

COUNCIL

24 FEBRUARY 2022

COUNCIL STRATEGY AND COUNCIL PLAN REFRESH 2022/23

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Adrian Gulvin, Portfolio Holder for Resources

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Public Health
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Summary

The Council Strategy sets out the Council's key priorities, the outcomes we expect to achieve and the programmes that we will deliver. The Council Plan is the delivery plan which sets out the measures that will be used to track performance against the Council's key priorities.

Following consultation with directorates, this report proposes the Council Strategy 2022/23 and the Council Plan 2022/23.

The report was initially considered by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee on 25 January 2022, the comments of which are set out at section 5 of the report. An officer response to these comments is set out at section 6 of the report. The report was considered by the Cabinet on 8 February 2022, the outcome of which is set out at section 7.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The current Council Strategy and Council Plan were agreed in February 2021 and cover the Council's strategic objectives up to 2023.
- 1.2 To ensure the Council Strategy and Council Plan remain relevant and focused, the key programmes, key measures of success and targets are subject to an annual review process.
- 1.3 The annual refresh for 2022/23 has now taken place. This report proposes the measures to be used for monitoring in 2022/23.
- 1.4 Both the Council Strategy and the Council Plan form part of the Council's Policy Framework, therefore, the proposals will be considered by Cabinet and Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the Corporate Management Team meeting on 12 August 2020, it was agreed to produce a short-term two-year Council Strategy and Council Plan for 2021/22 and 2022/23, to focus on the recovery from Covid19. A more fundamental review of the Council's Strategy is to take place during that time.
- 2.2 The Council Strategy and Council Plan have been reviewed by Directorate Management Teams (DMTs), Corporate Management Team (CMT), Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
- 2.3 The refreshed Council Strategy can be found at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The refreshed Council Plan performance measures can be found at Appendix 2. These are split across the Council Plan priorities and values as follows:

Priority and outcome	Proposed Council Plan measures 2022/23	Proposed Council Plan measures 2021/22
Healthy and active communities	6	6
Resilient families	14	13
Older and disabled people living independently in their homes	5	6
All children achieving their potential in schools	9	9
A clean and green environment	3	3
Medway on the map	0	0
A strong diversified economy	3	3
Residents with jobs and skills	4	3
Preventing homelessness	3	3
Delivering new homes to meet the needs of Medway's residents	1	1
Getting around Medway	1	1
Values		
Financial Resilience	1	1
Digital Enablement	1	1
Working together to empower communities	0	0
Creativity and Innovation	0	0
Tackle Climate Change	0	0
Child Friendly	0	0
TOTAL	51	50

3. Diversity Impact Assessment

- 3.1 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 clear 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.
- 3.2 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been completed for the refreshed Council Strategy and Plan and can be found in Appendix 3.

4. Financial and Legal implications

- 4.1 The Council Strategy and Plan are developed alongside the budget setting process, to ensure the financial implications are considered during the development of the priorities and measures. Implementation of a performance management framework allows the Council to evidence how successful it is in achieving against its stated objectives, and for residents it provides genuine accountability on how successfully the Council is administering its resources.
- 4.2 There is no longer a statutory requirement to have a Council Strategy or Plan. This means that they are 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, Council has decided to retain both as policy framework documents within the Council's Constitution and thus a decision on refreshing them must be taken by Full Council.

5. Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 The Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 25 January 2022 and its comments are set out below.
- 5.2 The Committee considered a report on the Council Strategy, which set out the Council's key priorities, the outcomes the Council expected to achieve and the programmes that would be delivered, and the Council Plan, which was the delivery plan which set out the measures that would be used to track performance against the Council's key priorities.
- 5.3 Members were asked to consider these proposals and forward any comments to Cabinet on 8 February 2022, prior to consideration by Full Council on 24 February 2022, for implementation from April 2022.
- 5.4 Members raised the following questions and comments on the Council Strategy Refresh:

What was the Council doing to be a leading Smart City in the South East by 2035 and what were the challenges that might prevent this being achieved?:
It was agreed that an update would be provided to Members.

- 5.5 **Local Transport Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan:** The links to these documents on the Council's website would be sent to Members.
- 5.6 **Sites identified for Development:** Noting that 12 sites had been identified for development, clarification was sought on the two further sites that MDC had been commissioned to consider. A response would be provided outside the meeting.
- 5.7 **Could a breakdown of the delivery of new homes to meet the needs of residents, and also the delivery by MDC, be reported on a quarterly basis?:**
Members were advised that, as the delivery of new homes changed so much throughout the year, it would not be a useful quarterly indicator. Clarification would be sought on the reporting of MDC.

5.8 Members raised the following questions and comments on the Council Plan refresh:

4.2 Digital Enablement: Concern was expressed that DIGI TU 01 – Digital Take Up was being moved from the Council Plan to Directorate monitoring, given that it was such an important issue for residents.

5.9 **1.2.1 Programme. Together We Can – Children’s Services Improvement Plan:** The new Goldilocks measure for Children’s Services was welcomed. However, concern was expressed that ILAC7 - The percentage of CSC audits graded good or outstanding was being replaced by a new target of the number of audits graded requires improvement or higher. This was not considered to be a positive move and had not been discussed at the Children and Young People’s O&S Committee.

5.10 **1.2.2 Programme. The best start in life:** It had been requested at both this committee and at Children and Young People’s O&S Committee that PH16 Smoking at the time of delivery be made more challenging. However, this was not being proposed in the Plan.

5.11 **The Process for Changing Targets:** In view of the two previous points, clarification was sought on the process for changing targets. Members were advised that Officers start the refresh process each year and the comments from this meeting would be reported to Cabinet.

5.12 **Decision:**

Members commented on the refreshed Council Strategy as shown in Appendix 1, and on the refreshed Council Plan measures as shown in Appendix 2.

6. Director’s comments

Officers have reflected on the comments raised by Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee and have provided the following responses since the Committee meeting. These comments were provided to the Cabinet via an addendum report.

6.1 **Digital Enablement**

Digital take up is one part of the user journey. It is important to understand how residents interact with us online and through other channels, so that we can focus resources on where it is needed. Therefore, over the forthcoming year we will review how people choose to access services and what level of digital support is required. This will include agreeing key performance measure(s) for consideration as part of next year’s Council Plan refresh.

6.2 **ILAC7 – CSC audits**

6.2.1 Our aim is to achieve a service where good practice is embedded, therefore the aim of achieving 80% of audits graded good or outstanding is the long-term service ambition.

6.2.2 The service is currently in intervention and it would be expected that at this point in the journey that a high proportion of work would not meet expected standards until practice improves.

6.2.3 In the interim, the volume of audits graded as requires improvement is a further measure that will be provided to support Members in understanding the improvement trajectory. The current percentage of audits graded requires improvement in the last quarter was 33%.

6.3 **PH16 - Smoking at the time of delivery**

This measure relates to an outcome which is not directly within the control of the Council. There are many external factors that affect it and the Council works in partnership with other agencies to reduce it. The rate has risen again to 16% in the most recent quarter, as was anticipated due to the pandemic and the impact that has had on midwifery services and consultations with expectant mothers. The measure is therefore one that fluctuates and is impacted on by strong external influences, and although we aim to get it as low as we can, it is anticipated to rise over the next few months. Officers therefore recommend that the target is not amended for 2022/23 and is reviewed again at the next refresh.

7. Cabinet

7.1 The Cabinet considered this report on 8 February 2022 and:

7.2 The Cabinet noted the comments of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in section 5 of the report.

7.3 The Cabinet recommended to Full Council the adoption of the refreshed Council Strategy and Council Plan measures as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

8. Proposed Amendments to Council Plan Measures

8.1 In response to discussion at the Business Support O&S Committee, it is proposed to add an additional measure to monitor the percentage of audits graded as requires improvement (see paragraphs 5.9 and 6.2.3 above). This has been added at section 1.2.1 of Appendix 2 to the report under the existing ILAC7 measure.

8.2 Since the 2022-23 refreshed Council Plan measures were compiled, it has been established that the national benchmarking data for measure A1 (The average number of days (over the last 36 months) between a child entering care and moving in with adoptive family) has been discontinued in favour of the National Measure A10. This measure is very similar but with an adjustment for adoptions by foster carers i.e. if a child was adopted by their foster carer, the time considered is stopped at the date the child moved in with the foster family. This is a smarter measure as it gives a truer reflection of the time spent in care.

8.3 It is therefore proposed that measure A10 replaces measure A1 in the Council Plan document and is set out at section 1.2.1 of Appendix 2 to the report.

9. Risk management

- 9.1 Risks related to the delivery of the Council Strategy and Council Plan are managed through the Strategic Risk Register in line with the Risk Management Strategy. The Risk Management process helps the Council understand, evaluate, and act on all their risks. It supports effective decision making, identification of priorities and objectives and increases the probability of success by making the most of opportunities and reducing the likelihood of failure.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 The Council is asked to note the comments of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee, set out in section 5 of the report, the officer responses, set out at section 6 to the report and the decisions of the Cabinet, set out in section 7 of the report.
- 10.2 The Council is asked to adopt the refreshed Council Strategy and Council Plan measures as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively, noting that the Council Plan includes the revised measures set out at paragraphs 8.1 and 8.2 to the report.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Council Strategy 2022/23
Appendix 2 - Council Plan Performance Measures 2022/23
Appendix 3 - Diversity Impact Assessment 2022/23

Background papers

[Medway Council Plan and Strategy 2021/22](#)