



Report of: Councillor Matthew Lee
The Leader of the Council

Report to:	Council
Date:	24 May 2018
Subject:	Proposed Corporate Strategy 2018/2025 (ACEX003)

Decision Proposal:	Council Decision
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Matthew Lee The Leader of the Council
Report author:	Lee Sirdifield, Assistant Chief Executive 01476 406524 l.sirdifield@southkesteven.gov.uk Date: 10 May 2018
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Approved for publication:	Councillor Matthew Lee, the Leader of the Council Date: 15 May 2018

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council approval of the proposed Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2025 which accompanies this report at Appendix 1.

The report also provides feedback from the Cabinet from its meeting held on 10th May 2018 as well as the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee which considered the Corporate Strategy on 9th April 2018.

It also explains the components of the proposed Corporate Strategy and the aspirations of the organisation over the next seven years as well as setting out how Members will be able to track progress towards the agreed outcomes.

Provided that Council approves the wording of the proposed document, it will be adopted as the Council's Corporate Strategy 2018/2025 and the final artwork will be finalised prior to issue.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council adopts the proposed Corporate Strategy 2018-2025 which is contained in Appendix 1 to this report.

1. BACKGROUND TO REPORT;

Introduction

- 1.1** South Kesteven District Council is determined to succeed. It will take advantage of a rapidly changing political and fiscal environment. The clear political vision with significant ambition sees considerable investment in the local economy. This is supported by a clear programme of public services reform, through a desire for services to become more competitive and productive over the coming few years as the Council seeks to modernise its operations.
- 1.2** The proposed Corporate Strategy 2018-2025 sets out how officers will respond to the political vision outlined by members, governing the future of the district. It recognises that the operating environment for the Council will change, so provides flexibility to be able to shift focus and realign resources to any new outcomes that have been determined by members.
- 1.3** Increasingly local authorities are funded through their economic success. The success of the district is directly linked to the success of the organisation and vice versa. There is a need to drive housing and business growth; creating more opportunities for people to stay and prosper within the district and consequently, enlarging the tax base of the Council and generating important additional revenue.
- 1.4** The proposed Corporate Strategy will guide the organisation to achieve sustainable financial autonomy by 2025. This ambition will be achieved through growth, agility and the development of ever more competitive and relevant services.
- 1.5** For the Council to be financially sustainable services need to become more efficient and effective, with a greater ability to both predict and react to uncertainty. Developing multi-skilled, motivated and better-rewarded teams who see how they are contributing to the goals of the organisation will also enable this to happen.
- 1.6** The understanding of customer needs will be built into the design and delivery of services in the future. This will ensure that they are accessible and valued by customers as well as remaining relevant and competitive, particularly as technology rapidly changes the way people access services and knowledge.

1.7 The components described above are interconnected. Growth enables revenue; lean and agile services enable effective working practices; relevant and competitive services enable credibility and increased credibility provides the organisational headroom to continue to drive growth – and so on. When combined with a rejuvenated workforce guided by a clear strategic framework they will help drive the organisation towards its goals.

2. Background Analysis

2.1 The proposed Corporate Strategy is an organisational response to the political will of the Council. It provides a clear snapshot of where the Council is in 2018 and where it seeks to be by 2025. It has been informed through a series of closely-linked events and initiatives with elected members and officers. It is also informed by knowledge of the operating environment and the changes that will be seen over the next few years.

2.2 The political vision that guides this Corporate Strategy is based on the voice of Council. The voice of Council is still subject to differences in opinion and ideology; as it should be in a democracy, and should that voice of Council change at any stage, then the proposed Corporate Strategy has been designed to adapt to any such changes.

2.3 As a response to the political vision, the proposed Corporate Strategy has been shaped by the staff of the Council; it is after all they who will be charged with the day-to-day implementation of the priorities set out within it.

2.4 This response has drawn heavily from feedback of several hundred staff who have been involved in the process. It has drawn from a series of engagement activities including:

- The staff survey which was conducted on behalf of members last autumn and achieved an impressive response rate of over 70% of the staff at the Council. This showed some challenges which needed to be addressed.
- A series of culture and morale workshops led personally by the Chief Executive which considered these findings in more detail.
- A series of workshops held with the Talent Programme to consider how the organisation currently operates and where it should aspire to be in 2025.

2.5 The new proposed Corporate Strategy covers only four pages of A4. It is purposefully brief and as a 'works manual' for staff; it sets out the bigger picture and answers the fundamental question of 'why they come to work every day' (a question which many, many larger organisations struggle with). Most importantly, it is a document that will be 'owned' by the staff. It is their response to the political vision, which combined with the new corporate structure, will align the considerable resources of this Council with the interests of those we serve.

3. Foundations of the Strategy

3.1 The proposed Corporate Strategy is built on a series of foundations which will drive the organisation forward. The key components are:

- **Culture shift** –understanding, aligning and developing our culture; *‘the way we do things around here’*
- **Developing a commercial approach** –understanding cost, value, margins and how to more effectively leverage resources to the benefit of our communities
- **Innovation and transformation** – crafting new solutions to complex challenges and developing more efficient and effective ways to design and deliver services
- **Strategic partnering** – identifying and working with genuine partners to generate value
- **Driving Performance and Productivity** – increasing our level of output through improved managerial techniques and better use of performance data.

3.2 Action plans will be developed for each of these streams. This will achieve a managed shift in organisational behaviours to secure the success of the proposed Corporate Strategy, with a focus on:

- **Accountability** – replacing a structure based around hierarchy with one based around accountability
- **Flexibility** – developing a more flexible way of working and making work about the delivery of outcomes rather than a place to go
- **Agility** – creating a multi skilled workforce that is able to be flexible across the organisation
- **Equity** – ensuring the Council’s policies are applied consistently across the organisation
- **Networking** – providing support to other colleagues within the organisation and working with other public, private, community and voluntary sector partners
- **Always learning** – related to the ambition of becoming a learning organisation that places value on everyone’s ideas and provides space for people to develop those ideas and learn from failures
- **Talent** – identifying, developing and nurturing talent that already exists within the organisation and identifying and using talent outside the organisation.

3.3 Through a programme of innovation and transformation, both the range of services and the way they are delivered will change: Decisions will be driven by evidence and the delivery of outcomes will be supported by partners who will help to drive improvements. This will support the ambition of being financially independent by 2025.

3.4 The proposed Corporate Strategy will also see the creation and adoption of a new performance framework. This will measure the progress towards achieving each element of the Strategy. The performance framework will be used to raise awareness of, and accountability for, performance at all levels within the organisation.

4. Feedback from Cabinet

- 4.1 Cabinet Members considered the draft Corporate Strategy on 10th May 2018. There was unanimous support for it and a clear will to see it as a working manual for officers of the Council to deliver the ambition of South Kesteven.

5. Feedback from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 Members of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee were unanimously supportive of the proposed Corporate Strategy and were keen to see a robust process be put in place to monitor the performance and impact of the strategy. This echoed the views of the 'all Councillor briefing' which took place on 19 March 2018.
- 5.2 Particular reference was made to matters such as some of the negative comments raised by staff through the culture and morale workshop sessions. Consideration will also be given to how Members and Officers can work together more closely in the future.
- 5.3 Members highlighted the need to encourage young people to develop in the organisation.
- 5.4 It was noted that the financial foundations of the proposed Corporate Strategy are well established, building on the existing corporate plan brought forward in 2016.

6. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The development of the proposed Corporate Strategy has drawn on feedback from the staff survey and a series of culture and morale workshops which were attended by over 200 employees. A range of views and options were therefore considered whilst developing the draft strategy, these included:
- **Do nothing:** the existing corporate plan was designed to run through to 2020 and therefore remains 'live' for a further two years. This option was rejected on the basis that the new political leadership has led to a change in corporate focus which is not reflected in the current plan.
 - **Repurpose the existing plan:** this would see a development of the existing plan, modified to take into account the changes set out above. This option was rejected on the basis that the opportunity to 'reset' the culture and outlook of the Council is best served by involving the staff as well as members in the development of a wholly new strategy.
 - **Abandon the idea of a plan altogether:** many corporate plans are written and never read, so it might be as well to do away with them altogether. This option was rejected on the basis that the proposed Corporate Strategy will be short, to the point and very relevant to the work of SKDC; it will be a 'user manual' for the organisation and play a central and very relevant role in our work going forward.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The proposed Corporate Strategy considers how resources will be used in the future. It will be supported by a series of action plans. Resource implications for the action plans will be considered as the plans are developed and the appropriate projects are initiated.

8. RISK AND MITIGATION

- 8.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report and any specific high risks are included in the table below:

Category Risk	Action / Controls
None	

9. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS (EQUALITY, SAFEGUARDING etc.)

- 9.1 The District Council commitment to equalities is about long-term, continuous improvement. It is the responsibility of all officers and elected Members to implement the principles of equality and diversity and our Corporate Strategy aims to ensure that these principles inform decision-making at every level within the Council reflecting our ongoing commitment to the elimination of unfair discrimination, the advancement of equality of opportunity for all and to foster good relations between different communities. It is worth noting that 'Equity' is specifically set out in the values and behaviours of the Corporate Strategy and all staff will be held to account for its impact within the organisation.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

11. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 11.1 There may be financial implications arising during the development and implementation of the strategy and these will be given due consideration at the appropriate time.

12. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

- 12.1 The Corporate Strategy is a policy framework document. The Council makes decisions relating to the adoption of policy framework documents as set out in Article 4 of the Constitution.

13. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES

- 13.1 There are no comments from other services.

14. APPENDICES

- 14.1 Appendix 1: Proposed Corporate Strategy 2018-2025.

1. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Corporate Plan 2016-2020

<http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8472>

ACEX001 – Corporate Strategy – Report to Combined Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Growth, Communities and Wellbeing, Culture and Tourism, Environment and Rural OSCs)

<http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=649&MId=3586&Ver=4>

ACEX002 – Corporate Strategy – Cabinet

<http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=164&MId=3506&Ver=4>