

## **COUNCIL**

**25 FEBRUARY 2016**

### **COUNCIL PLAN 2016/17 – 2020/21**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Adrian Gulvin, Resources

Report from: Stephanie Goad, Assistant Director, Communications, Performance and Partnerships

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#### **Summary**

The Council Plan is the organisation's overarching business plan, setting out the Council's commitments to achieving certain outcomes during the life of the plan. This report sets out the key elements of the new 2016/17 to 2020/21 Council Plan. This includes the Plan's objectives, key performance indicators, programmes and ways of working.

The plan has already been considered by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 February and recommended for approval by Cabinet on 9 February.

#### **1. Budget and policy Framework**

- 1.1. The current Council Plan has been in place since 2013, with the indicators and key projects subject to an annual review process. The existing 2013-15 plan was extended into 2015/16 by approval of Full Council, with a view to developing a completely new Council Plan to set the organisation's strategic direction from 2016/17 to 2020/21.
- 1.2 This process looks at developing a new Council Plan that will set direction of the Council's vision and objectives over the next 5 years. This includes a new suite of programmes and indicators, enabling officers and Members to assess the Council's progress in meeting the commitments set out in the Council Plan. As the Council Plan is a policy framework document it is a matter for Full Council.
- 1.3 The new Council Plan priorities, outcomes, programmes and indicators has been considered at:
  - Business Support Overview and Scrutiny on 2 February 2016 and
  - Cabinet on 9 February 2016.

## **2. Background**

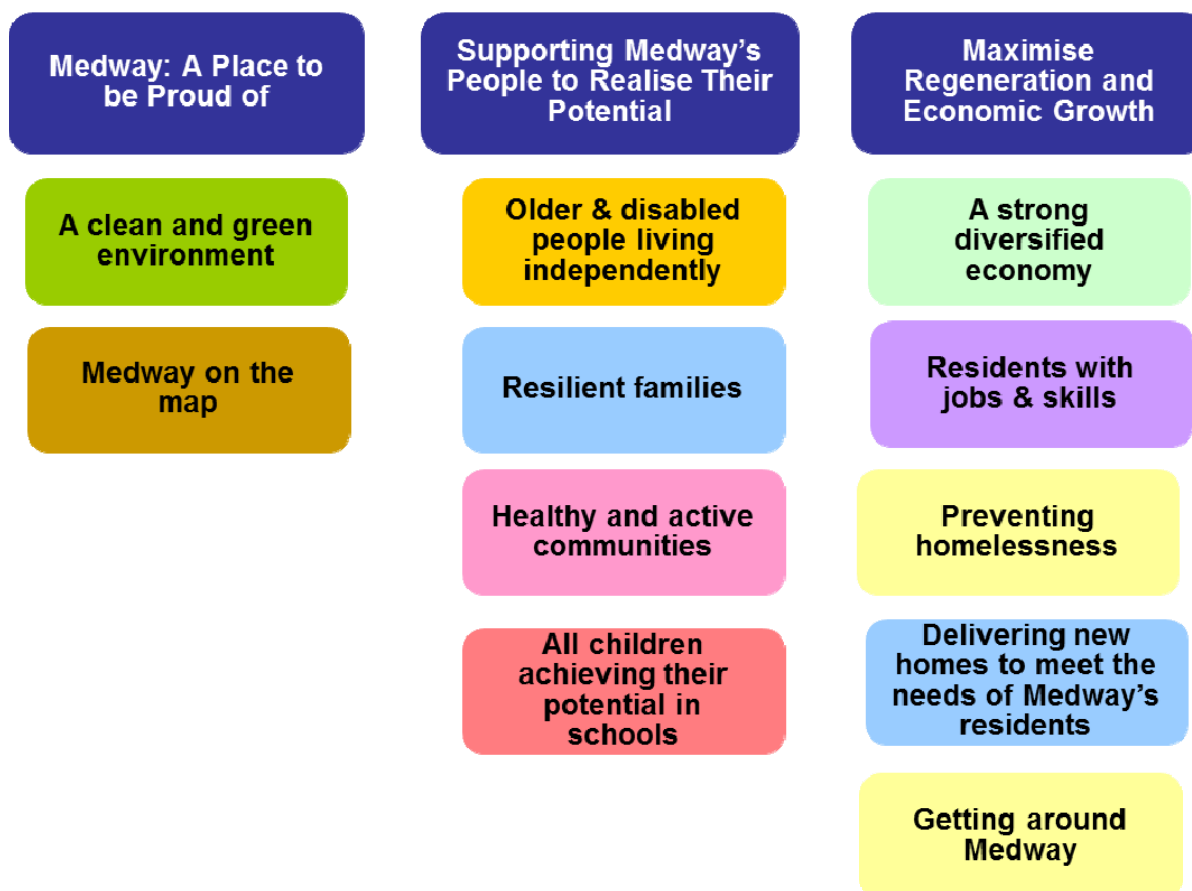
- 2.1 The Council Plan's purpose is to set the vision and direction of the Council for the next four years. The Council's current strategic objectives for 2015-16 incorporate:
- Children and young people have the best start in Medway
  - Adults maintain their independence and live healthy lives
  - Safe, clean and green Medway Council
  - Everyone benefiting from regeneration
- 2.2 Under each of the priorities the Council sets outcomes, programmes and key indicators it wishes to track over the life of the plan. The new Council Plan will continue to act as the primary framework for setting the direction and vision of the Council over the medium term (i.e. the next 5 years), including a new set of outcomes, programmes and indicators.
- 2.3 To underpin the Council Plan, Medway links strategic priorities all the way through the organisation to individual staff's personal development priorities. This is referred to as 'the golden thread'. The golden thread ensures there is a clear link between the priorities and values which Councillors and the senior management team have set for the organisation, and the work undertaken by individual members of staff. This helps us share best practice and encourages all departments to take into account Council priorities and values in the way they deliver their services.

## **3. The Council Plan 2016 – 2021**

- 3.1 In consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Corporate Management Team (CMT) has been developing the new vision and priorities for the 2016/17- 2020/21 Council Plan. The intention has been to develop a more focused Council Plan that concentrates on the Council's strategic 'transformational' activity. The intention is to deliver programmes over the life of the plan that will have a significant impact for local residents, whilst ensuring the services that matter most to local residents are preserved.
- 3.2 The Council Plan will act as the primary framework for setting the direction and vision of the Council over the medium term (e.g. the next 5 years). The new strategic plan will focus on delivering a strategic agenda of change, to transform the area and the way in which the Council delivers its services. To ensure the Council maintains its focus on delivering these outcomes the new plan will not capture all of the services the Council will continue to provide at an operational level. The narrower focus of the Council Plan compared to previous iterations does not however mean that delivery of these services will cease. Instead the effective monitoring of these services will continue occur at Directorate level.
- 3.3 To reflect this focus on change the new Council plan comprises of of 3 key priorities:
- Medway: A Place to be Proud Of
  - Maximise Regeneration and Economic Growth
  - Supporting Medway's People to Realise Their Potential

3.4 Under each priority the Directorates have identified the outcomes the Council will aim to achieve over the duration of the plan. These are set out in diagram 1:

**Diagram 1: Council Plan Priorities and Outcomes**



3.5 The intention in developing the 2016/17 – 2020/21 plan was to have a smaller, more focused, yet balanced set of outcomes, programmes and indicators that will deliver the Council Plan's stated priorities.

3.6 The current ratio of outcomes, programmes and performance indicators has been developed to ensure a 'pyramid' effect where each layer supports the one above. The distribution of commitments, projects and performance indicators for the Council Plan for 2016/17 onwards is outlined in table 1 below. In comparison the 2015-16 Council Plan had 26 projects and 62 indicators.

**Table 1: 2016/17 Council Plan**

Priority	No. of Outcomes	No. of Programmes	No. of Indicators
A Place to be Proud of	2	3	5
Supporting Medway's Communities to Realise Their Potential	4	5	23
Maximise Regeneration and Economic Growth	5	5	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>39<sup>1</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> The actual number of projects and indicators monitored on a quarterly basis in 2016/17 is likely to be lower than this as several of the programmes will not become operational until the later part of the plan's duration. These have been greyed out in Appendix 2 to show they will not form part of 2016/17 performance monitoring,

- 3.7 Taking into account the strategic, longer term nature of the plan, a number of the programmes will not start (and therefore will not be measured) in 2016/17, but will instead commence at a later point. More detail regarding the current set of programmes and indicators can be found in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.
- 3.8 A draft of the public version of the plan has been included with this report (Appendix 4), which will be finalised subject to receipt of financial data necessary to create the infographic detailing the Council's income sources and expenditure.
- 3.9 Some national policy agendas continue to evolve along timelines that do not fit the Council's planning and Member decision-making programme, including the publication of national benchmarking data. As a result, a number of indicators still have provisional targets and / or methodologies at this stage.
- 3.10 As the Budget reaches its conclusion at Council on 25 February, some of the commitments included in the draft indicator set may need to be revisited. Changes made to the budget up to and including Full Council may also have an impact, which will need to be reflected in the final version.
- 3.11 A delegation to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources will be requested as part of the report to Council to deal with any necessary changes to align the plan's indicator set to the agreed budget. This will include finalising the few remaining provisional targets by exception.
- 3.12 It is also important that the Council Plan is not so fluid as to be meaningless, but at the same time that it can accommodate in-year changes if required. If such changes are required they will be presented to members as part of quarterly monitoring.

#### **4. Ways of Working**

- 4.1 The Council Plan has traditionally incorporated a set of values that are intended to act as the organisation's first principles and help guide officers and Members as to what decision should be taken. The current strategy has two key values that cut across the strategic priorities:

- Putting our customers at the centre of everything we do
- Giving value for money.

Given the considerable pressures being placed on Medway Council, these values have begun to feel dated given the scale of change the Council is facing.

- 4.2 The development of the new Council Plan provides an opportunity to develop new corporate '*ways of working*' to incorporate the Council's commitment to deliver cross cutting transformation programmes and provide a way of monitoring cultural change within the organisation.

- 4.3 It is proposed that the following key ways of working are adopted as part of the Council Plan:

- Giving value for money
- Digital services so good that everyone who can use them prefer to do so
- Working in partnership where this benefits our residents

## **5. Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2 February 2016**

5.1 The Assistant Director Communications, Performance and Partnerships introduced this report which asked members to consider the proposed suite of Council Plan priorities, outcomes, programmes and indicators, with the committee's views being reported to Cabinet on 9 February 2016, alongside the 2016/17 budget proposals.

5.2 The Committee noted the new council plan and its component priorities, outcomes, ways of working, programmes, indicators and targets.

5.3 The following areas were discussed in detail:

- *The new focus of the plan on delivering change.*

A Member queried whether the Council Plan was intended to focus on the Council's transformation agenda, rather than capture all Council business. The Member expressed the view that if it was the former then the priorities as proposed captured the transformation agenda the council should be taking forward. The Assistant Director confirmed that was the case and this would be made clear when the matter was considered by Cabinet and Council.

- *Indicator: Jobs created and safeguarded*

The methodology for creating and safeguarding jobs was also queried, i.e. was this snapshot or measured over a period of time.

- *Indicator: The percentage of children social work substantive posts not filled by permanent social workers*

A Member referred to the proposed target of 28% of children social work substantive posts not filled by permanent social workers and commented that this did not appear to be very aspirational.

- *Programme: Improving Street lighting Efficiency*

A Member welcomed the plan to increase the energy efficiency of street lighting by using LED technology and queried its scope and how performance would be measured. With regard to street lighting the Committee were advised that plans were at a very early stage but the possibility of replacing all street lighting through prudential borrowing was being considered. Many columns were old and therefore some presented a potential risk as well as being inefficient.

## **6. Assistant Director's comments**

6.1 Further clarification has been sought from the appropriate service leads for each of the indicators queried above at the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- *The new focus of the plan on delivering change.*

To reflect Members comments paragraph 3.2 has been amended to more clearly state the Council plan's focus on delivering change.

- *Indicator: Jobs created and safeguarded*

Jobs created & safeguarded are measured from a number of different sources of intervention including Partners for Growth (PFG) start up grants & loans, businesses taking workspace and businesses relocating into Medway. In the case of funding schemes such as PFG, only growth businesses creating new jobs are supported.

For jobs created it has been agreed with agencies, such as Locate in Kent, that jobs are recorded at the start point, following the provision of an intervention as outlined above. In the case of the Council's PFG funding scheme, the jobs are measured when the loan is made.

- *Indicator: The percentage of children social work substantive posts not filled by permanent social workers*

The projection of the recruitment rate required to achieve the improvement from 40% to 28% is based upon activity in the last 12 months, which included regular media advertising, overseas recruitment and recruitment fairs. This is supplemented by the Social Work academy which produced 17 newly qualified social workers in the last 12 months. Due to the relative inexperience of these newly qualified workers, only a limited number can be introduced to the service at any one time. The target also includes qualified social work team managers, a grade which carries significant decision making and risk management responsibilities, therefore recruitment of appropriately equipped and capable managers is critical. There is a limited pool of these candidates available.

## **7. Cabinet – 9 February 2016**

- 7.1 The Cabinet considered the report on 9 February 2016 including the comments of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a revised Appendix 2 which included additional commentary explaining the rationale for the targets set for each indicator for 2016/17.
- 7.2 The Cabinet noted the comments of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Council Plan priorities, outcomes, programmes and indicators.
- 7.3 The Cabinet reviewed the component parts of the Council Plan 2016/17 – 2020/1 and recommended for approval to Full Council on 25 February 2016:
- Priorities and outcomes (as shown in the diagram in paragraph 3.3 of the report and within Appendix 1 to the report)
  - Programmes (Appendix 1 to the report)
  - Indicators and associated year 1 targets (revised Appendix 2 to the report)
  - Ways of working to underpin how the Council operates (paragraph 4 of the report). (Decision no. 15/2016 refers).

## **8. Diversity Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has legal duties to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. The Council has a clearly set out diversity impact assessment process which describes how changes to service delivery or new services and policies should be assessed for impact and the requirement for regular review of the equality impact of services and strategies.

- 8.2 These processes are in place to ensure that the outcomes and initiatives set out by services, and then included in the Council Plan, meet the needs of our customers and are assessed for impact during their development. This means that officers are expected to identify and address any potential adverse impacts in line with legislation and best practice as part of implementation of the Council Plan.
- 8.3 A Diversity Impact Assessment of the new Council Plan has been prepared with the report, in line with the Council's established procedure for new strategic documents and has been included as Appendix 3. This has not identified any adverse impact on residents with protected characteristics based on the proposed changes to Council Plan's key projects and indicator suite. For example although the focus of the plan has changed, this does not mean that operational activity no longer referenced within the plan will cease.

## **9. Financial and legal implications**

- 9.1 The Council Plan should be developed alongside the budget setting process. This ensures the financial implications are considered during the development of the Council Plan. This is particularly important due to the current financial pressures faced by the Council due to ongoing Central Government funding cuts. This has placed an ever-increasing pressure to focus the Council's resources on areas of greatest need and demonstrates that value for money is achieved through the allocation of scarce resources.
- 9.2 There is no longer a statutory requirement to have a Council Plan. This means that the Council Plan is no longer listed as a plan or strategy which must be adopted by Council in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000. However, the Regulations provide that where the Council determines that a decision on a non-statutory plan should be taken by them, the decision on adoption of that plan must be taken by Full Council. Members have decided to retain the Council Plan as a key document to guide the business of the Council and communicate its direction. The Council Plan remains a policy framework document within the Council's Constitution and so the decision to produce a new Council Plan must be taken by full Council.

## **10. Risk Management**

- 10.1 As the Council's overarching strategic plan, risks related to the delivery of the plan (including controls and mitigating actions) are developed through the Strategic Risk Register and the service planning process (in directorate business plans and service plans).
- 10.2 The local government environment is experiencing unprecedented change across multiple agendas – policy, finance, legal, and citizen and customer expectation. Continuing to communicate with key stakeholders through a clear Council Plan with appropriate measures is a means to mitigate risks arising from a lack of strategic and corporate planning.
- 10.3 To reflect the importance of managing risk on behalf of the Council, Directorates have been instructed to consider their strategic risks as a part of the Council Plan development process.

## **11. Recommendations**

11.1 Full Council is asked to review and agree the Council Plan 2016/17 – 2020/21 and its component parts including:

- Priorities and outcomes (shown in the diagram in paragraph 3.3 of the report and within appendix 1)
- Programmes (appendix 1)
- Indicators and associated year 1 targets (appendix 2)
- Ways of working to underpin how the council operates (paragraph 4 of the report).

11.2 Full Council is asked to grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, to make any necessary changes to align the plan's indicator set to the agreed budget, including to finalise the few remaining provisional targets by exception.

### **Lead officer contact:**

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### **Background papers**

None

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Council Plan 2016/17 to 2020/21- Strategic Projects

Appendix 2 - 2016/17 - 2020/21 Council Plan Key Performance Indicators

Appendix 3 – Diversity Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 – Council Plan