

Report Title:	Council Plan 2024-28
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Simon Werner, Leader of the Council
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 27 March 2024
Responsible Officer(s):	Rebecca Hatch, Assistant Director of Strategy and Communications
Wards affected:	All

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REPORT SUMMARY

This report shares the new Council Plan, 2024-28, which sets out the council's strategic aims and priorities for the next four years. The Council Plan includes a Technical Appendix, which includes key deliverables for 2024-25 and a revised set of performance metrics, by which to monitor performance and progress against the Plan. The Council Plan provides a framework for all council decision-making, including resource allocation. The Strategic Aims and Priorities were shared in draft as part of the November and February Cabinet reports on the 2024-25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy and were developed in consultation with staff, Members, parishes and key stakeholders.

The Council Plan is being shared with the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel, ahead of Cabinet on 27 March. Recommendations made by the Panel will be published as a supplementary document to the Cabinet Report, so that the recommendations can be considered as part of the Cabinet discussion. Where recommendations are accepted they will be reflected in the final version of the Council Plan, which is intended to go to Full Council on 16 April for agreement and adoption.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet considers the Council Plan, including the Technical Appendix and:

- i) Agrees to take the Council Plan to Full Council in April for consideration and agreement.**
- ii) Considers the recommendations made by Corporate Overview & Scrutiny at their meeting on 25 March 2024, and agrees to accept these, as appropriate.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Cabinet agrees to share the Council Plan, 2024-28, at Full Council in April, for agreement and adoption. Cabinet agrees to include any amendments resulting from Corporate Overview & Scrutiny recommendations, where agreed.	This is the recommended option.
Cabinet does not agree to share the Council Plan, 2024-28, with Full Council.	This is not recommended. The Council Plan is the key strategic document, for the council.

2.1 The Council Plan is the council’s most important strategic document – it sets out our vision over the next few years for the council and the borough; our priorities; what we’ll do to deliver those priorities; and how we’ll measure our success.

2.2 The Strategic Aims and Priorities set out in the Council Plan, are as follows:

Aim 1: Put the council on a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively

- Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council’s financial position.
- Improve and modernise the way in which we deliver priority services, including using technology in better ways.
- Manage contracts effectively and explore alternative ways to deliver to improve value for money, including insourcing where appropriate.
- Maximise the income we receive, through commercialisation, grants, fees and charges, and managing debt effectively.
- Optimise use of the buildings, land and other assets that we own.

Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough

- Keep our neighbourhoods clean and safe.
- Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity.
- Support our local economy, working with businesses and other partners to secure inward investment.
- Develop a more coherent approach to regeneration and place-making across the borough’s key locations, and ensure economic and housing development benefits local communities.
- Ensure availability of housing, that meets our local housing needs, with a focus on social housing and tackling homelessness.

Aim 3: Children and young people have a great start in life and access to opportunities through to adulthood

- Support children and families to live safe, happy and healthy lives.
- Support children and young people in our care and meet their needs safely.
- Support all children and young people to achieve meaningful outcomes from birth into adulthood, enabling them to live, learn and thrive locally and access opportunities.
- Support young people and families to develop resilience and independence.

Aim 4: People live healthy and independent lives in supportive communities

- A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities.
- Provide access to the right support to residents at the right time, in the right place, with a focus on early help and prevention, to maintain and extend independent living.
- Deliver quality adult social care with suitable homes for those who need life-long support.

Aim 5: A high-performing council that delivers for the borough

- Strengthen how we work to serve the borough better - placing the borough at the heart of communities; listening to people and involving them in decision-making.
- Strengthen partnerships with charities, the voluntary sector, businesses, parishes, health and education partners, statutory bodies, faith groups and others to enable better outcomes for residents.
- Strengthen the council's governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council.
- Empower and support our workforce to deliver well for the borough, now and in the future.

2.3 The Council Plan includes a Technical Appendix, summarising a selection of activities that will be delivered in order to achieve our priorities, and the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) which will enable us to monitor progress, and identify and respond to issues. The Council Plan deliverables focus on the coming financial year (2024-25) and will be updated on an annual basis. The full Council Plan is attached at **Appendix A**.

2.4 Progress against the Council Plan will be monitored through the Quarterly Assurance Reports (QAR) to Cabinet. The Quarterly Assurance Report will include the revised set of KPIs included within the Technical Appendix and share updates on progress against deliverables. A full assessment of progress on delivering the Council Plan will be included within an Annual Report. An annual review and refresh will be undertaken to reassess and update our deliverables and KPIs as appropriate.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Council Plan delivered	Performance off track on > 40% of KPI Failure to progress against substantial number of deliverables.	Majority of KPI show performance on track. Good progress against majority of deliverables.	Progress exceeds milestones identified in Technical Appendix. Performance against KPIs above target in substantial number of areas.		31 March 2025 (Annual Review and refresh)

4. FINANCIAL CONTEXT

- 4.1 The Council Plan provides the framework for decisions on resource allocation and the draft Strategic Aims and Priorities were shared as part of the reports to Cabinet and Full Council on the 2024-25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy in November 2023 and February 2024. Budget allocations are informed by our priorities, and in turn, the activities undertaken to achieve these priorities are developed in line with the resources available.
- 4.2 The Council Plan makes it clear that setting the council on to a strong financial footing to serve the borough effectively, must be the primary focus. The current financial position constrains the organisation's ability to pursue wider priorities until it achieves a more stable financial position. However, the council remains ambitious for the borough. The council will spend almost £100m next year in delivering essential services, in addition to capital investment of £13m in the borough's critical infrastructure. The council is also undertaking an ambitious transformation programme to change the ways in which we deliver services, and to enable more efficient and effective delivery of our priorities.
- 4.3 The full Council Plan was considered by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny on 25 March. A verbal presentation of the recommendations made at this meeting will be shared at Cabinet for consideration and discussion. Any amendments agreed will be reflected in the final the Council Plan will go to Full Council on 16 April 2024, for agreement and adoption.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None. Legal implications associated with specific deliverables will be considered as part of the development and delivery of these activities.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The Council Plan includes key deliverables and performance indicators which enable the council to monitor its performance and progress. This includes performance against our corporate priorities, delivery of statutory services and in delivering the savings and transformation needed to achieve a balanced budget. The Council Plan provides a strategic framework which supports the organisation to assess and manage risk.

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 **Equalities.** An Equalities Impact Assessment for the Council Plan is attached at **Appendix C**. The Council Plan makes clear the council's commitment to addressing inequalities in the borough and providing support to those in need at the earliest opportunity. The specific priorities and deliverables focused on equalities, or with particular equalities impacts, are highlighted within the EQIA.

7.2 **Climate change/sustainability.** Climate change and sustainability are a key priority for the council, as reflected in **Strategic Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous borough**, and specifically under the priority to 'Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity'. The delivery of our climate change and sustainability aims requires action across all areas of the organisation and externally with our communities, businesses and partners.

7.3 **Data Protection/GDPR.** Not applicable.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The Council Plan has been informed by engagement sessions with key stakeholder groups including: young people, older people, people with disabilities, the voluntary and community sector, Members, parishes and staff. A total of 224 people participated in the sessions, with more contributing to responses submitted via email or the online survey. There was support for the general direction of the council's emerging aims and priorities, with feedback contributing to their shaping and definition in a number of key areas, such as partnership working. The early community engagement highlighted priority concerns for residents and the VCS and the later sessions fed into the definition of the aims and priorities. A summary of key themes from the engagement is included at **Appendix B**.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 If agreed by Cabinet, the Council Plan will be shared with Full Council on 16 April for their consideration and agreement. It will then be adopted with immediate effect. Communications and engagement with Members, staff and stakeholders will follow the adoption of the Plan, to ensure that it is embedded across the organisation and externally.

10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report is supported by three appendices:

- Appendix A: Council Plan, including Technical Appendix
- Appendix B: Council Plan Engagement Summary
- Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix D: Recommendations from Corporate Overview & Scrutiny – to follow

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 None.

12. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputies)</i>			
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	12.03.24	15.03.24
Elaine Browne	Monitoring Officer	12.03.24	13.03.24
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	12.03.24	12.03.24
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	12.03.24	13.03.24
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	12.03.24	15.03.24
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services	12.03.24	15.03.24
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People Services	12.03.24	15.03.24

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cllr Simon Werner, Leader of the Council	Yes
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
For information	No	Not applicable

Report Author: Rebecca Hatch, Assistant Director of Strategy and Communications
