

Cabinet

25 January 2022

Developing Our Council Plan 2022

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet

1. Approves the Council Plan and supporting State of Warwickshire evidence base for submission to Full Council in February 2022.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to make such minor amendments to the Council Plan as she considers necessary in advance of it being presented to Full Council for approval

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council Plan sets our ambition, direction, and strategy for both Warwickshire and the County Council.
- 1.2 At its meeting of 8 July 2021, Cabinet approved the approach to the refresh of the Council Plan as part of a comprehensive Integrated Planning approach. At this meeting Cabinet also supported the top-level vision and strategic priorities for the Council.
- 1.3 In December 2021 Cabinet considered the draft Council Plan and endorsed the approach and the proposed three priorities for the Council and the seven areas of focus.
- 1.4 In doing so Cabinet considered the links and messages from the public engagement that had been undertaken, the Covid 19 Recovery Plan and the draft State of Warwickshire report.
- 1.5 Subsequently the Council Plan and State of Warwickshire report have been further refined and the Council Plan is presented for approval in this report alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which is presented in a parallel report, prior to submission to full Council.
- 1.6 The Council Plan represents the overall strategic and policy direction for the Council. The detailed deliverables, timescales, responsibilities, and performance metrics will be separately set out in a rolling two-year Delivery Plan, to be updated annually, and the refreshed Council performance

framework. These will be finalised following approval by the Council of the Council Plan, and then brought to Cabinet for approval later this quarter.

2. Our Approach

- 2.1 The approach to developing the new Council Plan this year is fully integrated and can be described as - **One Council, One Plan, One Budget**. Its development has been supported by an engagement exercise with the public, partners and staff which took place in the autumn of 2021.
- 2.2 The Council Plan communicates our priorities over the next 5 years. It seeks to achieve this through simplicity, making sense of the complexity of all the connected issues and breadth of the Council's strategic role and service delivery, while ensuring sufficient flexibility in approach to respond to rapidly changing, volatile and often ambiguous external conditions.
- 2.3 Our Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will translate the direction set out in the Council Plan into a sustainable financial strategy. A separate paper on today's Cabinet agenda provides an update on the MTFS refresh and 2022-23 budget, which will be presented to full Council in February for approval, alongside the Council Plan.
- 2.4 These two key products will be supported by a wider suite of products as detailed below and explained in more detail in Section 4 of this report.

3. Our Council Plan

- 3.1 The purpose of the Council Plan is to set out the top-level strategic direction of the Council and to articulate the Council's vision and ambition for Warwickshire.
- 3.2 Our new Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is responding to:
 - A changeable and uncertain external environment.
 - National policy drivers relating to climate change, the forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper (reference incorporate into the Council Plan) and Health & Social Care reform
 - The pressing issues and concerns of residents and businesses as highlighted through our public engagement survey (see Section 4.0).
 - The Council's climate emergency declaration and our commitments and aspirations in relation to climate change.
 - The ongoing focus on maintaining and supporting our recovery from Covid.
 - Reducing resources, increasing demand and cost pressures and supply challenges.

3.3 Our new Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reflects:

- The strong foundations through delivery against the Covid-19 Recovery Plan and our transformation programme, as reported to Cabinet in December 2021, and a continuation of work we have started.
- Joining up, connecting, and working as One Council to focus our collective efforts and maximise their impact for communities and residents;
- Building on our work on Community Powered Warwickshire as a fundamental bedrock, and work done including Social Investment and Green Shoots funds, shielding hubs, Food Forum, community testing etc
- A sharper focus on prioritisation to balance rapidly increasing demand with available resource and funding, and to optimise the Council's impact on our communities and residents; and
- Our commitment to working with partners and communities to identify solutions to the challenges we face; to build on existing strengths and successes and to learn and improve from our experiences.

4 Our supporting elements

4.1 There are a number of integrated and supporting products in development that will accompany and support the Council Plan. Progress against each is set out below:

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) - The emerging MTFS is presented to Cabinet in a separate report on this agenda. This provides the detailed phasing for funding and resourcing our priorities.

State of Warwickshire Report - The State of Warwickshire report has been designed to provide the evidence base to the Council Plan, structured around the three Strategic Priorities. It reflects a broad range of data and analysis related to our priorities as well as beginning to look towards 2050 and future scenarios. The report will also act as the initial evidence base for informing the delivery of the Council Plan. The report was approved by Cabinet in December. A fully designed version will be presented to Full Council in February.

Two-year Integrated Delivery Programme - The direction set in the Council Plan will be translated into a single integrated delivery programme for the next two years which builds upon the Covid 19 Recovery Plan and sets out specific and trackable actions and responsibilities for delivery. This will provide the public with a clear programme of deliverables against the strategic ambitions set out in the Council Plan, improving transparency and accountability.

We will not distinguish within the plan between change and business as usual activity, which will sharpen the focus of our programme and simplify associated governance. This reflects the positive progress we have made through the transformation programme and the maturity of our delivery

capacity. This approach will align the whole organisation behind a simple, clear and prioritised programme of work, and improve our focus on impact and performance. This will combine the key service deliverables and change projects necessary to deliver the prioritised key areas of focus. In a climate where resources are constrained, prioritisation will be key, and the single integrated delivery programme will need to align closely with the affordability of the MTFs and capital strategy/programme.

The Delivery Programme will be presented to Cabinet for approval later this quarter.

Key Business Frameworks – As part of our integrated approach we are reviewing all our key business frameworks to ensure they support delivery of our Council Plan.

- **Strategic Risk Management Framework** – The Framework was approved by Cabinet in April 2021 and articulates the Council’s risk appetite across a range of strategic risk areas. It also offers a consistent and integrated approach to identifying and assessing risks associated with delivering the Council’s priorities.
- **Strategy Framework** – A new Strategy Framework has been developed to provide oversight and consistency to strategy development and maximise connections between strategies. Within the Council Plan relevant strategies have been aligned to the Areas of Focus and strategy action plans are being incorporated into the Integrated Delivery Plan.
- **Performance Management & Business Planning Framework** - Members have been engaged, through a cross-party working group, in the development of a refreshed Performance Management Framework. Considerable work, shaped by the member working group, will result in a new framework which will include three interconnected levels of measures: place-based outcome measures for the county; strategic measures of the Council’s performance in enabling delivery of those cross-cutting outcomes; and more detailed operational service-level measures. Together, these will help assess the delivery of the Council Plan, whether our performance is improving in areas relevant to the Plan, allow for escalation where they are not on track and give assurance on future trajectories. The framework will be considered for approval by Cabinet in March.
- **Consultation & Engagement Framework**– The Consultation and Engagement Framework sets out the approach to community and public engagement. Our new residents’ panel, called the Voice of Warwickshire, is now established with a representative group of up to 1,000 residents from across the county. In addition, beyond the Voice of Warwickshire, we are enabling the opportunity for more interactive, discussion-based engagement through an improved Ask Warwickshire platform. We will also continue to use existing engagement opportunities to talk to specific groups such as the Youth Council and our work with

the voluntary sector. Together, these mechanisms will provide a robust, blended approach to engagement where we can use the right tools at the right times with the right audiences.

- 4.2 This is a new and enhanced approach by the Council to integrated planning and it is anticipated that it will develop, iterate, and mature over successive cycles. The work we are doing this year sets a strong foundation and direction for work in future business planning cycles.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The financial implications of the Council Plan will be addressed by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, emphasising the importance of an integrated approach. Our ongoing work to support the preparation of the 2022-23 budget and MTFS refresh will continue to emphasise the link between available resources, priorities and pressures on both supply and demand.

6. Environmental Implications

- 6.1 The Environmental Implications of the Council Plan are a key consideration and are reflected in the *Sustainable futures* priority and *Climate change* Area of Focus.

7. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 7.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, the final version of the Council Plan will be considered by Full Council in February 2022.
- 7.2 Following Full Council, a communication and engagement plan will support the launch of the Council Plan and the supporting elements with staff, the public and partners from February onwards

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Council Plan

Background Papers

1. Council Plan and Integrated Planning 2022 – 2026, Cabinet – 8 July 2021
2. Council Plan 2022 – Cabinet – Dec 2021

	Name	Contact Information
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Report Author	Steve Smith Assistant Director Commissioning Support	stevesmith@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Strategic Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Izzi Seccombe - Leader of the Council Cllr Andy Jenns - Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation	Isobelseccombe@warwickshire.gov.uk andyjenns@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s):

Other members: