

SCRUTINY

Agenda Item: 08

Ward: All

Portfolio: All

Report Author(s): Cllr Liz Leyshon,
Portfolio Holder – Corporate
Service

Meeting Date:
17th August 2021

SUBJECT: Corporate Delivery Plan

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	Seen by:	Name	Date
Officer Sign off	Chief Executive/ Deputy Chief Executive(s)	Stuart Brown	03.08.2021
	Legal	Lesley Dolan	04.08.2021
	Finance	Richard Bates	03.08.2021
	Assistant CEO	Haylee Wilkins	03.08.2021
Elected Member Sign off	Portfolio Holder	Cllr Liz Leyshon	05.08.2021
	Leader of the Council	Cllr Ros Wyke	05.08.2021
Summary:	In light of the Government's decision to move to a single unitary authority for Somerset, there is a need to consider the key elements of the Corporate Plan that can be delivered over the period remaining for the current Administration, recognising the impact that this decision will have on the Council's resources. This report presents the proposed Delivery Plan priorities for the Council over the next year.		
Recommendation:	Scrutiny is asked to note the proposals in the plan and make recommendations to Cabinet on these proposals.		
Direct and/or indirect impact on service delivery to our customers and communities:	Approval of the Delivery Plan by Cabinet will see increased delivery of the actions identified and will, in certain circumstances, see improved service delivery for our customers and communities.		
Contribution to Corporate Priorities:	The paper identifies a contribution to all three Corporate Priorities.		

Legal Implications:	There are no perceived legal implications associated with this report.
Financial Implications:	<p>The report identifies the financial costs associated with each item.</p> <p>These are set out within the financial section below, however, in summary, the proposed amendments can be financed within existing budgets, with some realignment of reserves and with no negative impacts on existing services or other corporate priorities already in train.</p>
Climate Change Risk and Opportunities:	<p>The Climate Change, Risk and Opportunity matrix has been completed in support of this plan and can be provided if requested.</p> <p>Equally, the paper is considered to directly link to the Councils Climate and Ecological change commitments and action plan.</p>
Impact on Service Plans:	Service plans will be adjusted, where relevant, to address the Delivery Plan requirements.
Value for Money:	There are no perceived negative impacts associated with the attached proposals as the realignment of reserves, unrequired capital forecasts and MTRS provisions will meet the required need identified.
Equalities Implications:	There are no perceived adverse impacts associated with this report.
Risk Assessment and Adverse Impact on Corporate Actions:	There are no perceived adverse impacts associated with this report.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Council's Corporate Plan was adopted in 2020 to run until 2023. Within the Corporate Plan are three priorities:

1. Make Mendip a fairer place
2. Deliver on our Climate and Ecological Commitment
3. Protect and enhance our towns and rural communities

In light of the decision by Government to move to a single unitary authority for Somerset it is necessary to reconsider how the Council can best deliver on some of the areas of work at a greater pace, to ensure that resources are in place to complete these whilst the Council carries out the transitional work necessary to successfully create a new Council to serve our residents.

THE DELIVERY PLAN

The Council approved its Corporate Plan in 2020 and has been delivering on the activities within it over the last sixteen months, alongside the work carried out to address the impacts of the pandemic and to support our communities through this period.

The quarterly reporting to Scrutiny and Cabinet has shown considerable progress even in the face of the pandemic and its resulting pressures. With the country starting to move towards a post pandemic world the intention has been to refocus Council energies to deliver the remainder of the Corporate Plan in the final two years of the current Administration, recognising that the priorities set prior to the pandemic now have even more resonance in the world that is emerging. Recovery and re-growth post COVID is vital for our towns and rural communities and our priorities will help deliver this.

However, with the announcement by Government on 21 st July of its decision to move to a single unitary council for Somerset, the Council now recognises that the final two years of the Administration will face different pressures to those originally anticipated.

Going forwards there will be a need to create the new Council in partnership with the other Councils in Somerset which will place a resource pressure on our organisation. Alongside this there will be a need to continue to deliver the much-needed services that our residents need from us and that we have a statutory obligation to ensure take place. We do not however want to lose sight of the commitments made in our Corporate Plan and therefore need to find a way to manage the delivery of the key elements of the Plan as well.

The Delivery Plan below outlines the proposed areas of focus over the next year. We recognise that as more information comes out regarding the transitional work necessary to deliver the new Council and as pressures on our organisation alter, there will naturally have to be alterations and changes to this plan. As such it must be recognised that this plan will evolve over time as circumstances change. What will not change are the Council's Corporate Priorities.

The attached Appendix A represents the proposed amendments.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The services within Mendip District Council hold a number of earmarked reserves set aside for a variety of purposes. These include a number of the areas outlined in the revised delivery plan which will require funding to be taken forwards.

Rather than having to find corresponding savings, it is therefore suggested that these existing funds are used where possible.

The following areas can therefore be covered from within existing earmarked reserves:-

- a) Affordable Housing £200k
- b) Administrative support for the community & CEEG grant schemes £25k
- c) Economic Development £130k

Additionally, the end of year review of reserves and balances has also recently been completed, following finalisation of the end of year accounts. This has identified almost £700k of existing reserves which can now be re-prioritised from their original purpose. These consist of:-

Corporate Capacity £100k
Brexit £200k
Fair value adjustment for Investment Properties £290k
New Burdens housing funding £90k
Family focus / income generation £17k

TOTAL £697k

The use of these funds towards different priorities will need to be agreed by Cabinet.

The end of year position for the Council ended up £369k better than what had been anticipated when the budget was set in February 2021. This sum has been added to the MTFP reserve at present. It is now proposed that £300k of this is re-allocated to the Multi-user paths programme, adding to the £50k already agreed in March 2021. This will require Cabinet approval.

None of the re-prioritisation set out above will adversely affect existing service priorities or will impact on corporate performance.

The other outstanding issue is whether any funding will be required to meet a share of transition costs for the formation of the new Somerset Council. At present it is unclear whether these costs will be met by the County Council. Clarification of this is being sought from MHCLG and will be contained within the Structural Change Order that will be presented and must be agreed by both Houses of Parliament to bring into effect the Secretary of State's decision. At this point, options are being examined which include funding through asset disposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Scrutiny is asked to note the proposals in the plan and make recommendations to Cabinet on these proposals.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The change in circumstances in the delivery of local government in Somerset mean that the Council will need to work with other partners to develop a new Council for Somerset. This will have a resource implication and to ensure that the existing priorities of the Corporate Plan are still addressed there is a need to identify key actions, and their necessary resourcing, for delivery over the next year.

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List of background Papers:

APPENDIX A - Delivery Plan 2021 – 2023