

Cabinet

30 April 2024

One Medway Council Plan 2024-2028

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Vince Maple, Leader of the Council

Report from: Richard Hicks, Chief Executive

Author: Samantha Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer

Summary

This report presents the proposed new One Medway Council Plan 2024-28 which sets out the vision, ambitions and priorities with the Performance Indicators (PIs) that will be used to track performance against the Council's key priorities and sub-priorities.

Consultation has been undertaken with teams across the Council, the Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet. Public consultation was also undertaken via a survey with 318 respondents.

The report was considered by the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 April 2024 and its comments are set out in section 9 of the report.

Following consideration of the report by the Cabinet, the proposals will be presented to Full Council on 15 May 2024, for implementation from May 2024.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Cabinet is asked to note the comments of the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in section 9 of the report.
- 1.2. The Cabinet is asked to recommend to Full Council the adoption of the new One Medway Council Plan as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 1.3. The Cabinet is asked to note that Full Council will be asked to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree any final measures/benchmarks in relation to the PIs once data is received, as set out at paragraph 5.4 of the report.
- 1.4. The Cabinet is asked to note that Full Council will be asked to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the

Council, to agree the yearly performance monitoring, including interim targets where appropriate.

2. Suggested reasons for decisions.

- 2.1. The One Medway Council Plan sets the high-level objectives and direction for the Council and includes the PIs that will measure progress and outcomes. Agreement of the One Medway Council Plan will ensure continued delivery of the objectives and effective monitoring of performance.

3. Budget and policy framework

- 3.1. The current Council Strategy and Plan 2023-2024, agreed at Full Council in February 2023, ended at the end of March 2024.
- 3.2. This report presents the One Medway Council Plan 2024 – 2028 priorities, sub-priorities and PIs.
- 3.3. The process for creating and building this new Council Plan began with adopting the Logical Framework Model approach and working and consulting with senior leaders, Portfolio Holders and the residents of Medway through public consultation. This has resulted in a new suite of priorities, sub-priorities and indicators, which will enable officers and Members to assess the Council's progress in meeting the commitments set out in the One Medway Council Plan.
- 3.4. The One Medway Council Plan forms part of the Council's Policy Framework; therefore, these proposals will be considered by Full Council on 15 May 2024.

4. Background

- 4.1. The One Medway Council Plan's purpose is to set the vision and direction of the Council for the next four years.

- 4.2. The vision is:

Medway – a place that people are proud of.

Medway is recognised as a great place to live, work, learn and visit, where all people thrive.

- 4.3. Under each of the five interconnected priorities that will drive the work of the Council, are sub-priorities accompanied by indicators to track progress against each of the priorities. This One Medway Council Plan will act as the primary framework for setting the direction and vision of the Council over the medium term, supported by several key corporate strategies, such as the Children and Young People Strategy, Adult Social Care Strategy, People Strategy, Housing Strategy, Economic Strategy, Local Transport Plan, Corporate Parenting Strategy, Homelessness Prevention Strategy and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

4.4. The One Medway Council Plan is underpinned by our Values and Behaviours:

- Proud to be Medway
- Caring
- Respectful
- Trusted
- Ambitious for Medway
- Collaborative.

It provides alignment for directorate and service plans and individual performance appraisals, ensuring a link between what we do and how we do it, when delivering council services for the residents of Medway.

5. The One Medway Council Plan 2024-2028

5.1. In consultation with Cabinet Members, senior leaders have been working to develop this new One Medway Council Plan for 2024 – 2028.

5.2. The Council's proposed 5 strategic priorities for 2024 – 2028 are:

- Delivering quality social care and community services
- Benefitting from good education, quality jobs and a growing economy
- Enjoying clean, green, safe and connected communities
- Improving health and wellbeing for all
- Living in good quality and affordable homes.

5.3. The One Medway Council Plan can be found at Appendix 1. Appendix 2 details the public feedback from our consultation, and Appendix 3 details the 5 strategic priorities and associated sub-priorities with the proposed PIs.

5.4. The information for One Medway Council Plan measures where PIs have not yet been set, or where further data is required before PIs can be proposed, is likely to be received after the One Medway Council Plan 2024-2028 has been discussed at Full Council. It is therefore proposed that Full Council be asked to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to agree the final measures once the data is received.

5.5. The targets set out in Appendix 3 outline aspirations to be achieved by 2028. Progression towards these is anticipated to be incremental over the lifespan of the One Medway Council Plan. It is therefore proposed that Full Council be asked to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to agree the yearly performance monitoring, including interim targets where appropriate.

6. Advice and analysis

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been completed for the One Medway Council Plan and can be found in Appendix 4. Individual DIAs have been undertaken for each of the supporting strategies.

7. Risk management

- 7.1. Risks related to the delivery of the One Medway Council Plan are managed through the Strategic Risk Summary in line with the Risk 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.

8. Consultation

- 8.1. The development of the One Medway Council Plan has been undertaken in conjunction with council teams and senior officers in collaboration with Portfolio Holders and shared with strategic partners.
- 8.2. Public consultation was undertaken via a survey from 18 January 2024 to 11 February 2024. 318 responses have been received and a summary can be found in Appendix 2.
- 8.3. There is significant agreement with the overall priorities, and those priorities that are more tangible tended to be selected as the highest level of priority. The same is true with the sub-priorities; those that are more practical and tangible were selected with the highest priority most often.

9. Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 9.1. The Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 4 April 2024 and its comments are set out as below.
- 9.2. The Chief Executive introduced the report, outlining that the One Medway Council Plan set out the vision and direction of the Council for the next four years and had been subject to significant consultation internally, with partner agencies and the public. The plan also took account of best practice elsewhere.

- 9.3. The One Medway Council Plan sets out the Council's five priorities: delivering quality social care and community services, benefitting from good education, quality jobs and a growing economy, enjoying clean, green, safe and connected communities, improving health and wellbeing for all and living in good quality and affordable homes.
- 9.4. The Chief Executive added the One Medway Council Plan was underpinned by the Council's new values and behaviours: Proud to be Medway, caring, respectful, trusted, ambitious for Medway and collaborative.
- 9.5. The following issues were discussed:
- 9.5.1. **Transition** – it was queried how the Council intended to transition from the current Council Plan to the new One Medway Council Plan given the challenges in recruitment and funding. The Chief Executive informed the Committee the plan was a new approach and with different ways of working, teams across the Council had been extensively engaged in the development of the plan and it was vital there was a clear sense of direction to allow the transition to take place.
- 9.5.2. **Partner agencies** – a Member requested further information on how the Council could engage with external partners such as grammar schools to improve attainment. The Chief Executive agreed that working in partnership was key to achieving the Council's goals. The Council had recently signed the One Medway Charter with partner agencies and was committed to working closely with partners.
- 9.5.3. **Performance Data** - a Member asked if the Council had baseline data available to measure progress in achieving its objectives. The Chief Executive explained the Council was increasingly data driven. Council teams were working on the data and KPIs within the One Medway Council Plan building on previous work within the Council.
- 9.5.4. **Values** – a Member requested further information about the plan to embed the Council's values with staff, the Chief Executive stated the new council values and behaviours were developed in workshops and would be enshrined in staff Performance Development Reviews.
- 9.5.5. **Priorities** – a Member commented that they expected more targets to be included in the plan in relation to priority one. The Chief Executive explained there was an ambition to include both universal and statutory services and include reference to inspection reports. The Chief Executive noted the recent SEND report which showed good progress but acknowledged there was still more to do.
- 9.5.6. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of People informed the Committee there would be a detailed service plan with KPIs and in addition a post inspection action plan.
- 9.5.7. **Adult Social Care** – A Member asked whether the Council was ready for an adult social care inspection, the Chief Executive informed the

Committee that the Council was awaiting the announcement of an assurance review visit by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which would take place in the coming months. It was his view that the CQC would find that there had been a great deal of positive work undertaken but more still to do. The Chief Executive praised the leadership of officers and the Deputy Leader, noted the agreement to right size adult social care and many positive proposals for further development such as assistive technology to help people live at home and Care for Medway.

- 9.5.8. **Children Leaving Care** – A Member commented that the target for the percentage of young people leaving care who were in higher education was set at 50% (key Performance Indication 1.07) however, this figure was currently at 53%, therefore, was the target stretching enough? The Chief Executive agreed there was a balance required between achievable targets and being ambitious, targets would be refreshed each year so that balance could be maintained.
- 9.5.9. **Housing** – A Member commented that there were 112,000 homes in Medway and the Council had limited ability to affect house prices to make them affordable. As Medway became a more attractive place to live, house prices would likely increase as a result. The Chief Executive acknowledged that house prices would rise as a natural consequence of improvements in Medway, however he wanted to bring investment and good jobs into Medway so that residents could afford good quality housing. Good housing and employment had a significant impact on residents' health so it was a key priority for the Council.
- 9.5.10. **Tourism** – A Member expressed disappointment that whilst Medway sought to attract more tourism into the area Rochester Tourist Information Centre had been closed, the Chief Executive stated it had been a very difficult decision to close the tourist information centre, however the financial situation the Council was in required difficult decisions and research had shown that the pattern of how tourists access information about the area had changed. Medway benefited from £360 million per year from tourism and 7,000 jobs depended on it. The Council remained committed to tourism in Medway.
- 9.5.11. **Celebrate Medway Towns** – a Member expressed disappointment that Medway wanted to celebrate its towns, however, the funding for Rainham festival had been ended. The Chief Executive stated that difficult decisions had to be taken but that all Members would champion their local areas and he wanted to celebrate the different Medway towns and villages.
- 9.6. The Committee considered the One Medway Council Plan 2024-2028 as set out in Appendix 1, the KPIs detailed in Appendix 3 and submitted comments to Cabinet as detailed above.
- 9.7. The Committee noted that Full Council will be asked to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to agree any final details of the One Medway Council Plan, and any final measures/benchmarks in relation to the KPIs

10. Climate change implications

- 10.1. Climate action is a key principle within the One Medway Council Plan. Medway Council declared a climate emergency in April 2019 and committed to reduce our carbon footprint, provide our local community with a clean, green future, and be a place that people want to work and live that has a sustainable future. Our One Medway Council Plan applies this lens across all priorities and is further supported by our Climate Change Action Plan which sets out our priority areas for action across all our areas of service delivery.

11. Financial implications

- 11.1. The One Medway Council Plan is 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 managing its resources. Financial sustainability is a key principle within the One Medway Council Plan.

12. Legal implications

- 12.1. 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, this Council has decided to retain a Council Plan as a policy framework document within the Council's Constitution and thus a decision on adopting the One Medway Council Plan must be taken by Full Council.
- 12.2. As this will now be a standalone One Medway Council Plan, rather than a plan and a strategy, a recommendation will be made to Full Council to agree that the Council Strategy be removed as a Policy Framework document and that the Constitution be amended.

Lead officer contact

Nicola Trainor, Head of Council Planning & Programmes
Telephone: 01634 332597
e-mail nicola.trainor@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 One Medway Council Plan 2024– 2028

Appendix 2 Public consultation summary

Appendix 3 Performance Indicators

Appendix 4 Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

[Council Strategy and Plan 2023-2024](#)