

Report title: Essex Organisation Strategy	
Report to: Council	
Report author: Gavin Jones, Chief Executive	
Date: 11 July 2017	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To ask the Council to adopt the Essex Organisation Strategy, as recommended by the Cabinet at its meeting on 20 June 2017.

2. Recommendation

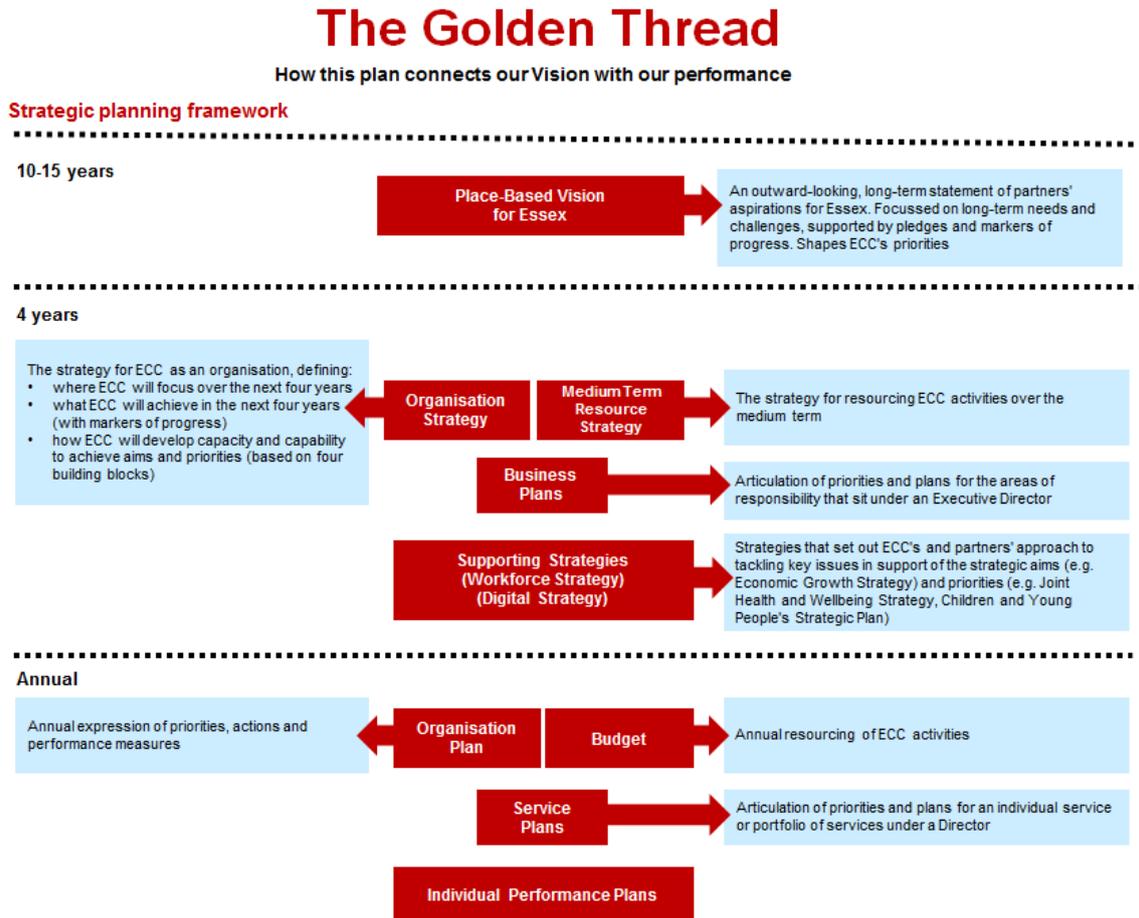
- 2.1. That the Organisation Strategy be adopted in the form attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Background and proposal

- 3.1. In the Chief Executive's 100 day report, it was identified that there was a need for a long-term strategy that would help the organisation to focus on and prioritise the things that matter most to our residents and communities. It was recognised that a clear set of priorities enables an organisation like the Council to plan ahead.
- 3.2. The types of challenges that both our residents and our organisation now face will not be solved in the short term: planning for an ageing population, moving towards a focus on early intervention and prevention, and building new homes and communities, require plans that extend beyond annual planning and budgetary cycles. The report committed to the development of a four year Organisation Strategy which would set out how the organisation would work and what it would seek to achieve over the next four years.
- 3.3. The Strategy was developed in parallel to discussions with partners on the development of a Vision for the county of Essex. That Vision is still in development but every effort has been made to shape the Organisation Strategy in the light of the emerging Vision for Essex. This is so that the organisation's priorities are firmly embedded in an appreciation of our long-term aspirations for the county.
- 3.4. The Organisation Strategy will underpin business and corporate planning and will provide a clearer strategic narrative for the whole organisation to follow

and a 'golden thread' that connects our strategic priorities to the emerging long-term Vision for Essex 2035 as well as to business and individual employee performance plans (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Strategic Planning Framework



Developing the Strategy

- 3.5 The Organisation Strategy is designed to:
- Define the organisation's priorities and areas of focus to inform allocation of its resources; and
 - Define clear objectives and the actions needed to achieve them.
- 3.6 A wide range of people from across the organisation have played an active role in the development of the Strategy.
- 3.7 Early engagement work was focused on establishing the principles that would shape the Strategy and ensuring employees were fully engaged in its development from the outset to create a sense of ownership across the organisation.
- 3.8 The need for culture change, the importance of digital, innovation and collaborative working across the organisation were all identified at this stage

as key to transforming the Council, improving outcomes for residents and managing significant budget pressures.

- 3.9 A series of workshops were held at the end of last year that were attended by around 300 employees to consider what issues and challenges residents of Essex were facing and what should be done to address them. These sessions were supported with insight and analysis on six themes that included both social, environmental and financial issues and data.
- 3.10 The outputs of these workshops were used to inform the drafting of the Strategy. Key Officers and Councillors have been given regular updates for input and review.
- 3.11 In addition to this, all Members were invited to attend a Scrutiny Committee meeting to engage in the development of the strategy and to review the final draft ahead of the Cabinet Meeting.

The Essex Organisation Strategy: Content and Structure

- 3.12 The Organisation Strategy clarifies our objectives. It sets out what we should achieve and how we should achieve it over the next four years. It connects the emerging 20 year Essex-wide vision, through our four strategic aims for ECC, to guide functional leadership teams' four year business plans. Activity in the business plans will be brought together each year in the Organisation Plan in order to create a policy context for the budgeting process.
- 3.13 The main audience for the document is ECC councillors and employees, although it will also be published more widely.
- 3.14 The four strategic aims are:
- Enable inclusive economic growth
 - Help people to get the best start and age well
 - Help to create great places to grow up, live and work
 - Transform the Council to achieve more with less
- 3.15 Twelve strategic priorities sit under the four main aims; down from the 40 in the previous commissioning strategies. Figure 2 provides more detail on these priorities.

Figure 2 – The Organisation Strategy on a page



- 3.16 The Strategy supports our business needs and new organisation design principles. In addition to supporting prioritisation, the Strategy helps ECC save money. About half the activities that make up the Strategy are directly tied to either reducing expenditure or increasing income.
- 3.17 It also promotes collaboration – there is a strong focus on working better with partner organisations, and the Strategy is also framed to support our ambition to join up our activity across ECC.
- 3.18 It also recognises that the role of the County Council is changing and that we need to put a greater emphasis on digital transformation to build new relationships with our communities and to help them, where appropriate, to help themselves.

4 Next steps, success measures and business planning

- 4.1 Measurable ambitions for the strategic aims and priorities in the Strategy will be developed over the summer, in parallel to the development of the Medium Term Resources Strategy and budget, and included as part of the scheduled

review and refresh of the Strategy that forms part of the overall business planning process. A schedule for this is included in appendix two.

- 4.2 The Cabinet considered the Strategy at its meeting on 20 June, and agreed to recommend it to the Council for adoption, subject to minor amendments which have been taken into account in the version attached as Appendix 1 to this report. This is in line with the approval process in the Council's Constitution.

5 Issues for consideration

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 The Organisation Strategy provides the framework for setting the budget. Delivery of the Strategy will therefore be set out clearly each year within the budget presented to Council in February and within the constraints of the resources available.

5.2 Legal implications

- 5.2.1 The adoption of the Strategy by full Council means that neither Cabinet nor Cabinet Members – nor officers acting on their behalf – are able to take a decision which is contrary to the Strategy – any proposed decision contrary to the Strategy would take effect as a recommendation, leaving full Council to make the decision.

6. Equality and Diversity implications

- 6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 6.3 Although the equality impact assessment indicates that the vast majority of impact is likely to be positive, it is too early to assess the overall impact of proposals in this report as individual equality impact assessments will need to

be undertaken as project proposals to deliver the strategic aims set out within the Strategy begin to develop.

- 6.4 The overall aim of the Strategy is to improve outcomes for the residents of Essex. The intention of the Strategy is to develop the resilience of communities, improve health outcomes, give residents the best start in life and foster inclusive economic growth across Essex - growth that will benefit everybody. Whilst it is intended that all Essex residents will benefit from the general principles of the Strategy, individual equality impact assessments will be needed on significant decisions under the Strategy to determine whether any adverse impact on protected characteristics exists and, if so, whether it will need to be mitigated against.

7. List of appendices

1. Essex Organisation Strategy as recommended to Council by Cabinet
2. Strategic Planning Cycle
3. Equality Impact Assessment – the equality impact is available on the ECC website with the papers for the meeting. All Members are advised to read the equality impact assessment before the meeting.

8 List of Background papers

- 100 days report
- Horizon scanning trend analysis
- Medium Term Resources Strategy