

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: COUNCIL STRATEGY 2014-2017
DATE: 10 JULY 2014
RECIPIENT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

The Council Strategy is a key strategic document, setting out what we will do, how we will work and how we will contribute to the priorities within the emerging City Strategy. It sets out our priorities for the next three years, the outcomes we expect to achieve by 2017 and the measures we will use to monitor our progress. It will influence all other strategies and policies developed during this period, as well as spending decisions; directorates and services will also use it to plan service delivery. It is part of the council's Policy Framework and must be approved by Council.

Once agreed, it will be published on the council's website and be available to all staff, residents and stakeholders. It has been drafted as an easy to read, accessible document, which focuses on key priorities, rather the trying to describe all 'business as usual' activities.

It replaces the current Council Plan, which received positive feedback, and has been used to set the strategic direction for the council since its development. It has been refreshed in light of feedback from residents and the changing local and national context.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

1. The Council Strategy 2014 – 2017, attached as Appendix 1, references how the council will contribute to the vision and priorities within Southampton Connect's City Strategy. The Southampton City Strategy 2014-2025 is on the agenda for this meeting.
2. The previous Council Plan was published in July 2013. Achievements in the last year include the following; further details are provided in Appendix 2:
 - Agreement on the development of the Royal Pier, Centenary Quay with key partners and commenced work on phase 1 of the Station Quarter Development, as part of the City Centre Master Plan
 - Successful City Deal submission, jointly with Portsmouth City Council which is expected to lever significant funding to support local economic growth and jobs for local people
 - Improvement in the levels of educational attainment at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 (GCSE) by the city's children and young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds
 - Launch of a new mobile app 'Recycle for Southampton' to help residents check collection dates, set reminders and find their nearest recycling point
 - Establishment of a joint Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to improve the effectiveness of responses to all referrals
 - Started work on the Southampton New Arts Complex

BRIEFING PAPER

- Established a joint Integrated Commissioning Unit between the council and Health (the Clinical Commissioning Group) within a unified management structure
 - Established an independent Fairness Commission to consider issues of fairness and equality in Southampton
 - Delivered 300 affordable homes and brought 100 empty homes back into use
 - Conducted the first City Survey since 2010 in partnership with Southampton Connect
 - Received positive feedback on the way in which we consulted our residents on our pre budget priorities survey and subsequently on our budget proposals.
3. We face a number of challenges including financial pressures and improving our performance in a number of areas. The final performance report for 2013-14 is available on the council's website, and provides an overview of progress to date. The key areas for improving council performance in the coming year are:
- Improving educational attainment for all children and young people
 - Improving children's safeguarding services, including increasing the number of care leavers in suitable accommodation and in employment, education and training
 - Increasing direct payments and reducing delayed transfers of care
 - Increasing recycling rates and transforming waste services.
4. In developing the Council Strategy, we have also considered feedback from residents, both from the pre-budget priorities survey, and the more recent City Survey 2014. It is reassuring to note that despite the fact that in the last few years the council has had to make difficult decisions in light of financial challenges:
- Satisfaction with how the council runs things has gone up since 2010 by 7% to 59%.
 - 44% agree that the council provides value for money which is 4% higher than in 2010
 - Over 75% are satisfied with parks and open spaces, bin collections and recycling
 - Over 60% are satisfied with our play parks/areas, libraries, sports and leisure, local tips and recycling.
5. We have also given particular attention to the key feedback points:
- The highest priorities for improvement were roads and pavements and local transport and travel congestion
 - 57% of residents were satisfied with the council in keeping land clear of litter with 29% being dissatisfied
 - 88% of Southampton residents have access to the internet
 - 28% use email alerts and 27% use the website as the main source of information about the council.

BRIEFING PAPER

6. The Council Strategy sets out the following priorities:
 - Jobs for local people
 - Prevention and early intervention
 - Protecting vulnerable people
 - Affordable Housing
 - Services for all
 - City Pride
 - A sustainable council
7. The strategy details the outcomes we expect to achieve by 2017 and the key success measures we will use to monitor our performance. Quarterly performance reports will be published on the council's website and be available for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to consider.
8. In addition to setting out our key priorities, the strategy reflects our priority to become a sustainable council in the context of our ongoing financial pressures. A separate report is on this agenda detailing the next phase of our transformation programme to enable us to achieve this priority by 2017.
9. The final version of the Council Strategy 2014 - 2017 will be published on the Council's website.

RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Policy

10. The Council Strategy forms part of the council's Policy Framework, as set out in Article 4 of the Council's Constitution. The Executive is, for almost all functions, responsible for implementing the policies and spending the budget in accordance with the Policy Framework and budget. Each of the proposed actions in this strategy will be subject to the council's normal decision making processes, including detailed legal and financial assessments as necessary.
11. In developing this strategy, consideration has been given to known national policy and budgetary changes which will have a significant impact on the city. Progress over the next few years will be partially dependent on the availability of funding from external sources or the identification of new income sources. As it is not possible to guarantee the outcomes in some cases, the Council Strategy is subject to in year variation. It is therefore proposed to delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise the Council Strategy, including incorporating any changes made at the meeting and to make any in year changes and to refresh relevant sections of the strategy in 2015 and 2016 so that it aligns with any new budgetary or policy developments which will impact on the council's activities during 2014- 2017.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

12. Appendix 1 - Draft Council Strategy 2014 – 2017

BRIEFING PAPER

Appendix 2 - Council Plan 2013 - 16 – Progress highlights

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