

REPORT TITLE: COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2030

11 DECEMBER 2024

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: CLLR MARTIN TOD – LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR ASSET MANAGEMENT

Contact Officer: Simon Howson Tel No: 01962 848 104
Email: showson@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The current five-year Council Plan was adopted by Council on 15 January 2020 and runs until 31 March 2025. To ensure the Council Plan has remained relevant over this period a review and update has been undertaken on an annual basis.

The proposed new Council Plan 2025 – 2030 sets out across 6 priorities the council's key ambitions and outcomes for the coming five years. This Council Plan is to be considered by Cabinet and recommended for adoption by Council with effect from 1 April 2025. The Council's suite of Key Performance Indicators will be reviewed in the light of the Council Plan priorities and delivery of the plan will be tracked through Service Business Plans.

A period of engagement and consultation on the draft Council Plan 2025-30 was undertaken during the summer and autumn and included residents, businesses, members staff and the voluntary sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Cabinet recommends adoption of the Council Plan 2025 – 2030 to Full Council with effect from 1 April 2025.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed new Council Plan that sets out the priorities and activities that the council will undertake over the next five years to deliver the outcomes in the new Council Plan.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The priorities in the Council Plan will guide the council's activities for the coming period and is being taken into account as we develop our Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Without doubt the public sector faces a challenging financial position and the council must be clear that delivery of the council plan presents value for money and best outcomes for our communities.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct legal implications which arise directly from the attached draft Plan, though individual projects and actions will be subject to review as required by Legal Services. The delivery and implementation of the Council Plan will need to take into account of legally binding duties and responsibilities on the council.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None directly arising from the report. To deliver the aims and objectives in the Council Plan, staffing resources will need to be assigned as required by the council.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None in the Plan, although asset management is an element of the council's activities.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 Executive Leadership Board and senior managers have been consulted on the content of the draft Council Plan. All Cabinet Members have contributed to the draft Council Plan.
- 6.2 Presentations were given to the council's Economy and Housing Policy Committee and Health and Environment Policy Committee meetings in September and contributed to the priorities to be included in the new Council Plan.
- 6.3 Winchester City Council's district wide 2024 Residents' Survey was completed in September, 1,654 individuals responded, and an additional Young Persons' Survey was undertaken which captured the opinions of 500 residents aged between 18-24 years old. The results of both surveys have

been used to evidence the priorities in the new Council Plan and the Executive Summary has been published on the council's website.

6.4 Engagement with parish councils was undertaken covering the outcomes and priorities for the new Council Plan at a Parish Liaison meeting held on 20 June. The presentation covered the challenges that were facing the council over the next 5 years and Parish representatives were invited to provide feedback and their own priorities for including in the new Council Plan.

6.5 Further information from the engagement and consultation undertaken is included in the main body of this report.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Tackling the climate emergency and supporting nature's recovery across the district is a key theme within all the priorities of the Council Plan.

8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken to assess the impacts of the draft Council Plan is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

8.2 Individual Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on the individual projects that support delivery of the priorities included in the Council Plan as required.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 None required.

9.2 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure	Financial planning and regular monitoring of expenditure and income ensures that the council maintains a balanced budget. All new projects require approval of a financial appraisal before they can commence.	New revenue streams derived from the outcomes included in the Council Plan contribute positively to the council's financial position.
Exposure to challenge	Each significant action or project will be subject to its own legal consideration in appropriate reports.	
Innovation	By exploring new ways of working, this increases	

	the council's exposure to risk and alters its risk profile. This is mitigated by consideration and approval of a robust business justification case before a project can commence	
Reputation	The risk of not delivering the plan is mitigated through the monitoring of the outcome measures contained within the Strategy, and ensuring corrective action is taken. Not delivering on some of these items, especially some of the major projects will have a large financial risk to the council through impacting on future revenue streams.	This plan gives the opportunity for the council to enhance its reputation through establishing a more targeted ambition for the district that is based on clear measures. Success against these key measures will enhance the council's reputation to move key programmes of work forward.
Achievement of outcome	Regular monitoring reports are prepared to capture the progress the council is making to achieve the outcomes in the Council Plan and where required take remedial action to ensure successful delivery.	
Property - none		
Community Support	Provide engagement opportunities especially through key projects.	Further opportunities to engage with our residents and communities.
Timescales	Quarterly monitoring of the measures included in the Plan by officers, The Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.	
Project capacity	Project team resourcing across the council supports the delivery of the programmes and projects included in the	Ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to all new projects as part of the business justification

	plan. And is reviewed regularly by the Programme and Capital Strategy (PAC) Board.	case and before they commence.
Other - none		

10 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 10.1 The Council Plan 2020-25 was adopted by the council in January 2020 and refreshed post the pandemic in 2022. An annual review is undertaken to ensure the themes and priorities in the council plan are still relevant to the district of Winchester.
- 10.2 The proposed plan covering the period 2025-30 (attached as Appendix 1) comprises 6 priority outcomes that the council wants to achieve and sets out the activities that will contribute to the delivery of the outcomes which are:
- Greener Faster
 - Thriving Places
 - Healthy Communities
 - Good Homes for All
 - Efficient and Effective
 - Listening and Learning

11. Residents' Survey 2024

At the beginning of July 2024, the council undertook a Residents' Survey to understand the views and opinions of our residents that would be used to not only support an evidence-based approach to decision making but also inform the priorities in this plan.

The headline results from the survey are that 90% of residents support the five priorities in the current Council Plan and that these should continue to be the priorities for the next five years.

The survey highlighted significant differences in the biggest household concerns by demographic subgroup. A higher proportion of residents aged 18-34 selected cost of living (62%) and access to affordable housing (48%) as their biggest concerns over the next 3 years. Residents aged between 35-54 responded with healthcare/ access to a GP (68%) as being their greatest concern followed by children's education (45%). Concern for the local economy was the third biggest concern for both demographic groups.

When asked about the areas the council should focus on during the life of the new Council Plan, providing affordable housing was the highest (55%) followed by protecting the natural environment (49%). The third highest was tackling homelessness (43%).

12. Economy and Housing Policy Committee

At its meeting on 17 September 2024, Economy and Housing Policy Committee members received a presentation setting out the challenges the council is facing.

During that meeting the following comments were made with a particular focus on economic and housing matters:

- It was suggested that the council should continue to focus on providing affordable housing, but that new housing must meet the diverse needs of the district
- It was suggested that the council support small businesses, particularly those with less 10 employees, with digital connectivity, especially in the rural areas where fibre connections were unlikely.
- It was suggested that the council support farms to adapt and respond to climate change
- It was suggested that consideration be given to managing the risks arising from private landlords leaving the housing market
- It was suggested the council should encourage business start-ups among young people
- Highlighting the impact of inadequate public transport in rural areas, especially on young people
- Support for farming to adapt the impacts of climate change

13. Health and Environment Policy Committee

Members of the Health and Environment Policy Committee received a presentation on 19 September setting out the challenges the council is facing with regard to environmental and health issues within the district.

With a focus on the residents' health and wellbeing as well as the environment, during that meeting the following comments were made:

- The Council should focus on reducing carbon emissions, but support residents and businesses with effects of climate change and adverse weather events
- It was suggested that the council should ensure new developments include dementia friendly facilities
- It was suggested the council understand the impact and prepare for the effects following future introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- Protection for 'blue spaces' in addition to green spaces
- Cooler home plans to respond to the effects of Climate Change
- Resilience mitigation, including water and food chains, cool hubs alongside warm hubs
- It was suggested the council focus on support for young people with anxiety and mental health issues

14. The Scrutiny Committee

At the meeting of The Scrutiny Committee on 14 October, members were presented with proposals for the new Council Plan and invited to provide feedback on the direction of the draft Council Plan. During the meeting the following comments were made:

- A question was raised about the key performance indicators that future KPIs should be clear and understandable key performance indicators, using language that residents could easily comprehend are put in place to report and track the progress of the outcomes in the new Council Plan
- Concerns were raised about how the council could support the assessment and restoration or establishment of community centres as they reach the end of their life
- A suggestion was made to support community centres in improving heating facilities to help achieve climate emergency goals by 2030.
- It was proposed that the council enable community facilities to learn from each other and make better use of grants through facilitating knowledge sharing and support.
- A question was asked about allocating more space for allotments to promote self-sufficiency and support increased demand for outdoor spaces post-COVID-19.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of COVID-19 on retail services in rural market towns, with facilities closing, and a request was made for more attention and support for rural areas, including transport issues.
- A suggestion was made to focus on reducing the need to travel rather than relying on rural bus services, by making amenities in rural areas more accessible and supporting initiatives that reduced congestion and pollution.
- A question was raised about considering hydrogen as an alternative to electric vehicles in the council plan.

- A question was asked about exploring additional recycling options, including learning from neighbouring councils, to enhance recycling efforts without transporting waste over long distances.
- Concerns were raised about the usability of the Winchester City Council website, with some residents finding it challenging to navigate and access information or submit comments.
- A concern was expressed that while there were many ideas for environmental initiatives, the council needed to progress them faster, focusing on efficient delivery.

15. At the Parish Liaison meeting held on 20 June 2024, parish councillors and clerks received a presentation on the development of the new Council Plan and invited to provide feedback on the areas the council should consider as priorities for the next 5 years. During the meeting the following comments were made:

Rural areas

- Lack of infrastructure and facilities in the rural areas, such as public transport access to doctors' surgeries, poor broadband, is an issue.
- There needs to be more joint partnerships, i.e. bus companies and train companies need to co-ordinate their timetables.

Housing

- There are examples of some social housing units that require updating.
- It needs to be recognised that there is not a one size fits all criteria for retrofit heating. Air pumps can be costly and not suitable for all residents, there could be more suitable options for rural areas.
- People are not moving around as much as they should/could because of the cost of living, which has an impact of the availability of housing stock.

Health

- Social care is an important issue that needs to be addressed.
- There needs to a collective understanding of services needed by the increasing ageing population better, particularly in rural areas.

16. Next Steps

The draft Council Plan 2025-30 is recommended to Council for adoption at its meeting on 15 January 2025 and the new Plan will take effect from 1 April.

As is our usual approach, Corporate Heads of Service will work collaboratively with Cabinet members to review and update actions and projects through the annual service planning process to reflect the outcomes in the new Council Plan. As the Council Plan is a longer-term strategic document, activity will be delivered over the next five years to deliver the outcomes set out in the document

A quarterly report on progress in delivery of the Council Plan 2020–2025 is already provided and the recently refreshed and sharper reporting style has been broadly welcomed as a significant improvement. Key activities from the 2025–30 Plan will be identified and commencing with the Q1 25/26 quarterly performance report, progress will be reported against significant actions in the 25/26 service plans. In this way the performance management framework is dynamic and ensures a focus on the key issues for delivery.

Without doubt the public sector faces a challenging financial outlook and as now the annual service plans will also incorporate agreed TC25 activities and initiatives.

A suite of performance metrics currently exists consisting of long-range trackers which endure through the life of the plan along with a suite of activity metrics. A review and refresh of these metrics will be undertaken during the early part of 2025 ensuring their appropriateness and relevance to the new Council Plan priorities and outcomes. As is usual, Members will be given the opportunity to comment and input into the new set of metrics.

17. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The council could choose not to have a Council Plan; however, it is this plan that sets out the key priorities and outcomes for the council and enables effective business planning and programme management for teams. Not to have a plan is not recommended.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

CAB3370 Council Plan 2020-25 Refresh

Other Background Documents:-

None.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Council Plan 2025-30

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)