

ITEM 9

Sustainability Framework

Report of Head of Planning Policy (Portfolio: Environmental)

Recommended:

That the proposed approach for a new sustainability framework is supported.

SUMMARY:

- The Council's current Sustainability Strategy was approved in 2012.
- Through the Corporate Action Plan it has been identified that the sustainability strategy would be reviewed. A new approach is put forward for the future document, with a framework setting out objectives for the Council in relation to environmental sustainability.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides an overview of the process of preparing a new sustainability framework, which will replace the 2012 Sustainability Strategy.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council's current Sustainability Strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2012 and covers the period up to 2017. It was intended as an overview document, with other plans / strategies sitting beneath it (such as the Council's Travel Plan and Biodiversity Action Plan). The document includes a series of objectives and an action plan. Progress was made in achieving a number of the action points, although in some cases events have overtaken the actions, additional information indicated they were no longer appropriate or the availability of data has meant that actions could not be delivered.
- 2.2 Given the end date of the Sustainability Strategy, a Corporate Action Plan project was identified to review and update this document. This links primarily with the 'Enjoy' priority within the Corporate Plan. An officer working group has sought to undertake this review, with input from others including senior officers.

3 Approach to review

- 3.1 As part of the review of the remit of a new document, it was considered that rather than preparing a replacement strategy, a more effective way forward may be to prepare framework document. This would be used as a consideration in how we deliver services (along with other factors). The focus of the framework would be a series of objectives providing direction on how we incorporate environmental sustainability matters in our operations. This approach would aim to avoid duplication with proposals and actions which are likely to be more appropriately identified and delivered through Service Plans and specialist strategies / projects / programmes.

- 3.2 It is envisaged that this approach would enable a more detailed consideration of all appropriate factors (including environmental sustainability) to ensure a balanced approach is taken for a specific work stream / project. This was considered to also increase the potential for integration of this topic into decision making, rather than a stand alone strategy (with agreed actions).
- 3.3 As part of the review process, it was highlighted that greater emphasis could be given to recognising things we are already doing that contribute to environmental sustainability and where people can find more information on specific topics.
- 3.4 A combination of the above has shaped the way a sustainability framework has been drafted. It would be intended that such a framework would sit beneath the Corporate Plan. Consideration was given to using the corporate priorities (i.e. live, work, enjoy and contribute) as the basis for the structure of the framework; however this was not considered to provide a good fit with the information available and may be harder for people to relate to if looking for information on a specific topic.
- 3.5 In order to ensure that the framework is taken into account in projects coming forward, it is intended to use the internal project initiation checklist (a project management tool) to highlight that consideration should be given to this matter early within the process of developing a specific proposal. The relevant section (under 'Other Issues') in the Committee templates can be used to report back on how this matter has been taken into account.
- 3.6 The draft sustainability framework is appended to this paper. It is intended that this is presented to Cabinet on 15 November 2017 for approval.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 As part of the Corporate Action Plan project to review and update the current Sustainability Strategy, it has been considered that an alternative way forward may be more appropriate in order to maximise the consideration of environmental sustainability and ensure an appropriately tailored approach to specific project areas.
- 4.2 As such, it is put forward that a sustainability framework is presented to Cabinet for approval, which establishes a series of objectives related to environmental sustainability and reflects on things we are already doing linked to this theme.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

Sustainability Strategy (2012)

Confidentiality

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

No of Annexes:	1		
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