

To: Cabinet
Date: 19 December 2019
Report of: Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive.
Title of Report: Council Strategy 2020-2024 – external consultation

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	Approval to consult on the Council Strategy 2020-2024
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Leader Cllr Susan Brown
Corporate Priority:	All
Policy Framework:	Yes
Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant approval to consult externally on the Council Strategy 2020-2024; 2. Delegate authority to the Head of Corporate Policy, Partnerships and Communications to work with the Council Leader to make any changes as may be required following Scrutiny and Cabinet consideration, and then publish the Draft Council Strategy 2020-24 for public consultation. 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Draft Council Strategy 2020-2024

Introduction and background

1. Oxford City Council’s Council Strategy 2020–2024 (also called the Council Strategy or Strategy in this document) succeeds the existing City Council Corporate Plan 2016-20 and updates the Council’s objectives to achieve sustainable systematic change for Oxford.
2. To underpin the delivery of the Strategy, the Council will produce an annual Business Plan that will set specific priorities for the year ahead and report on progress against agreed key performance indicators. In turn the Business Plan will be complemented by the City Council annual Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) that will allocate resources against the priorities set.
3. The Business Plan will replace the current Corporate Plan Annual Statement.

4. This report sets out the rationale behind a revised Council Strategy and the plan to take it out to public consultation over winter 2020 in parallel with the Budget consultation.

Strategy Scope

5. In shaping the proposed approach, officers reviewed corporate strategies of other councils. The separation of a short high-level four-year strategy and a more detailed series of actions captured in an annual business plan reflects current best practice. It offers the public with an accessible overview of what the Council is seeking to do, and how and why particular areas are prioritised; while at the same time providing a set of clear operational objectives to guide the work of officers.
6. The Strategy will set out high level aims and outcomes that the Council seeks to have achieved to guide decision-making over the period.
7. It should act as a route-marker towards delivery of the Oxford 2050 vision and Oxford Local Plan 2036.
8. The Strategy's greater emphasis is on what will have changed in four years' time, rather than on describing 'business as usual' activities.
9. Work on the Business Plan 2020-21 will start shortly and will be aligned to the emerging Strategy. The draft Business Plan will be considered by Cabinet in March 2020, with the final document published alongside the Council Strategy at the beginning of April 2020.

Consultation to date

10. Officers have held a series of workshops and meetings with a number of key stakeholders that have provided inputs for the draft Council Strategy. These include:
 - Oxford Strategic Partnership
 - City Council Corporate Management Team
 - City Council Heads of Service
 - City Council senior managers
 - City Council policy officers
 - Cabinet
 - Labour Group
 - Liberal Democrat Group
 - All-member workshop (including Green Group)
 - Information exchange with officers at Oxfordshire's County and District councils

Document Structure

11. The Council Strategy set four overarching aims and five strategic themes. The aims reflect outcomes the Council is seeking to achieve. The strategic themes reflect how the Council will seek to achieve them. These are cross-cutting through all areas of the Council's operations and should be considered as enablers.

12. The draft strategic aims are currently set out as:

- **Foster an inclusive economy**
- **Deliver more affordable housing**
- **Support healthy vibrant communities**
- **Pursue a zero-carbon Oxford**

13. With draft strategic themes set out as

- **We work innovatively and efficiently** – we are a flexible and customer-focused and team offering high quality services that meet people’s needs
- **We prioritise tackling inequality** – our services, investments and policy-making are all designed to address the social and financial inequalities across Oxford. We value diversity and seek to build community cohesion. We want to ensure all Oxford’s citizens have fair opportunities and a real share in the city’s future.
- **We work in partnership** – we work with other councils, business, communities, voluntary sector, universities, Government and other public sector bodies to ensure the way we shape our services and direct our investments is joined-up with others.
- **We use our commercial assets for the benefit of local people** – our wholly companies and properties create jobs the support the local economy and funds that support the delivery of public services
- **We are a campaigning organisation** – we work actively to engage and influence others to help achieve our aims

External Consultation

14. We aim to go out for joint public consultation as soon as possible following the Cabinet meeting of the 19 December for six weeks, alongside the Budget and MTFS.

15. The online consultation will consist of the draft Council Strategy/Budget + MTFS plus a series of questions for the public to answer specifically around the strategic aims, outcomes and actions.

16. We will contact key statutory stakeholders, such as County and District Councils, the universities, hospitals and police, to ensure they have the opportunity to feedback on the strategy.

17. In addition to the public consultation process, during January we will consult with the Oxford Residents Panel, Oxford City Council tenants group, Children and Young People’s Forum, Oxford Strategic Partnership, civic groups, Council members and employees.

18. Once all the feedback has been gathered the Strategy will be reviewed and revised as appropriate and an updated version taken to Cabinet in February for approval.

19. We are not proposing any alternatives to the Council Strategy 2020-2024.

Financial implications

20. The Strategy sets out high level outcomes and is not linked specifically to expenditure commitments so there are no financial implications.

Legal issues

21. There are no legal issues associated with this Strategy.

Equalities impact

22. The Strategy is concerned with high level strategic aims and outcomes. While the Strategy identifies tackling inequality as an underpinning strategic theme for all of the Council's work, it does not specify how the aims and outcomes will be achieved and these may change over time. Therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not possible at this point.

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Background Papers: None