

Meeting date: 7th July 2020

Report to: Full Council



Subject/report title: The Council Plan 2020 - 2025

Report from: Councillor Ian Courts, Leader of the Council

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Wards affected:

All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph:

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To present for approval the Council Plan 2020 - 2025.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 To approve the Council Plan for 2020 - 2025.

3. Matters for Consideration

3.1 The Council Plan sets out the direction we want to go in as a Council (our vision and purpose), how we aim to travel that journey and what we want to see at the end of it. It covers those major steps that we need to take in order to achieve our vision.

3.2 The primary audience for the plan is elected members, our employees, partners and all those who work with and alongside us. It is also used as a basis for engagement with Solihull residents and businesses.

3.3 When our Council Plan was approved in April 2018, we undertook to review it in 2020 to ensure that our direction of travel is sound. This reset plan is the result of that review.

3.4 The reset plan sets out our headline analysis of our strengths, challenges and opportunities, both as a Council and as a borough. It outlines the strategic context that

we work in, and how we are developing our service offers and ways of working to better meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

- 3.5 At the heart of the plan is the belief that economic development, environmental sustainability and health and well-being must go hand in hand. This is reflected in our nine 'key things to do' – the priorities at the heart of the plan – which seek to balance and benefit the economy, environment and people / communities:
1. Revitalising our towns and local centres
 2. UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2
 3. Increase the supply of housing, especially affordable and social housing
 4. Enhance Solihull's natural environment
 5. Improve Solihull's air quality
 6. Reduce Solihull's net carbon emissions
 7. Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities
 8. Enable communities to thrive
 9. Sustainable, quality, affordable provision for adults & children with complex needs
- 3.6 The new plan has a set of component activities for each of our 'key things to do', a set of end outcomes that we want to see and a set of things that we expect to deliver by the end of year one. This addresses feedback from the Local Government Association peer challenge, carried out in January 2020, about the need for a clear set of priorities and measurable outcomes going forward.
- 3.7 The plan outlines how we plan to develop the following enablers of Council efficiency and value for money: community engagement, use of digital, the employee journey, robust finance and use of our physical assets. It also describes the performance management arrangements that will enable us to know how we are progressing.
- 3.8 Recovery from the impacts of Covid-19, focusing on the needs of people, business and place, capitalising on opportunities and focusing on major projects such as the HS2 interchange and town & local centres is a watermark running through the new plan. The plan also seeks to ensure that we are maximising the impact of our role as an employer, procurer, investor and service provider to deliver inclusive growth.
- 3.9 The reset of the plan has taken place in the unprecedented context of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has profound implications for every part of the plan. Our response to the needs of those who are most vulnerable to the impacts of Covid-19 will evolve over time, but will need to continue for years to come. We recognise that Covid-19 recovery and reset is not going to be a straightforward or linear process and that how we do things will have to be flexible and evolve further over the next two years.

4. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 4.1 Through the Corporate and Directorate Leadership Teams we have followed an evidence-led approach to make informed decisions about which activities to prioritise for inclusion in the new plan. Cabinet Members and the Resources & Delivering Value Scrutiny Board have been engaged in this process. There has also been consultation with a sample of staff and the Trade Unions have been briefed and their feedback taken on board in the preparation of the draft plan.

5. Implications and Considerations

5.1 Delivery of the Council's priorities: How will the options/proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of Council Priorities?

5.1.1 Consideration of whether changes are needed to the Council Plan is the purpose of this report.

5.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

5.2.1 The involvement of partners and communities is integral to delivery of the Council Plan and is built into all of the activities that deliver the plan.

5.2.2 The Resources & Delivering Value Scrutiny Board was consulted on the draft plan at their meetings on 2nd March and 26th May. The Scrutiny Board welcomed the re-worked Council Plan and supported the scope and objectives detailed within it. Amended wording recommended by the Board has been incorporated into the final version of the Plan.

5.2.3 The work plans for each of the Scrutiny Boards are aligned to the activities in the Council Plan.

5.3 Financial implications:

5.3.1 The Council Plan sets out our priorities and the Medium Term Financial Strategy allocates and aligns our financial resources to them. They are complementary strategies which are reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

5.4 Legal implications:

5.4.1 Production and publication of a Council Plan is not a statutory requirement but there are many advantages to doing so e.g. providing a clear vision, strategic direction and a high level plan.

5.5 Risk implications:

5.5.1 The Corporate Risk Management Policy applies to all of the activities in the Council Plan and will be complied with.

5.6 Equality Implications:

5.6.1 The Council Plan embraces the Council's published Equal Opportunities Policy Statement and Equality Objectives. These both provide a commitment to the important task of paying due regard to how the Council will work to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not.

6. List of appendices referred to

6.1 Council Plan 2020-25 - included as a supplement on Mod.Gov

7. Background papers used to compile this report

7.1 None.

8. List of other relevant documents

8.1 None.