

Cabinet – 9 February 2022

Our Council Plan (Council’s corporate plan) 2022-25

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

1. Aim

- 1.1 The Aim of our Council Plan is to demonstrate the Council’s intentions to reduce inequalities and maximise potential. A council plan covers four years, articulating the strategic direction for the council and how it intends to measure its success.
- 1.2 This three-year Plan is a revised version of the 2018-21 and refreshed 2021-2 corporate plans and has been renamed ‘Our Council Plan’ as this formation of words have a meaning to our residents e.g. Our Walsall Story.
- 1.3 This Plan will be published for 2022-25 and will be a more comprehensive document that outlines the Council’s medium-term plans and aligns with the Budget Outcomes timeline.
- 1.4 The design will be to be more reader friendly with graphics and less tables to make it look less than a report and more like an informative booklet.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 gave councils collective responsibility for approving its policy framework and budget.
- 2.2 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council agreed to publish a one-year refreshed version of the 2018–2021 publication, for the period 2021/22 on the understanding that a new corporate plan for 2022-25 would be published April 2022.
- 2.3. Our Council Plan 2022-2025 has been informed by an updated Joint Strategic Needs and assets Assessment (JSNA), several internal strategies, internal and external surveys, Community Safety Needs Assessment and the Local Economic Needs Assessment.

- 2.4 This document has highlighted some of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and how the Council has and continues to respond its impacts, as well as highlighting some of the Council's successes.
- 2.5 The theme of this document is Positivity and Accountability, drawing and building on the strong partnerships, resilient staff and strong community relationships developed these past 22 months.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet supports the newly drafted Our Council Plan for 2022-25, as appended to the report.
- 3.2 That the 2022-25 Our Council Plan be recommended to Council for approval.
- 3.3 That the final design of the document be agreed with the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 Every local authority has a requirement to have a plan that articulates the strategic direction for the Council and how it measures its success for a four-year period.
- 4.2 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all Council resources were reverted to managing the impact of the pandemic, resulting in the Council's last four-year corporate plan (which expired in 2021) being replaced with a one-year refreshed publication for 2021/22.
- 4.3 In spite of the pandemic still being prevalent, the completion of the 2022-25 Our Council Plan publication is due to the successful updating of the Joint Strategic Needs and assets Assessment (JSNA), feedback from survey returns and community engagements, assessments and strategies being completed.
- 4.4 The pandemic has had, and will continue to have for some time, an impact on communities – some have been identified and/or understood – and it is acknowledged that we will continue to identify potentially many more impacts in years to come, leaving councils in the position of not knowing what will be required and how they will need to respond to mitigate these impacts.
- 4.5 Walsall Council is still learning the brevity of the effect of the initial Covid-19 wave and lockdown (March 2020) while managing new waves. Every attempt to ensure the wellbeing of residents, business and staff are being taken.
- 4.6 Our Council Plan 2022-25 discusses the current landscape and offers projected Outcomes for the next three years with clear indicators of what success of these Outcomes would look like – the markers of success.

- 4.7 The 2022-25 plan continues to build on the five areas of focus Economic, People, Internal, Children, Communities (EPICC), projecting 10 Outcomes and offering 20 markers of success to assess progress in delivery of the plan during the year.
- 4.8 The Aim has been expanded to clarify the Council's intentions [page 3 of plan].
- 4.9 The Council's approach and values - PLATE (Professionalism, Leadership, Accountability, Transparency, Ethical) - continue to shape how we as a Council will work and influence our choices and behaviours.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.10 The five areas of focus for the Council (EPICC) remain:
1. **Economic** - Enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses
 2. **People** - Encourage our residents to lead more active, fulfilling and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing
 3. **Internal focus** - Council services are customer focused effective, efficient and equitable
 4. **Children** - Have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well
 5. **Communities** - Empower our communities so that they feel they are connected and belong in Walsall, creating safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community.

Risk management

- 4.11 There are no specific risks identified in the 2022-25 Plan.

Financial implications

- 4.12 The Plan provides:
- the strategic direction of financial investments,
 - informs such decisions in the future and
 - aligns the Council's budget to agreed outcomes.
- 4.13 There are no specific financial implications of this report.
- 4.14 This three-year Plan will present the 2021-22 Corporate Revenue Budget, as approved at Cabinet.

Legal implications

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

Procurement Implications/Social Value

4.16 There are no direct procurement implications from this report.

Property implications

4.17 There are no direct property implications from this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

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

Staffing implications

4.19 There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

Reducing Inequalities

4.20 In the delivery of the Plan and by the assessment of the markers of success, we will monitor progress on the Outcomes.

This demonstrates the Council's determination to be accountable and will have implications for how the Council operates and makes its decisions, including the assessment of all impact and distribution of those impact/s.

4.21 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

4.22 Our Council Plan 2022-25 builds on the previous Plan with more information from the JSNA, feedback from engagements and surveys, assessments, workshops which have informed the content of this Plan and the markers of success.

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

4.23 Consultation and engagement has been carried out on the 2022-25 Plan with the Corporate Management Team and Directors group.

5. Decide

- 5.1 Having a three -year Plan (2022-25) would bring the Plan in line with the Council's Budget Plan.
- 5.2 Due to the continuity of the pandemic, it is recommended that this publication be treated as a live document, which will enable elements of the Plan to be reviewed and updated annually such as the Markers of Success.
- 5.3 Any changes would be presented to Cabinet in an annual review (Quarter 4 report) and announced on the Council's website.

6. Respond

- 6.1 If agreed, comprehensive plans to deliver the Council's ambitions will be developed with Cabinet Members.

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 the 2022-25 Plan. Reports will be presented publicly to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. This will allow councillors, scrutiny committees and residents to monitor the progress and review the steps being taken to continue to change the organisation to get the best outcomes for residents

Appendices

Appendix 1: Walsall Our Council Plan 2022-25

Appendix 2: Council Plan 2022-25 EqlA

Background papers

Current Corporate Plan 2021-22:

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Councillor Bird
Leader of the Council

01 February 2022

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