

ASSEMBLY

17 May 2023

Title: Corporate Plan 2023-2026	
Report of the Leader of the Council	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
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Accountable Executive Team Directors: Fiona Taylor, Acting Chief Executive, and Alex Powell, Director of Strategy	
Summary <p>This report introduces the new Corporate Plan for 2023-2026.</p> <p>As the period covered by the last plan (2020-22) has finished, we need to review and reflect on our activities and approach as a Council: how these address the challenges of today and work towards the long-term vision laid out in the Borough Manifesto.</p> <p>Whilst there is no specific statutory duty to produce a Corporate Plan, it is a necessary element of good governance, and it defines the Council's medium-term priorities. The Corporate Plan is part of the Council's agreed Policy Framework.</p> <p>This new Corporate Plan articulates what we need to achieve over the next three years and how we need to work to best deliver those aims, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vision – setting out a new vision, that bridges medium-term plans with the long-term ambitions of the Borough Manifesto.• Our community profile – to better understand who the residents we serve are, in order to plan and prioritise effectively to meet their needs and aspirations.• Priorities – seven strategic priorities to focus Council activities and resources.• Our principles – a set of eight principles to be applied to all aspects of Council work, to drive service delivery, performance, and innovation.• Equality and Diversity – setting out our approach to embedding equality and diversity considerations and placing it at the heart of everything we do.• The way we work – the values and workplace culture that is needed to deliver on these objectives.• Turning strategy into action – how we will monitor progress and connect the high-level strategy with operational planning and delivery. <p>The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Corporate Plan at its meeting on 18 April 2023.</p>	

Recommendation(s)

The Assembly is recommended to:

- (i) Approve the Corporate Plan 2023-2026 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Director of Strategy, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leaders and Deputy Cabinet Member for Performance and Data Insight, to develop and implement an Outcomes Framework relating to the new Corporate Plan.

Reason(s)

Chapter 4, Part 2 of the Council's Constitution states that Assembly has the responsibility of "approving which plans and strategies shall form the Council's Policy Framework. The Corporate Plan is one of the strategies in the Policy Framework.

The Corporate Plan assists the Council in meeting the challenges of the present and achieving the long-term vision for the Borough, set out in the Borough Manifesto, by providing a clear set of priorities and bringing staff together behind common principles for the medium-term.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1. In 2017, the Borough Manifesto was developed in partnership with the local community, establishing a shared long-term vision to make the borough a place that people are proud of and want to live, work, study and stay. This continues to be a driving force behind our work as a council.
- 1.2. At the end of the period covered by the 2020-22 Corporate Plan, it is time to reflect on what has been achieved and set out a new Corporate Plan that lays out the way forward. Although there is no statutory requirement to have a Corporate Plan, it is a necessary element of good governance.
- 1.3. The Corporate Plan is a vital part of the Council's "Golden Thread", translating its long-term ambitions for the borough, as set out in the Borough Manifesto, into clear objectives to drive activity over the next three years. In turn, it will inform services' operational plans, which will be outlined through Service Plans that sit below the Corporate Plan, and individual employee performance, feedback and development objectives, aligning day-to-day operations with the long-term vision and goals for the borough.

2. Proposal and Issues

- 2.1. This new Corporate Plan establishes a clear agenda for the Council over the next three years, with an understanding of the context we are working in, and the key challenges facing us, such as the rising cost of living and an increasing complexity of health and social care needs. It sets out a unifying set of priorities and values for us as a Council, to bring staff, partners and the local community together behind a common goal and approach.

2.2. It establishes seven priorities for the Council, focussed on what we want to deliver for our residents:

- Residents are supported during the current cost-of-living crisis.
- Residents are safe, protected, and supported at their most vulnerable.
- Residents live healthier, happier, independent lives for longer.
- Residents prosper from good education, skills development, and secure employment.
- Residents benefit from inclusive growth and regeneration.
- Residents live in, and play their part in creating, safer, cleaner, and greener neighbourhoods.
- Residents live in good housing and avoid becoming homeless.

2.3. There are approaches and elements of good practice that will support us to deliver on those priorities. The Corporate Plan lays out set of principles, values and a working culture that will drive service delivery, performance and innovation. We will:

- Work in partnership.
- Engage and facilitate co-production.
- Be evidence-led and data driven.
- Focus on prevention and early intervention.
- Provide value for money.
- Be strengths-based.
- Strengthen risk management and compliance.
- Adopt a “Health in all policies” approach.

2.4. A commitment to addressing structural inequality must be central to our vision for the borough, to make sure we build a community where every resident can thrive. To reflect this, the new Corporate Plan also states our approach to equality, diversity, equity and inclusion. Our Equality Objectives set out three principal types of action the council will take to promote equality within the borough, going above and beyond our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010:

- Addressing structural inequality: activity aimed at addressing inequalities related to the wider determinants of health and wellbeing, including unemployment, debt, and safety.
- Providing leadership in the community: activity related to community leadership, including faith, cohesion and integration; building awareness within the community throughout programme of equalities events.
- Fair and transparent services: activity aimed at addressing workforce matters related to leadership, recruitment, retention, and staff experience; organisational policies and processes including use of Equality Impact Assessments, commissioning practices and approach to social value.

2.5. Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council is required to publish Equality Objectives at least every four years.

2.6. The plan also outlines its place within the wider strategic framework, including how it integrates with other key documents as part of the ‘golden thread’ that translates our

long-term ambitions into meaningful day-to-day action. Its priorities and principles will inform annual Service Plans.

3. Corporate Plan Outcomes Framework

- 3.1. The Cabinet is responsible for implementing the Corporate Plan, and within its functions it has the responsibility to monitor corporate performance. A robust and effective monitoring regime is therefore required to assist Cabinet to keep oversight of performance, delivery and progress to outcomes.
- 3.2. An Outcomes Framework to accompany the Corporate Plan is in development. A recommendation of this report is to delegate authority to the Director of Strategy to finalise the development of the framework and to make arrangements for reporting and monitoring, including the design and development of reporting products.
- 3.3. Though the focus of corporate performance monitoring is on the Outcomes Framework, there are robust arrangements in place for monitoring operational performance. This is typically delegated to Directors and their management teams with escalation routes to the Executive Team and Portfolio Holders where there are performance issues or risks. Performance management arrangements for services are outlined in annual Service Plans.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. The Corporate Plan highlights that consistent engagement with the community and our partners must be at the heart of our approach as a Council, establishing “working in partnership” and “engaging and facilitating participation” as two of the key principles that define our way of working.
- 4.2. This Corporate Plan has been developed through collaboration with a range of stakeholders. Workshops with members and conversations with leaders and managers across the council have driven the choice and framing of the Priorities, the content of our commitments and the values and principles that we articulate in the plan. A roundtable was held with our partners from the VCSE sector to discuss and gather feedback on the approach outlined and whether it resonated with their own perspectives. Reflections from these discussions have been incorporated into the Corporate Plan.
- 4.3. The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Corporate Plan at its meeting on 18 April 2023.

5. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Katherine Heffernan, Head of Service Finance

- 5.1. The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the 2023-24 budget were approved by Cabinet and then Assembly in February and March 2023. There will be further updates in summer and autumn/winter. As the MTFs sets out, the Council is under severe financial pressure and will need to draw down at least £9m from its reserves in 2023-24. It is very likely that substantial savings will need to be found in future years in order to balance the budget.

- 5.2. These financial pressures are the background against which the Corporate Plan will be delivered. The plan itself and the priorities set out should provide a framework for making decisions and choices about allocation of our very limited funding and where savings can be made. The Outcomes Framework must be deliverable within the available budget and this will be a constraint on the level of ambition possible.
- 5.3. In this context the adoption of the principles underpinning the plan will be important to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable, in particular the need to be evidence led, focused on prevention, have strong risk management in place and provide clear value for money is stronger than ever.

6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Dr Paul Feild, Principal Standards and Governance Lawyer

- 6.1. The Corporate Plan is a non-statutory plan, but it is of central importance for the Council in determining its priorities. There is no specific statutory duty to produce a corporate plan, but it is a necessary element of good governance and of central importance for the Council in determining its priorities. The performance regime established by the Local Government Act 1999 as amended by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 together with supporting legislation, requires the Council to work to achieve continuous improvement and best value. A corporate plan, its objectives and in time how the delivery measures up in terms of outcomes, are therefore one of the signifiers of a well-run local authority.
- 6.2. Furthermore, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 Regulations obliges the Council to produce an Annual Governance Statement for each accounting year evidencing how the Council has performed. This is to be done in accordance with proper practices. The CIPFA / Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 guidance sets out the required practice and that includes a clear statement of the Councils purpose and intended outcomes. The Corporate Plan thus plays a vital role in the legal duty to ensure sound governance of the Council.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1. **Risk Management** – Strengthening risk management is a cross-cutting principle of the Corporate Plan, highlighting the importance of proactively identifying and managing risk appropriately. The Council maintains a Corporate Risk Register that highlights the key strategic risks that may prevent the Council from achieving its stated objectives. These risks, controls and mitigating actions are reviewed periodically by the Audit and Standards Committee. Risk management is also embedded into the new service planning process, where services will identify and monitor risks to the delivery of work that contributes to the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan. There is proportionate reporting and escalation of issues and risks to the Senior Management Team, and to relevant Cabinet Members where appropriate. The recommendations of this report delegate authority to the Director of Strategy to develop and implement an Outcomes Framework for the purpose of monitoring performance and progress to outcomes. Once in place that monitoring regime will strengthen performance and risk management.

- 7.2. **Contractual Issues** – The vision and priorities will be underpinned by procurement activity, and this will be conducted in line with the Council’s Constitution and UK legislation (PCR2015).
- 7.3. **Staffing Issues** – The Corporate Plan sits at the heart of the council’s strategic framework, and therefore guides the work of all services and the workforce. It is a key resource which drives strategic and business planning at all levels of the organisation. The objectives and priorities of the Corporate Plan inform individual employee performance, development and feedback conversations ensuring day-to-day operations link and contribute to the medium-term and long-term vision and goals for the council and the borough.

The Corporate Plan also sets out the culture we want to foster to deliver these objectives, including accountable and inclusive leadership, harnessing the talents and resources of all, putting collaboration at the heart of everything we do, and performing at our best.

- 7.4. **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact** – The Corporate Plan sets out our approach to equality, diversity, equity and inclusion, including a set of Equalities Objectives. Setting and publishing Equality Objectives is a requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty, as part of the Equality Act 2010. But our commitment to embedding equality and diversity goes above and beyond our responsibilities under the Equality Act. The Equality Objectives have been developed in line with, and as part of the development of the Corporate Plan, and are part of the service planning process, to ensure that equality, diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the heart of our plans for our work. A full Community and Equality Impact Assessment has also been carried out and is attached as Appendix 2.
- 7.5. **Safeguarding Adults and Children** – One of the seven strategic priorities is “Residents are safe, protected, and supported at their most vulnerable”, which sets out our work to safeguarding adults and children, our commitment to strengths-based practice and prevention, and our ambitions to improve services and support, to improve outcomes for this group of residents, and empower them to achieve.
- 7.6. **Health Issues** – The strategic priority “Residents live healthier, happier, independent lives for longer” covers the Council’s work to improve the health and wellbeing of residents, with a data-led, system-wide, and innovative approach working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary and private sector organisations. In recognition of the impact of social determinants of health, including socio-economic factors, behaviours, and quality of environment, we also commit to a “Health in all Policies approach”, across the Council, as part of our cross-cutting principles.
- 7.7. **Crime and Disorder Issues** – The strategic priority “Residents live in, and play their part in creating, safer, cleaner, and greener neighbourhoods” covers our approach to making our borough safer and challenging anti-social behaviour. Local priorities to address crime and disorder are defined within the Barking & Dagenham Community Safety Partnership Plan (CSPP) 2023-26 and underlying relevant thematic plans. The Community Safety Partnership Board and its subgroups are responsible for ensuring that progress against the CSPP is maintained and regularly reviewed. Legislation, including the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, set out the Council’s statutory responsibilities.

7.8. **Property / Asset Issues** – Activity on the Council’s approach to all its assets – housing, community, service and other is covered throughout the Corporate Plan; in particular, our approach to investing in our housing stock is outlined under the priority “Residents live in good housing and avoid becoming homeless”. One of the principles of good practice for all work in the Council is to strengthen risk management and compliance, including a commitment to ensuring that we meet all regulatory standards, take our legal obligations and requirements seriously, and take a proactive approach to risk management, to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our residents.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- Borough Manifesto (<https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/Barking-and-Dagenham-Together-Borough-Manifesto.pdf>)
- Corporate Plan 2020-22, Assembly 13 May 2020 (Minute 9)
<https://modgov.lbbd.gov.uk/Internet/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=179&MId=10441&Ver=4>
- Reviewed Corporate Plan 2020-22, Assembly 25 November 2020 (Minute 36)
<https://modgov.lbbd.gov.uk/Internet/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=179&MId=10821&Ver=4>

List of appendices:

- Appendix 1: Corporate Plan 2023-26
- Appendix 2: Community and Equality Impact Assessment Corporate Plan 2023-2026