

COUNCIL MEETING – 24TH FEBRUARY 2022

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 (4)

COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE 2022-25

A report from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8th February 2022.

SUMMARY:

This report presents a draft Council Plan for 2022-25 as set out at **Appendix A**.

Refreshed and updated annually, the draft plan sets out the council's priorities and the steps it will take over the next three years that contribute towards achieving the council's longer-term vision set out in the document Your Future, Your Place – A vision for Aldershot and Farnborough 2030.

The Council is recommended to approve the updated three-year Council Plan 2022-25 as set out in Appendix A.

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Together with its partners, the council provides a strategic role and a wide range of services helping to place-shape its area and benefit the activities and lives of local businesses, residents and its community as a whole.
- 1.2 To help with the planning and delivery of this work the council prepares a number of key documents that help set the general direction and work activities of the council. Collectively, these documents help inform many of the decisions the council makes, how it allocates resources and how it sets service and staff objectives; helping the council to make sure it best serves its residents, businesses and the borough of Rushmoor as a whole. One of the key documents concerned is the Council Plan.
- 1.3 The intention of the Council Plan, is not to provide detail on all its activities, but to outline the council's priorities over the next three years and, in particular, the key strategic projects that will contribute to achieving the council's vision. This is set out in the document Your Future, Your Place – A vision for Aldershot and Farnborough 2030.
- 1.4 In short, the Council Plan provides a focus for the council's activities and services by setting out the short to medium-term steps needed to realise its longer-term vision and goals. The plan is underpinned by a number of individual service plans which include more detailed information on the activities and work of individual council services.

- 1.5 While covering a three-year period, the Council Plan is refreshed and updated annually. Following consultation and review, a revised Council Plan has been prepared for 2022-25. A copy is given at **Appendix A**.

2. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

Format and structure

- 2.1 As a refresh, the draft plan largely follows the structure and format of previous plans. However, in line with consultation feedback (see below), the following changes have been included -

- (a) **Welcome and introduction** - A revised introduction is given that helps provide some narrative and context to proposed council activities in the plan.
- (b) **Other strategies, plans, projects and programmes** - Some commentary and a diagram is provided to explain where the Council Plan sits, and how it and other strategies, plans and programmes relate and fit together.
- (c) **Workforce and the way we work** - This section has been given greater emphasis and reframed with additional content covering the modernisation and transformation of the Council's workforce, community engagement and the council's organisational values. This section also includes the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- (d) **Community engagement** - A new section is included in the draft plan to outline how the Council takes account of community needs and views. This will be developed further through a communications plan linked to the delivery of the Council Plan.
- (e) **Delivering & Measuring the plan** – To help bring the plan to life, the draft plan also includes a new section showing examples of what the council has said and done in previous plans.

Key priorities and activities

- 2.2 As with previous plans, the key priorities and activities are provided in summary format under the key themes of People and Place.
- 2.3 The council's priorities have been reframed and follow those outlined in the council's vision document Your Future, Your Place 2030. This provides for some consistency and a 'golden thread' that helps bind the council's key documents, strategies and plans together.
- 2.4 The key activities outlined in the plan include –

People

- Roll out the second phase of the Council's weekly food waste recycling service to households with shared bins

- Help people (especially young people) into employment through training, apprenticeships and upskilling
- Develop a walking and cycling plan to encourage sustainable travel and to support town centre regeneration plans
- Develop a new leisure centre in Farnborough
- Working with partners, encourage more residents to be active and have healthier lifestyles
- Support apprenticeships, research and innovation opportunities through the Aerospace Research and Innovation Centre (ARIC)

Place

- Complete the Union Yard development, support the regeneration of the Galleries in Aldershot and update the facilities at the crematorium in Aldershot.
- Progress the regeneration of Farnborough town centre, including the civic quarter
- Develop Southwood Country Park, including providing a new visitor centre and improving its access, environment and facilities
- Support the creation of quality, new homes
- Progress an aerospace heritage project
- Continue progress towards our goal of becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030 through reducing emissions in our facilities and operations

Performance monitoring arrangements

- 2.5 The draft plan also outlines the performance monitoring arrangements to be used in delivery of the plan. While the draft plan includes a number of measures applicable to the priorities and planned activities, it also outlines how it will be monitored through quarterly monitoring and annual reports and identifies the bodies that will scrutinise them.

The measures used have been developed in consultation with the Policy & Projects Advisory Board who were specifically asked to consider the performance monitoring and reporting measures appropriate to the priorities and activities referenced in the plan.

3. CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The draft Council Plan has been prepared following a programme of events, including a call for evidence, service workshops and engagement with Heads of

Service and their teams, elected members, partners and residents; the latter in the form of the resident's survey in summer 2021.

Head of Service Workshops and call for evidence

- 3.2 Development of the plan included a call for evidence and the holding a series of workshops with Heads of Service, Executive Managers and their teams during October / November 2021. The workshops were held to help identify any necessary structural changes and the most significant issues likely to impact the council in the next three-year period and provided an opportunity to identify potential activities for inclusion in the plan.

Policy & Projects Advisory Board (PPAB)

- 3.3 Development and progress of the plan has been regularly reported to and discussed by the Policy & Projects Advisory Board (PPAB).

- 3.4 At their meeting on 26 January 2022, PPAB considered the draft of the Council Plan. There was broad support for the Council Plan, recognising the challenges of distilling considerable amounts of input into a relatively short and high-level document. In particular, the following points were made:

3.4.1 That there are clear linkages between the Council Plan and the emerging Strategic Economic Framework and that once available, the priorities and actions from the Strategic Economic Framework should be captured within the Council planning and performance management process. There was particular interest from some PPAB members that support for key sectors (for example creative and digital) and SME investment are considered.

3.4.2 That the statements in the draft Council Plan are high level and refer to the Council 'supporting the creation of new, quality homes'. There were a range of views from PPAB about where the priorities should lie within this activity (whether that be affordable housing or private sector rental via Rushmoor Homes). It was noted that the performance management approach would see both being measured under this plan and that further levels of detail sit within different plans and strategies (for example, the Local Plan and the emerging Housing and Homelessness Strategy).

3.4.3 The new section of the Council Plan around community engagement was welcomed with PPAB members keen to know more about the actions that will be taken as a result of this, particularly around the engagement of young people and the equality, diversity and inclusivity agenda.

3.4.4 PPAB commented that whilst the rationale for having climate change and financial sustainability as cross-cutting themes that run across the Council Plan, there was a risk that they receive less focus as a result. In light of this feedback the Council's work around becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030 has been added as a key activity under the 'place' section.

3.4.5 PPAB also highlighted the risk of performance measures giving too narrow a perspective on complex issues and sought reassurance that this would

not be the case. For example, whilst increased recycling rates can be viewed as a positive, a measure of success would also be reducing food waste in the first place. Officers were able to give reassurance that issues such as this are under consideration. PPAB members also sought reassurance that projects in the Council Plan 2021 – 2024 would continue to be monitored to ensure their successful delivery and it was confirmed that this would be the case.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 4.1 While the draft plan sets out an ambitious programme of key activities, many of these are ongoing or pre-planned projects that have been costed and/or are subject to project and performance management arrangements. The key activities are also subject to a range of suggested measures that will form the basis for future monitoring in delivery of the plan as part of the council's performance monitoring arrangements.

Legal implications

- 4.2 Whilst there may be legal implications associated with some of the individual activities outlined in the plan, these are subject to their own project and risk management arrangements as outlined above. Beyond this, the draft plan merely sets out the ambitions and aspirations of the council and, as such, there are no specific legal implications applicable to the preparation and/or approval of the plan.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.3 The draft plan has been prepared in the context of the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Any projects identified in the Council Plan will be subject to Business Case development and approval if not included in the current budget.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.4 The draft plan outlines a number of high-level activities intended to make a real positive and tangible difference to both the area, businesses and residents of Rushmoor. As individual projects, key activities will be subject to their own equality impact assessment and measures where appropriate. It is considered that there are no direct implications associated with the preparation and/or approval of the plan.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The refreshed plan, which was supported by the Cabinet at its meeting on 8th February 2022, reflects the ambitions set out in 'Your Vision, Your Place – A Vision for Farnborough and Aldershot' and identifies key projects to be delivered over the next three years.

A R NEWELL
PORTFOLIO HOLDER DEMOCRACY, STRATEGY AND
PARTNERSHIPS