

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

Corporate Plan 2021-22

Portfolio:	Councillor Bird
Related portfolios:	All
Service:	Policy and Strategy Unit
Wards:	All
Key decision:	Yes
Forward plan:	Yes

1. Aim

1.1 To present the Council's one-year Corporate Plan (2021/22) to Cabinet and then to Council seeking agreement on the content and format.

1.1.1 This one-year Plan will be a refreshed version of the 2018-21 Corporate Plan. A three-year Corporate Plan will be published for 2022-25, which will be a more comprehensive document, will outline medium term plans and align with the Council's Budget Outcomes.

2. Summary

2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 gave councils collective responsibility for approving its policy framework and budget. A Corporate Plan covers four years, articulating the strategic direction for the Council and how it intends to measure its success. The Council's most recent Corporate Plan covered the period 2018 – 2021, which was to be succeeded by the new Corporate Plan for 2021-25.

2.1.1 The new Corporate Plan (for 2021 – 2025) was to be informed by an updated:

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment,
- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (the Walsall Plan),
- Community Safety Needs Assessment and
- Local Economic Needs Assessment.

Substantial development of these (four) assessments has been delayed due to the Council's response to COVID-19.

2.2 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact in global, national and local communities - some of which have been noted and others can be

predicted. However, as this pandemic is ongoing, there is no way of knowing the many consequences, which will have an impact on the needs of the Borough of Walsall and a subsequent response from Walsall Council.

- 2.3 The proposal is to have a Corporate Plan running for 2021-22, which will build on the current Corporate Plan outlining areas of focus, outcomes with markers of success as well as highlight some responses received from the 2020 Residents' Survey.
- 2.4 This will enable the Council to undertake update the four assessments; carry out further research, analysis and to listen to our communities regarding lessons learned from 2018 and in particular during the pandemic which will inform the 2022-25 Corporate Plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet supports the refreshed 2021-22 Corporate Plan, as appended to the report.
- 3.2 That the refreshed 2021-22 Corporate Plan be referred to Council for approval.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 Every local authority has a requirement to have a Corporate Plan that articulates the strategic direction for the Council and how it measures its success.
- 4.2 The Council's current Corporate Plan ends in 2021 with a new 4-year plan to be developed in 2020. The new 4-year plan was to be informed by updated strategic assessments including the Joint Strategic Needs (and assets) Assessment; Community Safety and Economic assessments.
- 4.3 2020 encountered the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and the Council needed to revert resources to manage the impact of the pandemic resulting in the response, engagement in development and completion of these assessments being significantly delayed.
 - 4.3.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has had, and will continue to have, an impact on Walsall communities – some of which have been identified and/or understood. However, while it has been acknowledged that there are potentially many more impacts to be identified or to come, where the fallout has not been possible to project or not fully understood has placed councils in the vulnerable position of not knowing what will be required of councils and how they will need to act differently to mitigate these impacts.

- 4.4. The 2021-22 Plan (Appendix 1) builds on the previous (2018-21) Plan with the same vision of *Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised*.
- 4.4.1 The Plan sets out 5 areas of focus (EPICC), 10 outcomes and 20 markers of success to assess progress in delivery of the plan.
- 4.5 Our values (Professionalism, Leadership, Accountability, Transparency, Ethical - PLATE) continue to shape how we as a Council will work with our local communities and influence our choices and behaviours.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.6 The 2021-22 reaffirms the five areas of focus for the Council (EPICC):
1. Economic Growth for all people, communities and businesses
 2. People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities
 3. Internal focus. All council services are efficient and effective
 4. Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well
 5. Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places.

Risk management

- 4.7 There are no specific risks identified in the agreement of the Plan for 2021-22.
- 4.8 Any future large-scale response to COVID-19 may further delay any planned engagement and development that would inform the Plan for 2022-25:
- strategic needs and asset assessments,
 - community listening events, and
 - research.

Financial implications

- 4.9 The Plan provides the strategic direction of financial investments, informs such decisions in the future and aligns the Council's budget to agreed outcomes.
- 4.10 There are no specific financial implications of this report. It is expected that the one-year Plan will be delivered within the Council's 2021-22 Budget, as approved at Cabinet.

Legal implications

- 4.11 There are no direct legal implications from this report.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.12 There are no direct procurement implications from this report.

Property implications

- 4.13 There are no direct property implications from this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.14 The successful implementation of the Corporate Plan will play a significant part in having a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents. The Corporate Plan highlights the Council's intentions ensuring the reduction of inequalities and equipping Walsall residents with the foundations to lead good, independent lives.

Staffing implications

- 4.15 There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.16 The Aim of the Corporate Plan is to articulate the Council's plan to reduce inequalities and maximise potential. In the delivery of the Plan and by the assessment of the markers of success, we will monitor progress on this Aim. This will have implications for how the Council operates and makes its decisions, including the assessment of all impact and distribution of said impact/s.
- 4.17 In the development and delivery of this process, due regard to the EQIA and other duties placed upon the Council has been undertaken and considered.

Consultation

- 4.18 The updated Plan builds on the previous Corporate Plan with refinement of the narrative and markers of success. Community focus groups and community and staff surveys were undertaken in 2020, of which the highlights have been used to inform the 2021-22 Plan.

Other insights have been used to inform the framework of the Plan:

- an ethnographic study on what it is like to be a child in Walsall,
- participation in the *Beyond Us and Them Research* Project which explores how societal cohesion is affected by the COVID-19 crisis and
- feedback gleaned through the work of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board

- 4.19 Consultation has been carried out on the updated Plan with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet members, the Corporate Management Team and Directors group.
- 4.20 The Joint Strategic Needs (and assets) Assessment (JSNA); community safety and economic assessments will be updated in 2021/22. Other engagement and listening events are to be planned throughout the year to inform the 2022/25 Corporate Plan.

5. Decide

5.1 Options

5.1.1 Having a new 2021-25 Corporate Plan, as originally planned, which would ensure the Council's target for four-yearly Plans was met. However, it should be noted the high probability of this 2021-25 Plan becoming outdated before the end of 2021 as it would potentially miss the assessment of the full impact of COVID-19 on our local community; not include the four assessment updates and therefore could omit significant areas on how the Council will need to respond to meet the needs of local residents. This option will significantly undermine the Council's ability to meet its Aim.

5.1.2 Having a refreshed one-year Corporate Plan (2021-22) that would build on the current 2018-21 Plan, will allow time for the assessment, evaluation and consideration of the impact of COVID-19 on the Borough – residents, assets and Council.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made significant impacts in global, national and local communities, with some of these already known. However there will be many consequences that are currently unknown, national reviews and subsequent government policy decisions; which will have an impact on the needs of the borough of Walsall and the subsequent response from the Council.

During 2021-22 the Council will complete the planned strategic assessments and undertake further listening and engagement activities with local residents, businesses, providers and staff to inform the 2022-25 Plan. This option will maximise the Council's ability to meet its Aim.

5.2 It is recommended that Cabinet and Council approve the publication of a 2021-22 Corporate Plan and the development of a new Corporate Plan for the remaining three years (2022-25) over the coming year. This would allow for an improved, more informed understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on our local community and the actions the Council will need to take to mitigate these impacts.

6. Respond

6.1 The strategic assessments planned already have a governance through the Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership and Town Deal Board and will be report to those boards over the coming year.

6.2 The Walsall Insight Group will oversee the operational development of these strategic assessments and involve all directorates across the Council, as well as other partners in the Borough.

6.3 The development of the 2022-25 plan will be the responsibility of the Policy and Strategy unit, with quantitative assessment in quarter 1, qualitative understanding and impact in quarter 2-3 and final agreement in quarter 4 of 2021-22. This is in line with, already agreed, strategic assessments i.e. JSNA.

6.4 These timelines are indicative and will work in parallel with the development of the medium-term financial plan and subsequent service transformation.

7. Review

7.1 Regular update reports will be given on the progress of the Plan to the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet members to ensure oversight and assurance of delivery for both the 2021/22 Plan and development of the 2022/25 Plan.

Background papers

Current (2018-2021) Corporate Plan: <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/corporate-plan>

Appendix 1: Walsall Corporate Plan 2021/22

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01 February 2021



Councillor Bird
Leader of the Council

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