

Update on the progress of the development of the Corporate Plan 2023 to 2027

Report of the Head of Strategy & Innovation

Recommended:

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the progress made to date, in preparing the evidence-base for developing the new Corporate Plan for 2023 to 2027.

SUMMARY:

- This report gives an update on the actions completed to date, and those outstanding, since the last report in September 2022, to prepare the evidence base that will inform the development of a new Corporate Plan that will be considered by Council in Spring 2023.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report updates members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the action completed, and outstanding work, to develop the new Corporate Plan.
- 1.2 The Corporate Plan is developed by bringing together a robust evidence-base that draws upon an analysis of the strategic environment in which the council is operating, key data and facts and extensive public engagement to gain insight to what matters most to communities across Test Valley.
- 1.3 Over the course of 2022 extensive public engagement has been completed. This has been undertaken across two phases, the second of which, has been the completion of the innovative Deliberative Engagement workshops in conjunction with the Involve Foundation. The evidence and outcomes of this work is now being brought together to enable officers to understand the emerging themes and issues, and potential priority areas that will enable the council to start to shape its corporate plan.
- 1.4 In addition, this work will also ensure that an underpinning Corporate Action Plan is in place later in summer 2023 that sets out the key projects that will deliver the corporate plan over the next four years and beyond.
- 1.5 This report focuses on the outcomes of the deliberative engagement phase and sets out how this will be used alongside the other evidence to shape the next corporate plan.

2 Public Engagement Activities

- 2.1 The public survey, alongside a series of 15 public events (fairs and markets), which ran from May to August 2022, concluded with the completion of over 1550 surveys (achieving statistical significance for a survey of this magnitude). In addition, focussed workshops were held with school children in three borough schools and with the Romsey Disabled People's partnership, to gain feedback from groups that would have otherwise been under-represented in the survey feedback.
- 2.2 The analysis of the survey responses provided valuable insight, which formed the basis of the new and exciting stage of public engagement: Deliberative Engagement (delving deeper into issues, by posing a series of linked questions and providing information to the residents of the Borough, to understand aspirations and priorities). The Council partnered with the Involve Foundation, one of the UK's leading public participation organisations, to lead this stage of engagement enabling the council to further develop its knowledge and expertise of this form of engagement and to provide a level of independence in hosting the events.
- 2.3 The Deliberative Engagement phase was based around the hosting of three geographically based full-day workshops (in Kings Somborne for the rural community, in Romsey for residents of Romsey and Southern Test Valley and in Andover). A final event brought together participants from these three workshops to examine and discuss the broad themes raised at the local sessions (arts and culture venues and activities, volunteering, sports and recreation, parks and greenspaces and the public realm) and delving into greater detail, drawing upon people's lived experiences, and focusing on developing a consensus on key issues to feedback to the council. The overarching question posed was:
- *"What makes communities work well as thriving places where people can live fulfilled lives? And what role should the council be playing to help make this a reality in Test Valley?"*
 - In the final session participants were asked to create statements based on having achieved a consensus of where the council could create added value in response to the question above.
- 2.4 Recruitment of participants, conducted in September and October 2022, focused on inviting survey respondents who had expressed an interest to be further involved, a more general press release and social media campaign, as well as direct invitations to community groups to encourage their members to sign up. It was vital to ensure that the participants reflected the demographic composition of the Borough, and to ensure a diversity of experiences and perspectives were in the room. The selection process ensured that a wide and diverse range of representation was achieved using a process of sortition against an agreed framework of characteristics. Officers will provide further information on the approach and diversity of the groups at the meeting of the committee.

The deliberative events were held as below:

- Kings Somborne, Saturday 5th November, number of attendees: 33
- Ganger Farm, Romsey, Sunday 6th November, number of attendees: 27
- TVBC, Andover, Saturday 19th November, number of attendees: 34
- TVBC, Andover, Saturday 26th November, number of attendees: 33

3 Feedback and Outputs

3.1 The outcome of the Deliberative Engagement phase was to provide the council with a detailed understanding of community need and provide insight towards future priorities, which could add value to the life of residents in the Borough. A full report from Involve, who acted as an independent critical friend, is being produced and will be published in the weeks ahead.

3.2 As part of developing their final statements, participants identified several key principles that they used to develop their ideas throughout the deliberative events. These included:

- Accessible to all
- Consider local needs
- Consider the environment and sustainability
- Protect and conserve nature / greenspace
- Community involvement and societal wellbeing
- Valuing diversity and inclusion
- Community cohesion
- Inclusive spaces
- Connections across the borough' s communities
- Fostering two-way dialogue
- Financial viability of projects
- Sharing events and information across the borough building upon community connections
- Supporting a healthy democracy

3.3 Although the full report of the findings is still to be published, a (interim) headline summary of the twelve statements that emerged from the workshops has been produced and will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on the 23 January. Officers are currently using the outcomes of this work as part of bringing the evidence base together to begin to shape potential priority areas that could form the next corporate plan. The full findings of the deliberative engagement phase will not only be used to shape the corporate plan, but also the corporate action plan, other emerging council plans and strategies and to be fed into both Romsey Future and Andover Vision.

3.4 Officers have reviewed the initial outcomes of the deliberative engagement phase alongside some of the wider strategic influences that will impact the council. As a result of this there appear to be several emerging cross-cutting issues that the next corporate plan could embed and use to underpin the emerging strategic priorities that will be developed over the next phase of the project. A summary of these cross-cutting issues (in no particular order) are set out below:

- Pride of place and considering the unique strengths and needs of communities
- Sustainability
- Economic development and prosperity in all areas
- Housing
- Equalities, inclusion, and diversity, to ensure that all places, activities, and opportunities are accessible to all people
- Supporting the wellbeing of communities and empowering them through the way we work.
- Working with and strengthening our partnerships

4 Next Steps

4.1 The new corporate plan will build on the foundation of the current plan and draw upon the extensive evidence and work undertaken over the last twelve months. Officers are currently bringing together the evidence and beginning to develop proposals on the emerging draft strategic priorities ready for consideration by members over the course of the next 6-8 weeks.

4.2 It is proposed that Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds a roundtable session in late February where officers will be able to share the next update and provide a briefing on emerging priority areas for the next corporate plan, ahead of a draft proposed plan being submitted to council in April 2023.

5 Conclusion

5.1 The Corporate Plan is due to be considered by Council in April 2023. This report has provided members with the work undertaken to get to this stage and demonstrates that a robust public engagement process has been undertaken, to ensure that the emerging Corporate Plan is supported by a firm evidence base, taking into account the strategic operating environment in which the council works, as well as ensuring the plan is focused on the current and emerging needs of communities.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

None

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:	None		
Author:	Charlotte Starkie / James Moody	Ext:	8123
File Ref:	N/A		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	23 January 2023