

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

14 December 2022

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Executive Non Key Decisions

1 CORPORATE STRATEGY – CONSULTATION DRAFT

This report provides an update on the Corporate Strategy Consultation Draft, particularly feedback from the recent staff consultation and Overview and Scrutiny, and seeks approval to proceed towards a community engagement exercise during Winter 2023.

1.1 Background:

- 1.1.1 In February 2022, the Borough Council underwent a Corporate Peer Challenge Review. The resultant report set out a number of observations and suggestions, with the Peer Team setting out a total of 10 recommendations. One of these recommendations related specifically to the Council's Corporate Strategy:

“Co-develop a refreshed corporate strategy, based on resident engagement, with clear outcomes, focussed on delivering for the community – not just finance”

- 1.1.2 This recommendation reflected the view that the Corporate Strategy was too internally focussed, and set a limited ambition for the borough. As such, the Borough Councils priority should be to create a clear, shared and outward looking corporate strategy with key priorities for the future that supports the delivery of its ambitions.

1.2 Corporate Strategy – Consultation Draft 2022-25

- 1.2.1 The borough council has pulled together a draft document (see Appendix 1).
- 1.2.2 This draft document went to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 November 2022.
- 1.2.3 In addition, it was felt critical that members of staff had the opportunity to provide feedback and views on the consultation draft before it went out to public consultation. On 08 November 2022, the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive presented an overview of the document to around 135 staff. This was then followed up with an email to all staff providing a copy of the consultation draft, a link to the presentation as well as a link to a short survey. Staff were given two weeks to respond to this internal consultation exercise.

1.3 Feedback Received to Date:

1.3.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet to approve the Corporate Strategy – Consultation Draft. There was also support for the creation of an annual action plan to support the strategy. However, there were a few changes that were suggested by the committee:

- Points of clarification – for example, explaining that the £689.90 median wage is a gross weekly figure.
- Removal of the CGI of Snodland on page 8 and replacement with an alternative image from that part of the borough.
- Inclusion of fly-tipping on the second bullet point on page 9.
- Change to the label of the photograph on page 10 to simply state 'West Malling'.
- Putting the list of strategies in alphabetical order.

1.3.2 In total 44 members of staff responded to the internal consultation exercise, with an overview of the feedback provided in Table 1 below:

Question	Response
Do you agree with the vision?	In total, 91% of responders agreed with the vision, 4.5% did not agree with the vision and 4.5% were unsure.
Is there anything else you would like to add about the vision?	A number of positive comments, but others highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little to explain how vision will be achieved. - More emphasis on enhancing natural and heritage assets. - Having more face-to-face options for residents. - Does need a culture change and additional resources and skills to implement it. - Need to make it more explicit that we are here to serve the people of the borough.
Do you think the values of Innovation, Transformation and Delivery are the right ones for the borough?	75% of responders thought they were the right ones, 2% did not agree with the values, and 23% were unsure.
Is there anything you would like to	- Inclusion of values such as respect, professionalism, openness and integrity.

add about the values?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability as a value. - Customer service and more engagement with our residents. - There is a real need to make sure these values are embedded in to day-to-day processes. - Innovation and transformation overlap, so do not need both.
In what order would you rank the priorities in this strategy?	<p>Delivering Efficient Services for all our residents (top priority)</p> <p>Sustaining a Borough which cares for the Environment</p> <p>Improving Housing Options</p> <p>Investing in our Local Economy</p>
Are there any priorities that you think are currently missing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Becoming a leader of place - Biodiversity emergency - Helping vulnerable residents - Personal well-being and fitness. - Crime and anti-social behaviour could be added into one of the priorities. - Working in partnership.
Are there any measures missing from this strategy that you think could help the borough council meet its priorities? If so, please explain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disabled access to services. - Adoption of new technologies. - Staff development/training and empowering and incentivising staff. - Encouraging innovation - Youth and leisure activities. - More needed on resident engagement - Clearer commitment to sustainable travel. - Improving housing standards should include more than private rented accommodation.
Are there any other comments you would like to make about this strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for an action plan to become meaningful. - Need to apply for awards to demonstrate achievements. - Difficult to be innovative when limited staff and resources.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for engaging staff earlier in the process of developing the strategy. - Need for KPIs to align with the priorities in the Corporate Strategy. - Should focus more on people and less on processes. - Some minor presentational matters flagged up.
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Table 1: Staff Consultation Feedback

1.3.3 Overall, the feedback received from staff was positive, however there were a number of points or proposed improvements raised by staff. These can be broadly grouped into the following:

- The strategy doesn't provide concrete measures that will deliver the priorities.
- The importance of staff and resources in embedding the values.
- The need to make residents more central to the strategy.
- Need to effectively measure delivery.
- Proposed minor amendments and additions.

1.3.4 Regarding the above categories the following is proposed:

Category	Response
The strategy doesn't provide concrete measures that will deliver the priorities.	This is a high-level document, but once it has gone through consultation and the vision and priorities have been finalised, a short action plan will be developed to set out priority actions for delivering the strategy.
The importance of staff and resources in embedding the values.	Agreed. There is a need to continue the process of engagement with staff during the consultation exercise, and further briefings for staff to keep them informed and give an opportunity to share thoughts.
Need to make residents more central to the strategy.	Proposed amendments: Amend the vision slightly to "To be an innovative and forward-thinking council, that leads <i>the people and businesses of</i> the borough towards a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future"

	Make specific reference to supporting our most vulnerable residents under the priority 'Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective Council'. For example 'Promote well-being and help people, <i>especially our most vulnerable residents</i> , to live healthy and active lifestyles'
Need to effectively measure delivery	Agreed. Whilst corporate KPIs have been developed and are being captured, there is a recognition that these will need to evolve as the Corporate Strategy develops through this consultation process, in order to ensure that they reflect the priorities set out in the document.
Proposed amendments and additions.	<p>Proposed amendments:</p> <p>Change strategy to 2023-2025 to better reflect timescales.</p> <p>Inclusion of reference to built heritage and sustainable travel under the priority of 'sustaining a borough which cares for the environment' on page 9 (especially as mentioned in the foreword).</p> <p>Change last bullet point on Page 10 to "Improving standards in rented accommodation, including offering help to make flats and houses more energy efficient" in order to recognise that this isn't just an issue in the privately rented sector.</p> <p>Direct inclusion of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy on the list of strategies on page 12 (rather than included in reference to the Savings and Transformation Strategy).</p> <p>Change description of the Community Safety Partnership Strategy to 'creating a safer and more resilient Tonbridge and Malling' on page 12.</p> <p>Some minor word changing for the purposes of clarity.</p>

Table 2: Incorporating staff feedback into the consultation document and process.

1.4 Next Steps:

- 1.4.1 Subject to the recommendations in this report being approved, Appendix 1 will be amended accordingly and a five-week consultation will commence in January 2023,

thus avoiding the Christmas holiday period. A consultation survey will essentially use very similar questioning to that of the staff survey (as set out in Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report from 17 November 2022), with additional demographic questioning in order to ascertain the level of representation across our local communities. The survey will be the main way for residents to comment on the strategy. It is therefore important that this is widely promoted in order to get responses from a broad section of the public.

1.4.2 The Corporate Strategy consultation will be promoted via the following:

- TMBC website and Social Media Channels
- T&M Business Bulletin
- Direct emails to the following contacts:
 - Borough Councillors
 - Town and Parish Councils Contacts
 - Contacts at neighbouring authorities and KCC
 - Local Schools and Community Groups
 - Business Representative Organisations
 - Housing Associations
 - Environmental Groups

1.4.3 Once consultation responses have been gathered, these will be used to inform any amendments to the Corporate Strategy and to pull together a draft action plan. In line with our Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules the following is a proposed timetable for the adoption of the strategy:

Meeting	Date
Cabinet	07 March 2023
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	06 April 2023
Cabinet	June 2023 (TBC)
Council	June 2023 (TBC)

1.5 Legal Implications

1.6 The matters raised in this report are considered to be routine, uncontroversial or not legally complex and a legal opinion has not been sought on these proposals.

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.7.1 None arising directly from this report.

1.8 Risk Assessment

- 1.8.1 Reputational risk if the Council fails to meet targets set out in the Corporate Peer Review Action Plan and undertake the recommendations suggested by the Peer Team.

1.9 Policy Considerations

- 1.9.1 Business Continuity/Resilience
- 1.9.2 Communications
- 1.9.3 Communities
- 1.9.4 Planning and Housing
- 1.9.5 Environment
- 1.9.6 Economy

1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 That the report **BE NOTED**
- 1.7.2 That the Corporate Strategy Consultation Draft as set out in Appendix 1, but including the suggested amendments set out in Table 2, **BE ENDORSED**.
- 1.7.3 That delegated authority **BE GRANTED** to the Chief Executive in liaison with the Leader of the Council to approve any necessary further minor changes to the Corporate Strategy Consultation Draft that may be required for reasons of clarity or presentation.
- 1.7.4 That the programme for community consultation as set out in section 1.4 **BE APPROVED**

Background papers:

Nil

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