

5 June 2024		ITEM: 11
Cabinet		
Update on Corporate Plan 2024-29		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: n/a	
Report of: Cllr John Kent, Leader of the Council		
Accountable Assistant Director: Patrick McDermott, Assistant Director, Strategy, Policy, Performance and Partnerships		
Accountable Director: Alex Powell, Assistant Chief Executive		
This report is public		
Version: Final Version		

Executive Summary

As part of the Improvement and Recovery Plan Thurrock Council needs a Corporate Plan to give clarity about how the organisation will move forward. The Corporate Plan is an internal-facing document setting out the purpose of the council and how services will need to adapt. It focusses on:

- corporate priorities
- the changes needed
- guiding the work of the council's leadership, teams and officers
- rebuilding external and internal confidence in the council

As a new team, the Leader and Cabinet fully support the urgent need for a new Corporate Plan, and agree this important strategic document will give members, staff, partners and residents more clarity.

Through this Corporate Plan the new administration is determined that the council will be different and better. It will put Thurrock and its communities first and take responsibility for its decisions. It will say what it means and mean what it says. It will be honest, open, fair and respectful.

This update report presents a short summary of the key points within the Corporate Plan, as a precursor to presenting the final version to Cabinet and Council in July.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioners have been consulted on the content of this report and agree with the recommendations made.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 To review and support the key principles of the Corporate Plan as articulated in Appendix 1.

1.2 To note the full Corporate Plan 2024-29 will be presented to Cabinet in July ready for recommendation to Full Council in July.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The lack of a Corporate Plan, strategic narrative, clarity of priorities and associated comprehensive performance management, assurance and reporting framework is well recognised. This has been reflected in the IRP, enhanced IRP, Commissioner's reports and the Best Value Inspection report.

2.2 The Corporate Plan articulates, in one place, the messages shared over the last year with staff, members, Commissioners and government as part of the improvement and recovery of the council, and its journey out of intervention. It draws upon feedback from engagement sessions with staff and members across the council, particularly in relation to culture, behaviours and values. It also takes account of comments and recommendations in the Best Value Inspection Report and subsequent reports of Commissioners and the Secretary of State. And it reflects the commitments and determination of the new Leader and administration to be honest, open, fair and respectful.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The principles which make up the Corporate Plan have been developed through engagement from across the political spectrum over the last 18 months, including steer from the leadership of both main political parties and Commissioners through the governance of Improvement and Recovery Board.

3.2 Appendix 1 is a high-level summary of the key principles within the draft Corporate Plan. This report asks Cabinet to review, comment upon and support these principles, ahead of the detailed Corporate Plan being presented for approval in July.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The development and delivery of a Corporate Plan and associated performance management and assurance framework are required outcomes of the Enhanced IRP as agreed by Council, with endorsement from Commissioners and the government.

4.2 The Local Government Act 1999 requires that council services are "responsive to the needs of citizens, of high quality and cost-effective, and fair and accessible to all who need them". Councils are also under a general best value duty to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness".

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 There has been consistent and ongoing engagement with Commissioners, members and staff over the last 12-18 months about the future for the council and how it needs to change in order to improve and recover. This has been led by the Chief Executive with support from Senior Leadership Team (SLT), with regular engagement with Improvement and Recovery Board (IRB) which had cross party political membership.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The Corporate Plan will be the foremost document which articulate the council's strategic priorities including how it will work with communities in the future. The plan includes a number of different projects and activities, some of which will require a different relationship with communities and residents, for which Community and Equality Impact Assessments (CEIA) will be completed as appropriate as those projects progress.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Rosie Hurst**
Interim Finance Manager
24 May 2024

This report provides a progress update and high-level summary of the principles within the Corporate Plan. One of the key principles of the Corporate Plan is getting the council to a place of financial stability and sustainability. Many of the projects/actions will have financial implications and these will need to be reviewed and considered as individual projects develop and progress.

As the principles are developed, these will inform the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget setting objectives.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Jayne Middleton-Albooye**
Interim Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer.
28 May 2024

7.2.1 Whilst there is no specific statutory duty to produce a corporate plan, it is crucial to the Council in establishing its priorities. The CIPFA / Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 guidance underlines that Councils should set out their purpose and intended outcomes. The Council can then measure itself against the outcomes to ensure that its resources are being managed in accordance with its priorities for its residents.

7.2.2 Additionally, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 oblige the Council to produce an Annual Governance Statement for each accounting year evidencing how the

Council has performed: the Corporate Plan is therefore an important part of the overall governance framework of the Council.

- 7.2.3 Councils are also under a general best value duty (Local Government Act 1999 s.3 (1)) to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. The Corporate plan and meeting of objectives outlined therein will assist in demonstrating continuous improvement.
- 7.2.4 The Corporate Plan is a requirement of the Improvement and Recovery Plan as agreed with Commissioners as part of the Directions issued by the Secretary of State. Some of the individual projects/actions will have legal implications and these will need to be reviewed and considered as individual projects develop and progress.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer
28 May 2024

This report provides a progress update and high-level summary of the principles within the Corporate Plan. The final Corporate Plan will emphasise our commitment to diversity and equality objectives and services will need to consider the impact of decisions through Community and Equality Impact Assessments (CEIAs) as projects develop and progress.

7.4 **Risks**

Not having an agreed Corporate Plan risks staff, members and partners not having a clear understanding of the direction for the council, and risks loss of confidence from Commissioners and government in the council’s ability to progress.

- 7.5 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

This report provides a progress update and high-level summary of the principles within the Corporate Plan. The final Corporate Plan will articulate a number of projects and activities which will have differing implications on a number of different areas, including those highlighted in the heading of this section. These implications will need to be reviewed and considered as individual projects develop and progress.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):
- [Improvement and Recovery Plan](#)
 - [Documents on www.gov.uk regarding intervention at Thurrock Council including reports \(Enhanced\) Improvement and Recovery Plan](#)

9. **Appendices to the report**

Appendix 1: Summary of Corporate Plan

Report Author:

Sarah Welton

Strategy Manager

Chief Executive's Office