support effective decision making
- coordinate activities
- motivate and guide employees

4. Our corporate plan

- 4.1. The council has four priorities which seek to address the needs and challenges of our city and the council:

A city that is:

- **Proud and prosperous**
- **Safe, clean and green**
- **Caring with a good quality of life for all**
- **Led by a transformative, responsive council**

The Corporate Delivery plan

- 4.2. Key activity to deliver the outcomes under each of the corporate priorities is captured in the corporate delivery plan, **Appendix 2**. Progress against these actions will be reported to Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team.

Corporate Performance Report

- 4.3. We will measure and monitor our progress in delivering priorities and adapt our resources and approach accordingly. Our performance monitoring is aligned with our financial reporting and risk management. Key performance indicators are associated to each of our strategic priorities, reported to our Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team. All council employees have performance and development conversations, connecting them to the delivery of outcomes. A summary of the key performance measures included in the Corporate Performance Report is attached at **Appendix 3**

Council Vision

- 4.4. Within the Corporate Plan, the council has articulated a clear vision for the organisation. The vision will guide a new framework to support the organisation to develop more efficient and innovative ways to delivery services. The vision statement is the culmination of employee engagement across the organisation, senior leaders and cross-party engagement with councillors. As a result, the vision statement represents the characteristics of an organisation which our employees value and aspire to most. It will guide and motivate our employees to achieve the strategic objectives and corporate priorities.

At Southend-on-Sea City Council, we are proud to be part of a modern, vibrant coastal city that values its heritage.

We listen, with our city's many voices shaping what we do. We have the confidence to innovate, embrace connection and seek opportunity, and are building a sustainable future together.

5. Reasons for Decisions

- 5.1. To ensure the Council has a robust strategic plan that clearly articulates the priorities for the organisation, enabling efficient use of resources.

6. Other Options

- 6.1. There is no requirement to have a Corporate Plan, but it is best practice (as set out in the Best Value Guidance) and provides an essential guide to set the direction for our work towards a set of common goals

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. Resourcing the Council's strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan will require tough choices and careful consideration over the next four years. Decisions will be underpinned by our Financial Sustainability Strategy 2022 to 2032 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2024-25 to 2028-29, helping to support our ambition to deliver better outcomes for residents and for the Council to remain financially resilient.
- 7.2. Some of the strategic priorities have existing capital or revenue budgets to enable them to progress. Other priorities may need additional council resources, and if necessary, these will need to be considered through the normal governance processes and within the relevant budget setting reports. Any additional resources required will need to be considered alongside all the other statutory demands and pressures impacting on the council's budget whilst ensuring a robust and deliverable budget and maintaining the financial sustainability of the Council.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1. Being the principal corporate strategy, the Corporate Plan falls within the remit of the Council to approve.
- 8.2. Article 4 of the Constitution sets out those matters which are reserved to the Council. This states that Southend 2050, the former principal corporate strategy, is reserved to Council for approval. As this Corporate Plan stands in the place of the Southend 2050 strategy, it is for the Cabinet to recommend its approval to Council.

9. Policy Context

- 9.1. The Corporate Plan is shaped by a number of influences, which include: the administration's priorities; our statutory responsibilities; responses to inspections and audits; and national policy change.

10. Carbon Impact

- 10.1. The Council is committed to becoming net zero carbon by 2030 to address the climate emergency, with this being a leading priority for the Council. Priority activities include: minimising waste, promoting re-use and increasing recycling; developing an active and sustainable travel network; enhancing and protecting our natural environment; and undertaking flood and coastal erosion risk management.

11. Equalities

- 11.1. The Council's Equality Objectives were updated in 2022 with a new approach to support our desire to be more effective and accountable on equality, diversity and inclusion matters. The approach includes an overarching Equalities Statement that sets a vision for the type of council we want to be. We will achieve the vision through a number of objectives, which cover four key topics: employees, access to services, partnership working and community cohesion. Under each topic we have identified a commitment which describes a specific and measurable piece of work, which when completed will help us on our journey to achieving our stated equalities vision. We will report on our progress against the commitments in future corporate plans.

12. Consultation

- 12.1. The Corporate Plan has been informed by findings from the residents' perception survey undertaken in 2021, in addition to specific consultation, engagement and co-production for associated strategies and plans.
- 12.2. All employees and councillors had the opportunity to engage in the development of the council vision. Around 200 employees took part in workshops and a cross-party workshop was held with Councillors.

13. Background documents

- 13.1. Financial Sustainability Strategy 2022 to 2032
- 13.2. Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024-25 to 2028-29

14. Appendices

- 14.1. **Appendix 1**: Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2028
- 14.2. **Appendix 2**: Corporate Delivery Plan
- 14.3. **Appendix 3**: Corporate Performance Measures
- 14.4. **Appendix 4**: Supporting Strategies & Plans

15. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	19.07.24
Monitoring Officer	Susan Zeiss	18.07.24
Executive Director(s)	Claire Shuter	19.07.24
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Daniel Cowan	22.07.24