

A NEW CORPORATE STRATEGY 2020-2024

1.0 Corporate Priority:	Decision Type:
1.1 The new Corporate Strategy 2020-2024 will replace the previous Corporate Plan (2015-2020) and will create a new set of Corporate priorities for the next 4 years.	Key Decision

2.0 Summary:
2.1 This report sets out the proposed Corporate Strategy 2020-2024 for consideration, and with the intention of making a recommendation to Council. The new strategy sets out the Council’s Mission, Vision, Values, Priorities and Key Actions for the coming 4 years. It includes proposals to improve the quality of council homes and landlord services, more effectively tackle community issues, regenerate our town and rural communities and improve services to customers. It has been developed taking into account the challenges facing the Council and the community and draws upon evidence, including the results from the recent Residents’ Survey and public consultation.

3.0 Recommendations

4.0 Reason for Recommendation:
4.1 To set the strategic direction of the Council for the next four years and to establish a set of affordable corporate priorities which provide clarity and focus at a time of ongoing significant financial pressures.
4.2 The new strategy seeks to find a balance between affordability and ambition; a balance between investing in core services and new initiatives.

5.0 Alternate Options Considered
5.1 To continue with the existing Corporate priorities. This is not recommended as it will impede the Council’s ability to meet its strategic aspirations including improving the quality of the housing services, customer services more generally, generating additional return on our assets and more effectively tackling community concerns.

6.0 Report Detail

6.1 The current Council Corporate Strategy was approved in 2015 and runs until 2020. With the arrival of the new Chief Executive in August 2017 and following a peer review by the Local Government Association, the Strategy was updated for the period 2018 to 2020 to reflect emerging issues affecting the Council at that time. Following the Council elections in May 2019, the process to develop a new Corporate Strategy to consider what we should focus on over the next four years began.

6.2 The new Strategy needs to find a balance between affordability and ambition (identifying resources needed), a balance between investing in core services and investing in new initiatives, to address the challenges the Council (and our communities) are facing in the future and the need to prioritise what we do to effectively deliver.

6.3 The Council's journey to the new Corporate Strategy

Over the last six months the Council has sought to review and reflect upon the current and future challenges faced both by the organisation and the community. It has sought to gather a range of views from different groups, as well as from wider data and evidence.

The development of the strategy has drawn upon a number of sources:

LGA Peer Challenge Review: Undertaken in December 2017, this report identified a number of areas for improvement for the Council including governance processes.

Narrative Statement: This document took a detailed look at the Council in 2018-19 including identifying key political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental influences that affected the Council's finances. The statement drew on the Local Plan and Strategic Growth Plan, the Melton Growth and Prosperity Plan 2018-2020 and the policy context in respect of regional and sub-regional policy.

Corporate Performance measures: The performance measures reports for 2018-19 Q4 and 2019-2020 Q1 have identified areas of good performance and those services which require improvement in their performance. The Council has also made use of the LG Inform tool to facilitate comparative analysis with other councils.

Local Industrial Strategy Economic Review – Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership: This report sets out the evidence base that will underpin the Leicester and Leicestershire LEP (LLEP) Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). It draws on a mix of published data, forecasts, consultations and strategy documents as well as existing studies and business surveys. The analysis follows LIS guidance and focuses on productivity performance and its five drivers: business environment, ideas, people, place and infrastructure

Rural Evidence base 2018 – LCC: This document provides an evidence base that pulls together information, from a wide variety of sources to emphasise that issues do exist in rural areas, such as lower Broadband speeds and fewer affordable homes that can have a limiting effect on the rural economy. This report

provided a robust evidence base to help influence the rural content and priority given to Leicestershire's rural economy within the Local Industrial Strategy shown above.

Local Insight Profile (Sport England) – Melton: This tool gives access to interactive maps and reports at small area level. These reports show key social and economic indicators and develop and interpret the evidence base to help the public and community organisations deliver better services.

Community Input: The Council undertook a Residents' Survey in June/July 2019 with 5,000 households receiving a series of questions about the Council, its services and their views on the wider area. The results of the survey have been used to inform the development of the Corporate Strategy, to give the Council a baseline to measure improvement during the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and to identify a cohort of people to help the Council develop services and improve decision making in the future. Including face-to-face surveys, more than 1,700 responses were received. The resident survey is described in more detail at Section 7.

Developing the strategy: The evidence and views received have been considered by Cabinet and they have worked with officers to develop a new vision and priorities and investment proposals for the next four years. These were subject to public consultation in December 2019. Further details are provided in the consultation section below and the final proposals below take into account the views expressed.

6.4 **Mission, and Vision**

The Council's Mission is a statement of purpose and sets out why an organisation exists. It is proposed that the Council's Mission should remain unchanged as

Helping people. Shaping places.

A **corporate vision** sets out in broad terms what the council wants to achieve on behalf of the community it serves. In developing the new strategy it became clear a new Vision for the Council was required to provide a new clear statement of intent, This is proposed as below:

We want to be a first-class council, on the side of our communities and providing great services, where the customer comes first. We want to help people reach their potential, support the most vulnerable, and protect our rural environment. We want to provide more and better homes, create better jobs and regenerate the town. We want to ensure Melton prospers; benefiting those who live here and attracting others to visit and invest.

6.5 **Priority Themes**

Through reviewing the evidence base, considering the views of residents and reflecting upon the challenges faced both by the Council and the community the following priority themes are proposed:

Helping People:

- Service Excellence in all we do
- Providing high quality council homes and landlord services

Shaping Places:

- Protect our climate and Enhance our rural, natural environment
- Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton

Great Council:

- Ensuring the right conditions to support delivery
- Connected with and led by the Community

Through the Corporate Strategy the Council is intending to make a number of **key investment decisions**. These are:

- Unprecedented investment in our housing landlord services and council homes
- Support to Rural Pubs through a capital grants scheme
- Investment in plans for a Food Enterprise Centre, Manufacturing Zones and a sustainable future for our Leisure Facilities
- Investment in enforcement to tackle the things that matter to our communities; tackling anti-social behaviour and issue which affect our environment.
- Investment in a new destination children's play facility for the town
- Investment in our commercial property team so we can use our assets to build homes, create jobs and generate income.
- Investment in our debt management as we become more business-like and ensure we recover money owed to us
- Investment in technology, improved processes and a renewed focus on our customers for all our services
- Commitment to regenerate our town and deliver new homes and better jobs
- Commitment to reach out to and work with our communities and parishes
- Commitment to use our resources flexibly, be more commercial and secure our financial future
- Improvement in gateway and town centre planting, signage and street furniture to support aspirations to get gold in Melton in Bloom
- Commitment to maintaining our Armed Forces Covenant and supporting our veterans
- Enhancing our community grants budget to support communities to do more for themselves.

Further details of the proposed work streams and objectives associated within each theme are set out in Appendix A:

Resourcing the Strategy

To support the new strategy a new organisational structure has been endorsed by Cabinet and approved by the Employment Committee. The purpose of this restructure is to redirect resources to the new key priority areas so they can be more effectively delivered. The structure seeks to ensure the organisation is equipped to deliver improvements in the quality of council homes and landlord

services, as well as service excellence more generally. It facilitates greater capacity to commercially manage corporate assets so the Council can build more homes, and consolidates regulatory services within a new team to increase the pace and consistency with which the Council tackles community problems.

7.0 Consultation and Feedback (including Scrutiny Committee)

7.1 Significant discussions have taken place across the organisation, and at different levels to help inform and develop the new Strategy. The Chief Executive has undertaken staff briefings open to all staff to enable feedback on the Strategy proposals to be made.

7.2 The Corporate Strategy has been led and driven by the Cabinet who have overseen the process and all Members have had the opportunity to feed in through a strategic development day. This report will also be presented to Scrutiny prior the Cabinet endorsing the final version and recommending its adoption at Council.

A Residents' Survey was undertaken during June/July 2019. 5,000 surveys were sent out to random households across the whole of the Borough. This was based on Royal Mail postal address file – stratified by ward and then post code to ensure that the results of the survey were reflective of people from the whole of the Borough and they therefore had an opportunity to help develop the Corporate Strategy and provide a baseline to measure improvement during the delivery of the new Strategy. The survey was based on the Local Government Association Survey (to allow a comparison to be made on a national basis). We also used results from our last Place Survey in 2008 for comparison purposes. Where relevant the results of the Residents' Survey in June 2019 have been compared with the latest LGA Survey (June 2019) and the Place Survey (2008) The key results of the survey can be found at Appendix B. These reinforce the focus on issues like improving council homes and landlord services, as well as taking more proactive action to address environmental issues and community concerns.

A consultation on the Corporate Strategy themes, the key investment decisions needed to deliver the Strategy and some of the difficult decisions that need to be taken – including increasing car park charges was undertaken between 16 December 2019 and end 6 January 2020. The consultation was promoted widely on social media, with a press release being issued, contacting key stakeholders directly, including parish councils (and asking them to promote the consultation), promoting consultation with posters and flyers in community centres and a social media campaign. Over 250 responses were received. The outcome of this consultation is highlighted below:

Q1: How Strongly do you agree with our 6 proposed priority themes?

Strongly or Tend to Agree - 64%
Neither agree nor disagree - 23%
Strongly or tend to disagree - 13%

This represents strong support for the priority themes but respondents made a number of comments in relation to the priority themes with the following a flavour of those received:

- Themes may be too generic and not specific enough
- Climate emergency / environmental issues should run across all priorities or be more explicitly a priority to show commitment to this issue
- Town centre regeneration is important
- Reducing traffic issues across the borough need greater focus
- Increased services for children / young people required
- Increase support for the vulnerable required

Following the responses from the consultation in relation to more specific focus on the climate being included within the Council's priorities and the Scrutiny Committee meeting of 21 January 2020, priority 3 was amended from 'Protect and enhance our rural, natural environment' to 'Protect our climate and enhance our rural, natural environment'

Q2: How strongly do you agree with our proposed key investment decisions?

Strongly or Tend to Agree – 74%
 Neither agree nor disagree - 14%
 Strongly or tend to disagree - 12%

Again this represents strong support for the proposed investment decisions but respondents made the following comments:

- Investment in services for children / young people
- Investment in town centre
- Should rural pubs be a focus?
- Investment into reducing crime and ASB (inc. drug issues)
- Increase investment in environmental issues required

Q3: How strongly do you agree with us making changes to the way we operate in order to support our investment proposals?

Strongly or Tend to Agree – 54%
 Neither agree nor disagree - 18%
 Strongly or tend to disagree - 28%

This question picked up the importance of reorganising structures to ensure we adequately resource our priorities, as well as generating more income and specifically made reference to proposals to change car parking prices to ensure the proposed investments were affordable.

The specific feedback in relation to the consultation regarding car parking charges is being covered under a separate report

8.0 Next Steps

- 8.1 This report was presented to Scrutiny on 21 January 2020 and, subject to recommendation by Cabinet, it will be considered by Council on 26 February 2020 for approval.
- 8.2 A Corporate Strategy document has been produced to help promote the new Strategy and will be the key component in helping to communicate the new Strategy in the new financial year.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The detailed Financial Implications related to the delivery of the new Corporate Strategy have been assessed and incorporated into the revenue and capital budget proposals and medium term financial strategy set out elsewhere on this agenda.
- 9.2 The cost implications post 2020/21 will need to be developed further and affordability assessed annually as part of the budget process taking into account the outcome of the fair funding review and the resources provided and available to fund the council in the future.

10.0 Legal and Governance Implications:

- 10.1 Cabinet has responsibility for providing strategic leadership to the Authority. It is therefore a Cabinet function to recommend the strategic direction contained within the Corporate Strategy for approval by the Council.

The Corporate Strategy forms part of the Budget and Policy Framework and therefore must be approved by Council.

11.0 Equality and Safeguarding Implications:

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been approved by the Check and Challenge group and is available upon request.

12.0 Community Safety Implications:

- 12.1 The Residents' Survey identified some concerns within communities especially around anti-social behaviour and these concerns are being addressed through the new Corporate Strategy priority themes and the new Council Structure. In particular this is being achieved through the establishment of a Housing and Communities Directorate, investment in the new structure and the Housing Improvement Plan which will increase the Council's capability to support communities and improve safety.

13.0 Other Implications

- 13.1 Considered within the body of the report.
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14.0 Risk & Mitigation:

14.1 The risks identified at this stage in the process are as set out below:

L I K E L I H O O D	A	Very High				
	B	High				
	C	Significant			2	
	D	Low			1	
	E	Very Low			3	
	F	Almost Impossible				
				Negligible 1	Marginal 2	Critical 3
IMPACT						

Risk No	Risk Description
1	<p>Corporate Strategy priorities are not delivered.</p> <p>A new organisational structure has been put in place to deliver the new Strategy. Performance Measures are being developed to monitor performance, Portfolio Holders and Lead Directors will monitor progress, and Programme Boards will monitor ongoing progress.</p>
2	<p>Council is unable to finance key investments required within the strategy.</p> <p>Regular budget monitoring. Areas of financing already identified. Regular monitoring of the Strategy will identify early interventions required however the outcome of the fair funding review will have an impact which is currently unknown.</p>
3	<p>Change of Government put new responsibilities/ direction on Local Government not considered within the new Strategy.</p> <p>Work with new MP and partners across Leicestershire to mitigate any new responsibilities/direction identified.</p>

Background Papers:

LGA Peer Challenge Review
Narrative Statement 2018/19
Local Industrial Strategy Economic Review
Rural Evidence Base 2018
Community Insight – Profile for Melton
Corporate Performance measures 2018-19 Q4
Corporate Performance Measures 2019-20 Q1
Residents Survey 2019 – Full Report

Appendices

A Corporate Strategy 2020-2024
B Resident Survey 2019 – Key Results

Report Timeline:	Date of sign-off: (initials and date)
Equalities Check & Challenge	Signed off
SLT Sign off	N/A
Previously Considered by Cabinet	N/A
Director Approval	07.01.20
Legal Approval	09.01.20
Finance Approval	07.01.20
Chief Finance Officer Sign Off	07.01.20
Monitoring Officer Sign Off	10.01.2020

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