

Report to: **Hub Committee**  
Date: **11 July 2023**  
Title: **Setting Priorities for the New Council**  
Portfolio Area: **Cllr Mandy Ewings**  
**Leader of the Council**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y / N**

Date next steps can be taken:

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Hub Committee:**

- 1. Consider and approve the timeline and approach for development of the next iteration of the Council's corporate strategy;**
- 2. Work with the Senior Leadership Team and Assistant Director Strategy over the coming months to refine priorities for the next four years, with a new draft corporate strategy ready for consideration by Hub Committee at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023;**
- 3. Note the intention that, following the meeting held on the 21 November 2023, a period of consultation be undertaken to inform the final strategy prior to adoption by full Council.**

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 Following the elections in May 2023 and formation of the new political administration, the Council now needs to begin developing its aims and ambitions for the next four years.
- 1.2 It is important that the Council has an adopted corporate strategy in place and that it aligns its staff, budgets and other resources to delivering the agreed aims and ambitions of the Council in responding to the needs of our residents.
- 1.3 In parallel with the review of strategic plans and priorities, we will undertake a fundamental review of the Council's capital programme, earmarked reserves and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to ensure these are aligned to the delivery of the new administration's plans.
- 1.4 We will also ensure we take every opportunity to work with the communities and residents of the borough, listening to them and putting them first in developing the strategy.
- 1.5 This report sets out an outline timeline for the development of a strategy for West Devon that delivers the new administration's priorities which include taking steps to address the housing and climate and biodiversity crises while also ensuring our core and statutory council services such as waste and recycling and planning are as good as any.

## **2. Developing a new corporate strategy**

- 2.1 The Council adopted its current corporate strategy (A Plan for West Devon) in September 2021, setting out its priorities for the borough, building on our Covid pandemic recovery plans.
- 2.2 The strategy was accompanied by thematic delivery plans setting out specific actions to underpin the priorities. Having clear delivery plans ensured regular reporting on progress to Members through quarterly performance management reports to the Hub Committee and 'deep-dive' reports on individual themes by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.3 Council agreed the third-year delivery plan (for 2023/24) at its meeting on 4 April 2023 (Minute CM 82/22 (e)) to ensure that officers had a clear focus for delivery while the new administration developed its new priorities.
- 2.4 Following the elections in May 2023, there is now an opportunity for the new administration to develop a new corporate plan setting out its aims and ambitions for the coming four years.
- 2.5 This report proposes that Lead Hub Members work with the Senior Leadership Team during July – September to consider draft priorities for the Council. It will also be an opportunity to

engage with key partners and to develop outline proposals for a new Corporate Strategy for consideration by the Hub Committee at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023.

- 2.6 In parallel with the review of strategic plans and priorities we will undertake a fundamental review of the Council’s capital programme, earmarked reserves and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to ensure these are aligned to the delivery of the new administration’s plans.
- 2.7 Meetings have already taken place between the Leader & Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive to discuss the emerging priorities of the administration. The next stage will be to agree with the Hub Committee Leads, individually and collectively how and when new initiatives will be implemented to inform a new corporate strategy.
- 2.8 Following the development of the draft strategy, it is proposed that a formal consultation is undertaken with our residents, businesses and key partners with the final strategy being adopted later in the Autumn alongside the budget setting process.
- 2.9 The proposed consultation will be the beginning of ongoing conversations with our communities and partners. Throughout the term of this Council, we will continue to seek views and listen, adapting our plans in response where required.
- 2.10 Finally, while a new corporate strategy is being developed, we will continue to report on progress against the Year 3 delivery plan adopted by Council on 30 March 2023 as well as working with the Hub to bring forward early actions to implement schemes within the existing approved policy and budget framework.

#### 4. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		Ensuring a clearly defined strategy is in place is essential to ensuring good governance and performance within the Council, with officers having a clear set of priorities to deliver as set by Members.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. In parallel with the review of strategic plans and priorities, we will undertake a fundamental review of the Council’s capital programme, earmarked reserves and Medium-

		Term Financial Strategy to ensure these are aligned to the delivery of the new administration's plans.
Risk		
Supporting Corporate Strategy		This report sets out the outline for delivering a new Corporate Strategy for the Council.
Consultation & Engagement Strategy		Hub Lead Members and Lead Officers will engage with key partners and stakeholders while developing outline proposals. The report to Hub Committee in November will set out the approach to formal consultation on the draft strategy.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		No direct implications as a result of this report however Climate response is a key priority for the Council with an adopted action plan already in place which will likely form a key element of any revised strategy.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		No direct implications through this report
Safeguarding		
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		
Other implications		

**Supporting Information**

**Appendices:**

**Background Papers:**

Council 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (Minute CM 82(e) refers)