

## **Cabinet**

**DATE OF MEETING: 2 FEBRUARY 2023**

**TITLE OF REPORT: DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2023-2027**

**Cabinet Portfolio: Leader/Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services**

**Key Decision: No**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider the comments received to the draft Corporate Plan and to make a recommendation for debate at February's Full Council.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

2. That the adjusted version of the Corporate Plan 2023-2027 attached at Appendix 1 be recommended to Council for adoption.

### **BACKGROUND**

3. In November the Council launched a consultation on a draft Corporate Plan for 2023-2027, inviting residents and stakeholders to comment on the Council's priorities for the next four years.
4. This corporate plan will shape the projects and work the Council undertakes and therefore comments have been sought from residents and stakeholders to ensure the focus reflects the priorities of everyone in Hart.
5. To gather these, a public consultation was launched from Tuesday 1 November running until Sunday 18 December 2022. However, due the challenges posed by the recent postal strikes the consultation date for the receipt for written responses was extended to January 2023. Social media activity was also enhanced. In practice all comments received in January have been accepted.
6. 89 consultation responses were received and these are summarised in Appendix 2.
7. Overview and Scrutiny Committee also commented on the draft Corporate Plan and at its meeting on 17 February it made the following comments:
  - a) it was requested that the Corporate Plan should give more clarity on the climate change targets and use the phrase "Carbon Neutral" and not "Net Zero" as these are 2 different things.
  - b) the committee felt it would have been able to make a more valuable input if the report had contained the comments from the public consultation, therefore enabling the Committee to give a more meaningful recommendation to Cabinet.

### **COMMENTARY**

8. The majority of respondents were in support of the Corporate Plan— approximate ratio of 3:1 supportive comments relative to critical ones.

9. Most often voiced criticism was to oppose the “Planet” strategy, on the basis that relative to large countries such as the USA, China, Russia and India, Hart can only have a very minor impact. This criticism is not accepted because everyone has a part to play and we take our local responsibilities seriously. Some criticism also that the use of the word “Planet” is over-stating our impact as a small District Council, but we believe that (apart from the appeal of the alliterative 3 “P”s), most residents will understand that we have a part to play in a much broader national and international agenda.
10. We accept that the ambiguous use of the phrase “net zero” is not helpful and have replaced it with reference to carbon neutrality where appropriate which more reflects the Climate Emergency motion agreed by Council in 2021.
11. Another criticism is that Plan lacks detailed targets and is therefore too vague. The plan will be supported by Annual service plans that will have detailed and measurable targets, but this Plan is intended to give an overview of the priorities as the current administration sees them. In some respects, a “Corporate Vision” might be a better description for what we are setting out here.
12. Some respondents question what is meant by the word “sustainability” when we describe our preferred approach to future housing development. Our Local Plan explains what is meant by sustainable development and the definition that we are using is reflected in Government policy. This administration takes the view that ad hoc housing development in our existing settlements is not sustainable as it fails to deliver necessary infrastructure and support to either new residents or existing communities. We therefore support development that is properly planned to include access to transport, medical facilities, schools and other essential services. An example of this is the exemplar new village that is currently being delivered at Hartland Park.
13. Some respondents have interpreted the objective to “Undertake a Settlement Capacity and Intensification Study to enable the prioritisation of future opportunities for development within our defined towns and villages rather than on green fields”. We do not subscribe to high density ‘town cramming’ or development. In any future iteration of our Local Plan, we will therefore, look at all possible growth options including development within our main settlements. We therefore need to be confident that the analysis has been properly undertaken and that decisions incorporated into the next Local Plan accurately reflect the capacity of our existing settlements.

#### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

14. There are no reasonable alternative options.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

15. The adoption of a new Corporate Plan will in future guide the Council in setting its annual budget.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

16. There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

#### **EQUALITIES**

17. There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

18. There are no immediate climate change implications associated with this report although implementation of the Corporate Plan will support the delivery of Climate Change mitigation objectives.

## **ACTION**

19. Cabinet should recommend the draft version of the Corporate Plan 2022-2027 to Council for adoption.

**Contact Details:** David Neighbour, Leader of the Council.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: draft Corporate Plan 2023-2027 as proposed to be amended following public consultation.

Appendix 2: Summary of consultation comments