

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 5 February 2024

Title: Council's Emerging Strategic Plan - Mission, Vision & Objectives

Contact Officer: Town Clerk/CEO - Sharon Groth

Background

Strategic planning is an opportunity for the Council to look into the future to determine what its long-term priorities and objectives should be. It will also enable the Council to be more proactive in decision-making rather than reactive.

With a new administration in place, this is an opportune time to produce a plan to take the Council up to the next election and beyond if possible.

The purpose of this report is to consider the Council's Mission Statement, Vision, Values and Objectives to be incorporated in the Strategic Plan.

Current Situation

It should be noted that the Council does have other strategy documents, action/business plans in place, as well as external documents/sources published by other authorities which will inform and shape the emerging strategic plan. These include, but not limited to, the Open Spaces Strategy, Communications Strategy – both adopted in 2021; LCWIP, Witney Active Travel Infrastructure Plan, Community Infrastructure Review, Play Area Review, Corn Exchange Business Plan, Lake & Country Park Management Plan, s.106 funding and the Town Council's budget.

Appended to this report are the various statements which may assist Members in formulating appropriate, meaningful and perhaps measurable pledges.

The Council's current Mission Statement is:

To seek continuous improvement in the range and quality of services provided by Witney Town Council, in order to improve the quality of life for the people of Witney.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

A Strategic Plan will enable the Council to be more proactive in its decision making rather than reactive and others dictating decisions. It will also enable the Council to formulate its medium-term financial strategy based on what it intends to deliver over the course of the remainder of the term of office. This in particular will help with budget setting going forward.

The strategic plan should be clear on what are the Council's responsibilities and that of other public sector bodies and those better placed to deliver on areas of service delivery. In the local town and parish sector these types of plans are usually what the Council can achieve rather than a document that seeks to influence others on issues that are not directly under the control of the Council, and therefore Members need to be mindful of the powers and duties of the Town Council, and that of others higher authorities.

Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider formulating a Mission Statement, Vision, Values and Objectives, as appropriate, to be incorporated in the Strategic Plan

Council Mission Statement and Corporate Objectives

For the time being the current Mission Statement and Corporate Objectives are reproduced below:

MISSION STATEMENT

“To seek continuous improvement in the range and quality of services provided by Witney Town Council, in order to improve the quality of life for the people of Witney.”

The **strategic objectives** were as follows:

1. **A vibrant local economy** – promote local businesses and help develop locally controlled economies which put Witney first whilst preserving and enhancing our history and unique identity.
2. **An engaged and supported community** – actively seek engagement with all residents and work with others to enable them to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
3. **A beautiful Witney** – further improve and develop our open spaces and work to protect and enhance our environment.
4. **A forward-looking Town Council** – represent residents and businesses on key strategic issues facing the town.
5. **An empowered community** – encourage collaboration for the overall success of the town through the facilitation and championing of change programmes and initiatives.
6. **A respectful community** – promote inclusivity and always treat people fairly and with respect regardless of race or racial group, sex or sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or disability.

Corn Exchange Vision from Business Plan January 2024

Our vision is to maintain a modern, accessible, and affordable arts venue for Witney and its community, capable of facilitating both local and professional arts and performances.

Open Spaces Strategy Adopted March 2021

Five themes:

1. Modernising and upgrading our parks and open spaces.
2. Improving and investing in our sporting provision.
3. Improving and investing in our leisure provision.
4. Improving and investing in our infrastructure.
5. Working in the most effective and efficient manner.

Vision to encompass the five themes:

Our parks, open spaces and public realm will be high quality, well used and provide a modern, sustainable and diverse resource which will improve the health and enrich the lives of the communities at the heart of them; be of significant ecological value; and help mitigate the effects of climate change.

Examples from other Town Council Strategic Plans:

Vision

To develop an inclusive community so that Witney is the place where everyone wants to live and where the wellbeing of residents is prioritised. In developing this community, the town will be one which is environmentally sustainable, vibrant, resilient and safe.

Values

In pursuing its Vision, the Council will ensure that the following values are core to the way in which the Council works. We will always:

1. Act with integrity and respect and will make sure we are fully inclusive of a diverse and changing community.
2. Work effectively and collaboratively with all residents and community partners, consulting, communicating and ensuring that dialogue is truly two way. We will empower the community.
3. Work in an environmentally responsible manner to ensure that the town is sustainable for current and future residents.
4. Be cost effective, transparent and accountable.
5. Be an excellent and exemplar employer.

Mission Statement

The Council will continue to improve the quality of life for people living in Witney and enhance the attractiveness of the town as a place in which to live, work, visit and invest.

- ✓ A positive and inclusive town where no-one gets left behind.
- ✓ A clean, healthy and happy town
- ✓ A thriving and resilient community and local economy
- ✓ A town that actively encourages local people to participate in and feel ownership over ideas, spaces and assets.
- ✓ A town which embraces innovation, takes risks, celebrates its successes and learns from its experiences.

Vision

A town rich in heritage but looking to the future, with a strong and active community.

Mission Statement

Witney Town Council's mission is to deliver services our residents need and to realise the vision for Witney. In this we are accountable to our residents and to the community.