

Local Members Interest
N/A

Corporate Review Committee – 2nd December 2013

Achieving Excellence Staffordshire County Council Strategic Plan 2014 to 2018

Recommendation

1. That Corporate Review Committee considers the updated position in relation to the development of Staffordshire County Council's strategic direction and priorities for the 4 year period leading up to 2018.
2. That the committee considers the emerging work on the Strategic Plan for the period 2014 to 2018, and comments on and endorses the approaches set out for its preparation.

Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Transformation

Background

3. This report provides Corporate Review Committee with an update to the Achieving Excellence report presented on 17th September 2013. It sets out progress on the work undertaken to develop our priorities for the next four years, which are based on what people and businesses across Staffordshire have told us is important to them.
4. The report provides a summary of the planning work undertaken to date which will form the basis for the content of the draft Staffordshire County Council Strategic Plan. The draft Strategic Plan will be considered by Cabinet during winter 2013, and this report provides an opportunity for the Corporate Review Committee to influence the preparation of the draft plan.
5. Throughout the preparation process, the emerging plan is being used to shape the budget for 2014/15 and the forthcoming Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Together these will be formally signed off by full County Council in February 2014. Corporate Review will have a further opportunity to scrutinise the content of the Strategic Plan prior to final submission to Cabinet and Full Council. Corporate Review has agreed to establish a working group to scrutinise the development of the MTFS (a more detailed timetable for the preparation of the Strategic Plan is presented at appendix 1).

Introduction

6. Over the past twenty years there has been a major change in the way people live their lives. Technology has transformed the ways in which people work, play and connect, employment patterns have fundamentally changed, family structures are more varied and complex and people have more choice around how they spend their time and money. Today, everyone wants a greater choice and control of their own lives. At the same time, people's expectations have changed and we are no longer happy to receive what the state deems is best, and this has profound implications for all public services.
7. Alongside this, recent years have seen unprecedented change in local government and public services in general. Along with other local authorities, Staffordshire County Council continues to face challenging economic conditions, particularly around how it is resourced and run within the context of national economic austerity.
8. We have transformed the county council over recent years to develop a way of working, focusing what we do and how we do it on what matters most for Staffordshire's people, whilst ensuring value for money. While the economy is recovering, doing more for less is the new normal and this will continue to shape the future landscape of the public sector and its partnerships.
9. Underpinning all of this work, the county council needs to be clear about its priorities, particularly against the context of the financial position and as the demands for the county council's services increase for a range of reasons.
10. We have therefore created our strategic priorities for the next four years, and these shape the county council's Strategic Plan and all of the plans which will contribute to it for the period 2014 to 2018 and beyond.

Strategic Priorities for 2014 to 2018

11. Our priority in the months since the County Council election in May 2013 has been to shape the vision and outcomes which will drive what the county council delivers over the next four years, and translating the commitments in the manifesto into priorities for our business planning arrangements.
12. The vision and outcomes provide the framework against which Staffordshire County Council will base its commissioning intentions, and allocate resources over the next four years. They will also form the basis of the conversations we will hold with our residents and partners about how we will prioritise our work, make investments decisions and continue to be a well-run, value for money council.

13. To bring these priorities to life, the county council has adopted 12 principles for a connected Staffordshire which are fundamental towards the way that the organisation works, and how everyone associated with the county council should think.

Principles for a Connected Staffordshire

To deliver our radical approach, improve outcomes and deliver savings, over the next four years we will:

Evolve the deal with residents

- Think 'Individual, families and communities first, state last', promoting personal responsibility, resilience and independence in all our actions.
- Give a stronger voice and more clout to all the people of Staffordshire on the issues that matter to them, not just those issues we have statutory responsibility to deliver.
- Encourage and support all elected members to be true community leaders informing and influencing at a local and county level to create great places to live.
- Collaborate with residents and communities to identify the best long-term solution to problems, whether that's from within the community itself or from the voluntary, private or public sector.

One Staffordshire

- Focus on leading and influencing for the good Staffordshire – it doesn't matter who does what as long as the job gets done.
- Integrate insight, big thinking & planning with partners inside and outside Staffordshire as appropriate.
- Integrate back office, delivery and governance with partners inside and outside Staffordshire as appropriate.

SCC will:

- Promote Staffordshire as the place to invest, live, learn and visit.
- Be the passionate advocate for Staffordshire locally, nationally and internationally, seeking to deal only with the things that matter to our residents

How we work:

- Get more joined up, locally and corporately, so we can work with residents, communities and partners to meet local needs more effectively.
- Get our financial systems, governance processes and commissioning support aligned to enable delivery of our ambitions.
- Everyone associated with SCC (employees, members, providers, etc.) will go out of their way to understand what local people need, put their needs

at the centre of what we do and find new and better ways to improve their lives.

14. Throughout the summer of 2013 a number of workshops across 8 “think piece” themes were held. The think piece workshops were run in a way to encourage open thinking, to be challenging and free from any pre-conceptions. These groups were chaired by Cabinet members and Cabinet Support members and included evidence from policy and customer insight in shaping the conversations and outputs.

15. The summaries of the think pieces are being used, alongside the principles above, to help us explore how we can achieve our outcomes, and the vision of a Connected Staffordshire. The 8 themes considered in the think piece workshops were:

- Personal responsibility for health and happiness
- High aspirations for better and healthier lives
- People have and use their voice
- Staffordshire is a great place to live
- Technology improves quality of life
- More and better jobs, stronger enterprise
- Excellent access to the things people want or need
- Support for people when they need it most

Local partnership context and priorities

16. In June 2013, the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership agreed three priorities. These are based on the evidence set out in the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Story and other needs assessments, alongside the on-going conversations and engagement which help the Staffordshire public sector to better meet the needs of local people.

The partnership has agreed three priorities which closely link to the priority outcomes of Staffordshire County Council:

- **Community safety**
- **Health improvement and wellbeing**
- **Economic prosperity**

17. The county council has continued to collaborate with organisations across Staffordshire to ensure closer working with district and borough councils, parish and town councils, businesses, charities and the voluntary sector, as well as the police and fire services and health organisations to ensure that our joint working has the maximum impact in achieving these priorities.

18. Staffordshire County Council will work closely to ensure that innovative ideas and solutions are encouraged, and that everyone plays their part in contributing to the three high level strategies and plans which set the framework for how the partnership's priorities can be achieved, namely:

- "Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire" – A Police and Crime Plan for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent 2013 – 2018
- "Living well in Staffordshire" The Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Plan – 2013 – 2018
- The emerging Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan (which is currently in development)

19. The Strategic Plan and Staffordshire Business Plan will set out Staffordshire County Council's contribution in working towards these high level priority outcomes and strategies and the priorities contained within them. They will explain how we will work in partnership to deliver them, and the activities that we will lead on to make an impact against them.

The Strategic Plan 2014 to 2018

20. The Strategic Plan will set out the vision of what we will achieve for Staffordshire in the next four years and the ways that we will work with our residents, communities, businesses and partners to make this a reality. It sets out why we believe this is right for Staffordshire and how we intend to deliver it.
21. The Strategic Plan informs our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which provides details of how we will fund our operations. It will be accompanied by a Business Plan which provides more details on the 'how', 'who' and 'what' we will be doing to make our priorities a reality. This will be made available in April 2014 and will be refreshed on an annual basis.
22. This distinction between the Strategic Plan and the Business Plan provides the opportunity for the Strategic Plan to be more visionary, setting out the narrative of how the county council will work with its partners in achieving its vision and the priority outcomes for Staffordshire.
23. Using the outcomes of the 8 think pieces referred to above, and underpinned by the principles for a connected Staffordshire, the Strategic Plan will set out the county council's response to tackling the macro economic conditions faced by the whole public sector, and predicted increases in demand for services. As such it will set out the ways in which the county council expects that its relationship with Staffordshire's people will change. Today people want greater choice and control over their own lives, and they are not content in

receiving what the state deems is best. It will also mean a much greater shift from tackling problems, towards preventing them from occurring in the first place.

24. All of this will require strong, ambitious and visionary leadership, a focus on people rather than organisations, and a change in people's expectations of what the county council is there for.
25. The Strategic Plan will continue to reinforce our way of working as a commissioning organisation. We will continue to shape ourselves around what people and businesses tell us is most important to them, and our elected members will have a key role to play in this respect, acting as community leaders on the ground for local people, and relaying the insight that they gather from our communities to enable us to plan and shape services more effectively.
26. Above all, the Strategic Plan will set out the way in which Staffordshire County Council will work, embracing innovation, being as efficient as possible and shifting resources towards where they can make the greatest positive impact on priority outcomes.

Conclusions

27. Staffordshire County Council is making good progress towards its ambitions and meeting its vision of a Connected Staffordshire where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy.
28. The next four years will continue to be challenging, as the public sector continues to tackle the unprecedented financial position and making the very best use of resources available. The Staffordshire County Council approach will continue to be about looking fundamentally at what we do to ensure that we can make a positive and sustainable impact against the outcomes that matter most for Staffordshire's people and businesses. The input of the Corporate Review Committee in shaping the Strategic Plan is a key element in ensuring this future sustainability.

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