



ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 1 NOVEMBER 2021

ENGAGEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's views on the draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 26) as part of the 12-week public consultation period which commenced on 1 November 2021. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. P. Posnett CC, the Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations, to the meeting for this item and invited her to introduce the item.

Regarding the Council's draft Strategic Plan, members made the following comments for consideration as part of the consultation:

- (i) Members commented that the reference to 'meeting the accommodation needs of disabled and frail people' in the 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure' outcome, sub-outcome 8.5, needed strengthening. It was highlighted that the availability of accessible accommodation was a key aspect of being able to live a healthy life, so the potential to make properties accessible in the early stages of property development was an important factor. Whilst the County Planning authority did not consider applications for housing, its role in influencing local planning processes and its potential to use its resources to develop start-up properties were significant. Mrs Posnett CC said that whilst it was not possible to expect developers to build full wet rooms in new properties, building 'housing for life' as an alternative (for example, providing easy access for wheelchair users and installing certain aids such as shower platforms) was something that she actively advocated for.
- (ii) The draft Strategic Plan used the term 'customers' to refer to service users and it was suggested that a different term should be used to make it clear that the Council was not a 'business'.
- (iii) In response to a question raised, it was clarified that the reference in paragraph 23 of the report, under the Resources Implications section, that 'all actions within the Plan are from existing service/business plans', related to the actions that the Council had committed itself to deliver during the course of the period the Plan covered i.e. 2022-2026. The main purpose of the Plan was to summarise the Council's strategic vision and aspirations in a

single document to identify specific priority areas of focus. The outcome aims set out in the Plan were made up of a combination of areas identified from the Council's existing strategies and other areas identified through additional performance analysis being undertaken.

- (iv) The geographical locations of libraries and heritage sites across the County was an important element of libraries being accessible. It was felt the distribution ought to be wider and not concentrated in certain areas so that all residents had a place nearby to where they resided, to visit.
- (v) Members noted that engagement on the draft Plan was taking place directly with local parish and town councils by way of newsletters and round robins. The option to meet and discuss their views directly with Council officers had also been given. Members further noted that Mrs Posnett engaged with local parish councils and other such organisations about community related matters as part her Cabinet Lead Member role. A member suggested that in terms of the wider public consultation advertising in the local newspapers that were delivered to residents free of charge could also be a good way to encourage people to submit their views.
- (vi) In response to a question raised, it was confirmed that having Cabinet Lead Member representation on the Strategic Plan Outcome Boards was something that would be considered.
- (vii) Given the progress being made by the Department to develop its digital offer to service users, it was suggested that 'Digital' should be more at the forefront of the document and that often family members managed a service users care via 'smart' devices which could also be referenced. Members noted that the 'Digital' theme ran throughout the Plan document and it was expected that the actions to tackle the issues associated with 'digital exclusion' would arise as the activities set to take place over the Plan period progressed.
- (viii) Members commented that the Plan was well written overall, and it was pleasing to see the outcomes that the Council would be working to achieve clearly set out in a single document.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the work undertaken to review and refresh the Council's Strategic Plan be noted.
- (b) That the Chief Executive be requested to give consideration to the comments now raised as part of the consultation on the Council's Draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026).