

COUNCIL – 14 FEBRUARY 2023

STRATEGIC PLAN

Report by the Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The Council is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - a. **adopt the Strategic Plan as set out in Section 1**

Introduction

2. The Strategic Plan is the key element of the Council's Policy Framework that sets the Council's strategic priorities, and in turn, influences the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
3. This report forms part of the suite of information for the Budget and Business Planning process for 2023/24 to 2025/26. As such, the Sections referred to in this report are linked with those set out in the report at agenda item CC10 on Budget and Business Planning 2023/24 to 2025/26.
4. The proposed updated strategic plan is included at Section 1. The priorities, commitments and objectives in the strategic plan sit under a long-term vision 'to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county'.

Equality & Inclusion and Sustainability Implications

5. The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on local authorities that, when making decisions of a strategic nature, decision makers must exercise 'due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination... advance equality of opportunity... and foster good relations.'
6. In developing budget proposals which are influenced by the Strategic Plan, services have considered the potential impact of change with respect to equality, diversity and inclusion, in line with the council's framework "Including Everyone".
7. "Including Everyone" sets out how the council goes further than the protected characteristics in the Equality Act by also considering the impact our decisions might have on people living with social deprivation, rural communities, those leaving care, carers and those in our armed forces community.

8. The Climate Action Framework sets the council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency which is underpinned by the Council's priority to put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
9. Section 4.7 and 4.8 of the Budget and Business Planning Report at item CC10 on this agenda set out the overarching summary impact assessments for both climate and equalities.

Financial Implications

10. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, the Strategic Plan is an integral part of the Budget and Business Planning process, and the priorities and objectives influence the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Comments checked by: Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance

Legal Implications

11. Part 3.2 of the Council's constitution (Budget and Policy Framework) sets out the obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Full Council in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework. As the Strategic Plan is an integral part of the Budget and Business Planning process the proper consideration of its priorities and objectives is an important part of the budget setting process. This report sets out elsewhere the Equality Act 2010 considerations applicable to this matter. As previously reported to Cabinet, the strategic priorities within the Strategic Plan are unchanged from the previous year and the areas of focus have all been refreshed and updated into objectives to reflect the Council's current ambitions.
12. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council tax payers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term, the need to strike a fair balance between the interests of the Council Tax payers and ratepayers and the community's interest in adequate and efficient services and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The Council's Strategic Plan enables it to consider the prudent use of resources in accordance with its priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan as well as its statutory duties and powers.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Claire Taylor, Corporate Director of Customers and Organisational Development

Background papers:

- 1) Budget and Business Planning Report to Cabinet 18 October 2022
- 2) Budget and Business Planning Report to Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 9 December 2022

- 3) Budget and Business Planning Report to Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023
- 4) Budget and Business Planning Report to Cabinet 24 January 2023

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