



**Report of: Councillor Matthew Lee
The Leader of the Council**

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	10 May 2018
Subject:	ACEX002 – Corporate Strategy

Decision Proposal:	Council Decision
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Matthew Lee The Leader of the Council
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Approved for publication:	Councillor Matthew Lee The Leader of the Council Date: 26 April 2018

SUMMARY

This paper considers the draft Corporate Strategy which will run from 2018 to 2025. It also provides feedback from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee which considered the Strategy on 9th April 2018.

It explains the components of the Strategy and the aspirations of the organisation over the next seven years. The paper seeks input from Cabinet Members to ensure that the strategy reflects the ambition of, and opportunities within, South Kesteven for recommendation to Council for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Cabinet consider the content of the draft Corporate Strategy 2018 and recommend its adoption to Council.

1. BACKGROUND TO REPORT

Introduction

- 1.1** South Kesteven District Council is determined to succeed by taking advantage of a rapidly changing political and fiscal environment. A clear political vision with significant ambition will see considerable investment in the local economy and a clear programme of public services reform, through a desire for services to be modernised and become more competitive and productive over the coming few years.
- 1.2** This Corporate Strategy sets out how officers will respond to the political vision to deliver the required outcomes. The Strategy provides flexibility for the Council to be able to shift emphasis as the operating environment changes, whilst always ensuring that resources are aligned towards delivering the outcomes that have been determined by elected members.
- 1.3** Local authorities are increasingly funded through their economic success. 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. The success of the district is therefore directly linked to the success of the organisation and vice versa. The 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.
- 1.4** Additional income alone will not provide the level of sustainability and autonomy that is needed. Services need to become more efficient and effective, with a greater ability to both predict and react. 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.
- 1.5** There will be a greater emphasis on understanding customer needs and opinion when designing and delivering the services of the future. This will ensure that they are valued by customers and remain relevant and competitive, particularly as technology enables access to services and knowledge to change so rapidly.
- 1.6** The components described above are interconnected. When combined with a rejuvenated workforce guided by a clear strategic framework they will help drive the organisation towards its goals. 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...

2. Background Analysis

- 2.1 This Corporate Strategy is an organisational response to the political will of the Council. It has been carefully informed by a number of separate but closely-linked events and initiatives and is intended to provide a clear, straightforward and above all recognisable snapshot of where the Council is in 2018 and where it seeks to be by 2025.
- 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 Corporate Strategy has been designed to adapt to any such changes.
- 2.3 As a response to the political vision, the 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 the staff survey conducted on behalf of members last autumn, which achieved an impressive response rate of over 70% of the staff at the Council. The challenges – and in some cases failings of senior management – set out in there were explored in more detail through a series of sessions led personally by the Chief Executive which focused on ‘shifting the paradigm’ of the Council, or put more simply, setting out a plan of how we change from the organisation we are now, to the one we’d like to be, by 2025 and in line with the political vision set out by members.
- 2.5 In all, several hundred staff have taken the time to be involved in the process of compiling this Strategy for members and given the sheer range of opportunities to participate, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that anyone who wanted to ‘have their say’ has had the opportunity to do so.
- 2.6 This is important and comes back to the core aim of the Strategy; namely to deliver the vision of the Council and by extension the residents of the District who elected the Council. As a document, the new Corporate Strategy will extend to no more than four pages. It will act as a ‘works manual’ for staff; it will set out the bigger picture and answer the fundamental question of ‘why they come to work every day’ (a question which many, many larger organisation struggle with). Most importantly, it will be a document ‘owned’ by the staff. Their response to your vision, 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 strategy is built on a series of foundations which will drive the organisation forward. The key components are:
 - **Culture shift** – better understanding and aligning our culture; ‘*the way we do things around here*’
 - **Developing a commercial approach** – building a comprehensive understanding of cost, value, margin and how to better leverage resources to the benefit of our residents

- **Innovation and transformation** – finding new solutions to complex challenges and creating more efficient and effective processes in designing and delivering services
- **Strategic partnering** – identifying genuine partners with whom we can generate value
- **Driving Productivity** – increasing our level of output through improved managerial techniques and better use of knowledge.

3.2 The Strategy will see action plans developed for each of these streams. There will be a managed shift in organisational behaviours to secure the success of the Strategy, with a focus on:

- **Accountability** – replacing 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 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 the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.1 Members of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee were unanimously supportive of the 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 Members highlighted the need to encourage young people to develop in the organisation.

4.4 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.

5. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The development of the 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.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The 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.

7. RISK AND MITIGATION

7.1 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		

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

8.1 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.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

10. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

10.1 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.

11. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

11.1 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.

12. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES

12.1 There are no comments from other services.

13. APPENDICES

13.1 Appendix 1: Draft Corporate Strategy.

(The Corporate Strategy is, intentionally, a concise document, but it is essential that it is presented correctly. Finishing touches are currently being made to the draft document which will be issued to Members in advance of the meeting).

14. 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>