


Report of	Chief Operating Officer	Author	Ann Hedges
Title	Strategic Plan 2015 -18		 282202
Wards affected	All		

**Cabinet is asked to recommend to full Council that it adopts the strategic Plan 2015-18 at its meeting on 18 February 2015**

## 1. Decisions Required

- 1.1 To agree the draft Strategic Plan 2015-18 and recommend to full Council that it be adopted at its meeting on 18 February 2015.
- 1.2 To ask officers to prepare an action plan to achieve commitments in the Strategic Plan

## 2. Reasons for Decisions

- 2.1 The last Strategic Plan was published in February 2012 and runs to 2015. It now needs to be refreshed in light of changing circumstances and expectations
- 2.2 The Strategic Plan is one of the core statutory elements of the Council's Policy framework, as set out in Article 4 of the Council's Constitution. It must therefore be adopted by full Council
- 2.3 The Strategic Plan sets the framework for the Council's three year Medium Term Financial Forecast and its capital Programme. Both the Plan and the Budget will be debated at the same full Council on 18 February 2015.

## 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The current Strategic Plan expires at the end of the financial year. A new plan is required and needs to be adopted by full Council
- 3.2 The absence of a Strategic Plan would create a significant risk of the Council failing to identify and deliver on its core priorities.

## 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The new Strategic Plan will replace the existing plan that expires on the 31 March 2015.
- 4.2 The Strategic Plan sets the overall vision and a set of priorities for the borough and the Council for the next three years. An action plan will be developed to support the Strategic Plan. This will set out specific actions to be taken to deliver the priorities.
- 4.3 A set of principles was adopted for the new Strategic Plan:
  - The new plan would be more about the place that just the Council

- It would demonstrate leadership and look at a long term vision
- That it would be meaningful
- That it would be ambitious for the place

4.4 The new Plan has a number of sections:

- A new vision statement “Rich heritage, ambitious future”
- A description of some of the achievements from the last Strategic Plan
- A set of four words that sum up what we want to achieve
- Broad descriptions of what we will work towards under each of these words

## 5. Consultation

5.1 The Council undertakes significant amounts of consultation every year however it was felt that some additional information was required to help develop the this Strategic Plan. A number of consultations have been undertaken:

5.2 Qualitative consultation with the public was commissioned and a series of structured focus group were held with residents representing different ages, gender, location, demographic profiles, BME and disability. Some important messages came out of these:

- That most people liked living in Colchester
- That we need to make more of our heritage
- That there need to be more opportunities for business
- That transport and retail need to be improved
- That growth needs to be managed and housing needs to be affordable
- That we need to be ambitious for the whole Borough

5.3 A series of workshops was also carried out with staff. These sessions listened to staff views about priorities and helped to shape the plan

5.4 Key partners were also consulted. A draft of the strategic plan was shared and views sought on how this fitted with the priorities in other organisations.

## 6. Publicity Considerations

6.1 The Strategic Plan is a key element of the Council’s continued external engagement activity. The Council will continue to ensure promotion of strategic activity via new and existing communications channels including direct, in person, in the press and on social media platforms.

6.2 The Council will communicate at key milestones of strategic projects to promote a strong positive reputation as a vibrant, prosperous, thriving and welcoming borough

## 7. Financial implications

7.1 The financial implications of the action plan to deliver the priorities are incorporated into the annual budgeting process

7.2 A sum of £547k from the New Homes Bonus for 2015/16 will be used to support actions for delivery of the Strategic Plan in areas where it is felt additional resource is needed

## 8 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 8.1 The Strategic Plan 2015-18 has a range of objectives and themes which will promote equality and diversity. This includes “Develop a strong sense of community across the Borough by enabling people and groups to take more ownership and responsibility for their quality of life” and “Ensure Colchester is a welcoming and safe place for residents, visitors and businesses with a friendly feel that embraces tolerance and diversity”.
- 8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment is available to view on the website [here](#), or by following this pathway from the homepage:  
Your Council>How the Council works>Equality and Diversity>Equality Impact Assessments>Corporate and Financial Management>Strategic Plan 2015-18.
- 8.3 The communication strategy for the Plan will comply with the existing Council policies for access and availability in different formats
- 8.4 The plan includes a priority about equality and diversity that meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

## **9 Community Safety Implications**

- 9.1 Community Safety remains a priority in the Strategic Plan

## **10 Health and Safety Implications**

- 10.1 There are no Health and Safety implications of the Strategic Plan.

## **11 Risk Management Implications**

- 11.1 As action plans are developed, risks will be identified
- 11.2 The absence of a Strategic Plan would create a risk for the Council failing to deliver on its core priorities

## **Background Papers**

- Scrutiny report 27 January 2015
- Summary of the Public Consultation