

# **TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **CABINET**

**03 June 2020**

### **Report of the Chief Executive and Management Team**

#### **Part 1- Public**

#### **Executive Non Key Decisions**

##### **1 CORPORATE STRATEGY – FIRST YEAR ADDENDUM**

**This report sets out the proposed approach to a one- year addendum to the Corporate Strategy to provide a framework within which to consider a wide range of issues in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.**

##### **1.1 Background:**

1.1.1 At the meeting of Cabinet held on 19 May 2020, it was agreed that a one-year Addendum to the Corporate Strategy, should be prepared for consideration at future Cabinet meeting

1.1.2 At the time of writing, whilst the Government has set out plans for a phased approach to relaxation of restrictions, subject to certain criteria, it is still unclear as to how long the various phases of emergency arrangements will continue. As agreed by Cabinet, it is right and proper for us to plan for the next phase(s). None of us know how the national guidance will continue to evolve, but our strategy of following the national and public health messaging, and government guidance – must be the bedrock of our future thinking in managing a phased transitionary period.

1.1.3 Following announcements from the government made on 10 May 2020, we have now reopened our country park, car parks, toilets and catering, all in accordance with national guidance, and have seen increased usage of all our open spaces. Further announcements on potential changes to restrictions are expected on 28 May, with a suggested implementation date of 1 June 2020. These announcements will no doubt be supported by detailed guidance which will steer the next steps. An update will be given at the meeting

##### **1.2 Planning for Recovery:**

1.2.1 To remind Members, that as we move into recovery phase(s) we will need to do this not only within the national framework, but also at a county level. In accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the County Council has a statutory responsibility to establish the recovery framework. These plans are progressing and

there are a number of work strands, in which we and other partners are actively participating.

- 1.2.2 This Council, working within this broader context, needs to develop our own strategy for our own activity, but also more broadly in relation to our own communities and economies.
- 1.2.3 In order to provide a framework for our own recovery plan, Cabinet agreed development of a 1 year Addendum to the Corporate Strategy, underpinned by three themes:
- Review- how did we respond to the pandemic emergency, and what have we learnt from this
  - Re-orientation – how might we re-position the Council’s finances and operations to be fit for purpose in the “new normal”
  - Recovery – how to work with others to encourage recovery in our communities and economy, in adapting to both the transition period and into the “new normal”
- 1.2.4 It is proposed that these are considered on a thematic basis, using the county wide Recovery Plan cell themes as a starting point, but amending them to greater reflect our roles and responsibilities within the recovery.

### 1.3 Corporate Plan Addendum

- 1.3.1 As well as being underpinned by the three themes of review, re-orientation and recovery, it makes sense to use the thematic cells from the county wide Recovery Plan as a means of starting to structure the addendum to the Borough Council’s Corporate Strategy. These are as follows:
- Economy cell
  - Infrastructure cell
  - Children and young people cell
  - Health and social care cell
  - Districts and community cell
  - Voluntary and Community Sector cell
  - Finance cell
- 1.3.2 As the above thematic structure relates more to a county council operation, it is suggested that, for simplicity and appropriateness, the themes used by the Borough Council could be rationalised as follows, with each having a few key principles underlining them:
- **Economy:** Maximising the unique strengths of the local area to help create a resilient, dynamic and inclusive economy that fosters sustainable growth
  - **Infrastructure:** Embracing technology and the opportunities it presents – for homeworking, reducing trip generation and congestion, tackling air pollution.

- **Communities and Health:** Supporting our most vulnerable residents – be it the elderly, unemployed or people living in our most deprived communities (which are the ones that have been disproportionately hit by the crisis).
- **Environment:** Tackling the challenges presented by Climate Change
- **Running the Council:** Ensuring an efficiently run Council that meets the needs of its residents and businesses.

1.3.3 It must be recognised that we are in a period of continuous change, and that as such this cannot be an “absolute and fixed” plan, but a framework that guides our thinking and ensures that there is a strategic overview to guide our plans. The framework and approach allows for a flexible approach, to adapt to change in both the case of increased relaxation, but also should there be a further wave of coronavirus. The proposed addendum is attached as **Appendix 1**, for Members consideration. Subject to endorsement, this framework sets out broad considerations which will be developed further and reported to Members for consideration at appropriate Boards and Committees.

## 1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 The statutory framework governing the response to the pandemic is evolving and changing on a frequent basis, both in the restrictions placed upon individuals and upon the responsibilities of local authorities. Any specific proposals or changes brought about by the Addendum will be assessed at the appropriate time to ensure they are lawful.

## 1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 The financial impacts of the pandemic and, in turn, the implications for the Medium Term Financial Strategy are still being assessed.

1.5.2 As previously reported, the Council received funding from the government in two tranches totalling some £1.35m. This funding is very unlikely to cover the current financial impacts as previously reported to Members. Returns are being submitted to government by the Director of Finance & Transformation on a monthly basis as required by MHCLG.

1.5.3 An earmarked Reorientation/ Post Emergency Reserve of £200,000 is being established - see recommendation in Revenue and Capital Outturn 2019/20 report elsewhere on the agenda – to assist the Council in some of its recovery activity. This may prove to be insufficient, and will be kept under review.

## 1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 The Council’s Strategic Risk Register has been updated substantially and is included in a report elsewhere on the agenda.

## 1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act at this stage. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## 1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Procurement
- 1.8.2 Community
- 1.8.3 Business Continuity/Resilience
- 1.8.4 Healthy Lifestyles
- 1.8.5 Climate Change
- 1.8.6 Asset Management
- 1.8.7 Customer Contact
- 1.8.8 Health & Safety
- 1.8.9 Human Resources

## 1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 That the one-year addendum to the Corporate Strategy be **ADOPTED**
- 1.9.2 The actions, therein be **ENDORSED**, for further reporting to Advisory Boards or Committees as appropriate
- 1.9.3 That the proposed extension to the Climate Change Strategy consultation and the revised programme for adoption be **NOTED**.

Background papers:

Nil

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