

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:	Full Council – 16 April 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 comprises of 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 is presented here for agreement and adoption.

The report was shared with the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel, ahead of Cabinet on 27 March. Recommendations made by the Panel were published as a supplementary document to the Cabinet Report. Cabinet agreed delegated authority to the Leader and Chief Executive to amend the final council plan in line with their recommendations as appropriate. A summary of the responses to their recommendations are included in this report.

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. A programme of engagement and communications will be taken forward, following agreement of the Council Plan, to ensure that it is embedded throughout the organisation.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION: That Full Council agrees to adopt the Council Plan, including the Technical Appendix

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

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Full Council agrees to adopt the Council Plan 2024-28	This is the recommended option.

Option	Comments
Full Council does not agree to adopt the Council Plan, 2024-28.	This is not recommended. The Council Plan is the key strategic document, for the council.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 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.

3.2 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

- 1.1 Continue to improve scrutiny, forecasting and monitoring of the budget; actively manage risks and opportunities to improve the council's financial position.
- 1.2 Improve and modernise the way in which we deliver priority services, including using technology in better ways.
- 1.3 Drive channel shift and improve digital access to services, including the council's website – making payments and transactions easier and refreshing reporting functions.
- 1.4 Manage contracts effectively and explore alternative ways to deliver to improve value for money, including insourcing where appropriate.
- 1.5 Maximise the income we receive, through commercialisation, grants, fees and charges, and managing debt effectively.
- 1.6 Optimise use of the buildings, land and other assets that we own.

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

- 2.1 Keep our neighbourhoods clean and safe.
- 2.2 Protect and improve the environment and green spaces, reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity.
- 2.3 Support our local economy, working with businesses and other partners to secure inward investment.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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 good start in life and opportunities through to adulthood

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

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

- 4.1 A council-wide focus on increasing healthy life expectancy, improving wellbeing and reducing the impact of inequalities.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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

- 5.1 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.
 - 5.2 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..
 - 5.3 Strengthen the council's governance, transparency and accountability and provide the framework for a high-performing, compliant council.
 - 5.4 Empower and support our workforce to deliver well for the borough, now and in the future.
- 3.3 The Council Plan includes a Technical Appendix, summarising a selection of activities that will be delivered 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**.
 - 3.4 Success in delivery of the Council Plan is based on assessments of achievement of the deliverable and performance against the KPIs. Progress of 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.
 - 3.5 An annual review and refresh of the Council Plan will be undertaken to renew our deliverables and refresh our KPIs (if appropriate) for approval in April 2025.
 - 3.6 An easy read version of the Council Plan is being developed and will be shared with 'Speaking Out' group on Tuesday 16 April.

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.

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 AND INPUT FROM CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

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 available as link in Background Document section of this report.

8.2 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny had a detailed discussion of the Council Plan on Monday 25 March. They provided recommendations on the narrative content, deliverables and KPIs which were summarised in a report for Cabinet on Wednesday 27 March, available as link in Background Documents in this report. Cabinet agreed to delegate the authority to the Leader and Chief Executive to agree the recommendations that have been accepted into the final plan. All the recommendations and officer responses are included in **Appendix C** of this document. A summary of the key changes to the narrative, deliverables and KPIs is below.

Table 2: Responses to key recommendations from Corporate Overview and Scrutiny

Recommendation	Response
Strategic Aim 1	
Priority 3: Contract management and procurement strengthen the deliverable	Additional deliverable added: "Implement a contract management framework and associated guidance, and review the published contract register to ensure completeness and compliance with the Local Transparency Code 2015."
Aim 5, priority 3: Consider additional deliverable around accountability to the public, including Report it.	A new deliverable under priority 1.2 "Scope further work to improve front and back end system integration, including Report it functions."
Strategic Aim 2	
Aim 2: Economy & Place-making: Additional KPIs to reflect strength of business relationships	Four Additional KPIs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail vacancy rate: Ascot • Retail vacancy rate: Maidenhead • Retail vacancy rate: Windsor • Square foot of office lettings
Strategic Aim 3	
Aim 3: Education: Additional KPI on	Two additional KPIs:

Recommendation	Response
% achieving KS2 expected standards for all students.	<p>1. Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) at KS2 (Not disadvantaged)</p> <p>2. Percentage of pupils meeting the higher standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) at KS2 (Not disadvantaged)</p>
Strategic Aim 4	
Aim 4, priority 1: Strengthen socio-economic disadvantage deliverable	<p>Socio-economic deliverable strengthened to:</p> <p>“Work with a range of partners to support residents experiencing financial difficulties, with a focus on those most at risk - through targeted financial and practical support including Here to Help, Household Support Fund, Multiply programme and provision of advice to maximise incomes.”</p>
Strategic Aim 5	
Aim 5: Complaints: Volume of complaints: include in addition to complaints upheld.	Additional metrics added on the volume of complaints.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 If agreed by Full Council, the Council Plan 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. Resources including a video, poster and e-shot will be available alongside two planned in-person staff engagement sessions and communication through routine newsletters to members, officers and residents. Alongside this, services will be working through the detail of the implementation in their teams in terms of both delivery and monitoring of the plan.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 This report is supported by three appendices:

- Appendix A: Council Plan, including Technical Appendix
- Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix C: Response to recommendations from Corporate Overview & Scrutiny

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 This report is supported by two background documents:

- [Recommendations from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel](#) from March Cabinet
- [Appendix B Summary, Council Plan 2024-25 Engagement](#) from March Cabinet

12. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputies)</i>			
Julian McGowan	Senior Business Partner & Deputy S151 Officer	3/4/24	5/4/24
Elaine Browne	Monitoring Officer	3/4/24	4/4/24
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	3/4/24	4/4/24
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	3/4/24	4/4/24
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	3/4/24	5/4/24
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services	3/4/24	8/4/24
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People Services	3/4/24	5/4/24

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cllr Simon Werner, Leader of the Council	5/5/24
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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
