

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – 12 NOVEMBER 2015
COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 17 NOVEMBER 2015
CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 19 NOVEMBER 2015

THE CORPORATE PLAN 2016-2020 – ‘OUR CORPORATE PLAN’

1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

- 1.1 Following the May 2015 elections the Cabinet has considered its strategic plan for the period of the administration, resulting in the production of a draft Corporate Plan for 2016 to 2020 simply entitled ‘Our corporate plan’ (Appendix). At their meeting on 4 November the Cabinet approved the draft Plan to form the basis for consultation with the overview and scrutiny panels and the Industrial Relations Committee.
- 1.2 The Corporate Plan is the single most important strategy that shapes the way the Council works and defines its ambitions. In doing so it brings together strategic and service objectives, helping Members and Officers to work towards the same vision, values and priorities.
- 1.3 In keeping with the existing plan ‘Delivering for our communities’, ‘Our corporate plan’ is deliberately short, with the aim of setting a clear statement of intent that is both direct and easy to understand. It will be underpinned by a suitable and proportionate performance management framework that will detail the plan aims and monitor its delivery.

2. THE NEW FOREST DISTRICT – A UNIQUE AND SPECIAL PLACE

- 2.1 Covering 290 square miles, the New Forest District area is a very unique and special place. Two thirds of the area is located within the environmentally sensitive National Park. To the east and west are the two economically active conurbations of Southampton and Christchurch/Bournemouth/Poole in Dorset. It contains one of the largest areas of unenclosed forest, with substantial areas of the District being covered by national and international nature conservation designations, together with 40 miles of coastline.

The population of approximately 180,000 ranks the District as one of the most populated in the country. 70% of the population lives in the urban outskirts of the Forest and 25% are aged over 65. House prices are above average and average earnings are relatively low; there are significant pressures on housing and growth. Generally employment rates are good, with higher than average self-employment and active businesses within the District.

- 2.2 This is just an indication of what makes **our place** unique and special and helps us to understand the challenges of providing public services to a geographically and demographically dispersed population with differing needs and expectations providing the setting to the corporate plan development.

3. FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

- 3.1 Over the past four years the Council has delivered significant savings and the Corporate Plan is set against a background of continued funding reductions. In response to this funding gap the term of the plan will see options being explored to further reduce spending. These options will likely need to include identifying ways of delivering services differently; improving the business management of our back office functions and activities which are not core services; and increasing collaborative working with other public sector organisations; whilst maintaining a focus on visible frontline services and ensuring financial stability through delivery models suited to community needs and expectations.
- 3.2 'Our corporate plan' sits alongside the Council's financial plans to ensure the resources are available and appropriately directed to deliver the corporate plan.

4. PRIORITIES

- 4.1 Recognising both the special and unique place and the current financial imperative, the priorities of the plan are to secure a better future for the New Forest by:
- Delivering visible service outcomes which are valued by the community
 - Supporting local businesses to prosper for the benefit of the community
 - Enhancing outcomes through collaboration with other local organisations

Underpinned by effective and efficient management of resources and helping to deliver the following outcomes:

- Helping local business grow
 - More homes for local people
 - Protecting the local character of our place
 - Working with others to achieve more
 - Living within our means
- 4.2 The plan contains a clear statement of intent, highlighting the underlying values of ambition, financial responsibility, innovation, collaboration, pride and openness. These principles will be instilled within the organisation to help support delivery of the plan.

5. DELIVERING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The Corporate Plan sets out the overall strategic direction for the Council in the period 2016-2020. It will be supported by a range of strategic and operational plans, including portfolio delivery plans which set out in more detail how the aims and priorities will be delivered. These plans contain more specific activities and targets, progress against which will be regularly monitored and reported. These plans will be compiled over the next few months to support the commencement of the finalised Corporate Plan.
- 5.2 Primarily the Plan will be communicated and reported upon electronically, as has been the case with the current plan. This will help keep cost to a minimum as well as making the Plan and its delivery more accessible to those interested in specific aims and activities.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A clear focus of the Plan is continued financial responsibility. Direct costs arising from the production and publicity of the Plan will be kept to a minimum.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the draft corporate plan, as appended to this report, for feedback to Cabinet as part of the consultation process.

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Background Papers

The Corporate Plan 2012/16 – Delivering For Our Communities