

## FULL COUNCIL

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**Date:** Monday 14 December 2020

**Title:** Corporate/Strategic Plan – Initial Discussion

**Contact Officer:** Town Clerk – Sharon Groth

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### Background

One of the recommendations arising from phase 1 of the Organisation Review was – *a strategic planning process should be undertaken by Councillors and Managers together to provide a basic work programme for the Council [once the new staffing organisation is in place\*]. This would be implemented through well-defined workplans overseen by Committees, would be based on known budgets, and clearly identified responsibility for implementation.*

It further recommended – *a process should be put in place to allow Councillors to put forward proposals to Council for new initiatives which may fall outside the strategic plan. However, all proposals should be accompanied by a financial report and an implementation statement which takes account of the resources required and other issues which need to be considered. These should be created with the active involvement of management.*

And, finally – *the Town Clerk should maintain an overall workplan for the Council which shows progress against agreed projects and programmes and which can be used for discussion with Committee chairs and with the Council as a whole.*

### Current Situation

Draft strategic objectives were presented to the Stronger Communities Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2019 [Minute SC464] and it was agreed at that stage to undertake a resident's survey, in order to help inform and shape a strategic plan.

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.

It is therefore imperative that the Council now concentrates on preparing a clear plan with key priorities and objectives of what it wants to achieve for the remainder of this Council's term of office [and beyond] – Councils usually set a four-year plan.

The aim of the document will be to give Witney residents a clear understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve and how it intends to deliver these objectives. It will set out what the Council intends to focus on and will assist with future budgeting and the formation of a medium-term financial strategy. The document should be clear on what is 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 type 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.

To enable the Council to begin to discuss its priorities the Town Clerk sent around a link to a Survey Monkey asking what Councillors see as the Council's three priorities in the short to medium term. The results are consolidated into a document at appendix 1. The report is segregated into tangible projects on the Council's physical assets and then policy changes or things that are not under the direct control of the Town Council.

Also attached is the current projects which have been budgeted for – the revised revenue growth items and capital special revenue projects programme for 2020/21 at appendix 2, and projects which have already been identified for 2021/22 and beyond at appendix 3.

### **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 regarding its facilities and services it operates.

### **Risk**

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

Formulating a Corporate/Strategic Plan will set out what the Council is trying to achieve and will also give a basis for planning its resources effectively and efficiently to avoid wastage.

**Financial implications**

Once it is established what exactly the Council is trying to achieve, Officers can then set about costing projects which will then inform a medium-term financial strategy to assist with future forecasting and hopefully limit unexpected Precept increases.

**Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and have an initial discussion on Council priorities for the short to medium term.

It is also recommended that the Council should form a Task and Finish Group [suggested-made up of the Committee Chairs] to work with the Senior Management Team in formulating a draft Corporate/Strategic Plan and present to the next ordinary meeting of full Council.