

The Corporate Outcomes Framework 2014-18

Report by Councillor D Finch, Leader of the Council

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Purpose of report

To seek Council's agreement to a new Corporate Outcomes Framework for the period 2014-2018.

Recommended:

That Council adopt the Corporate Outcomes Framework 2014-18, set out as the Annex to this report.

Background and proposal

In July 2013 the Council adopted a new Vision for Essex – a vision of a county where innovation brings prosperity. In support of this Vision, a new Corporate Outcomes Framework has been developed to guide the work of teams across the Council and is relevant to all County Divisions. This is a part-strategic, part -technical document that translates the Council's Vision into:

- a single set of **outcomes** that the Council seeks to secure. There are seven outcomes in total, and each is a positive statement of wellbeing for residents and/or communities, made in plain English. These statements have been designed to reflect the Council's aspirations for Essex residents and communities, and to guide activity in the short, medium and long term; and
- the **indicators** through which progress will be tracked towards the achievement of the outcomes. These indicators do not seek to measure the effectiveness of particular services, programmes or agencies. Rather, they seek to quantify the key changes the Council should expect to see as the outcomes are achieved. All indicators have been selected based on the extent to which they a) say something of central importance about the outcome, b) are common sense and communicate with a broad range of audiences, and c) are based on data that is accurate, reliable, consistent and available on a regular and timely basis.

The Corporate Outcomes Framework plays a key role in the Council's new strategic planning framework and has been prepared to guide the work of teams across ECC and is relevant to all County Divisions. This Framework replaces a multitude of separate outcomes and objectives used previously by teams across directorates as a basis for strategic planning. The consolidation of outcomes into a single, authoritative, framework is designed to provide:

- a clear focus on the outcomes that will improve the lives of Essex residents,
- a clear foundation for a new strategic planning framework and for the development of commissioning strategies and a commissioning work plan in particular;
- a clear framework for managing performance – allowing the Council to assess its impact on residents and communities in Essex; and
- a foundation for analysing resources, assets, contracts etc, against a consistent set of outcomes.

The Framework sets out the Council's ambitions for Essex – the actions the Council will undertake to secure progress will be set out in a suite of commissioning strategies to be published in summer 2014. It has been developed through a three-stage process with engagement from Cabinet Members, the Corporate Management Board and Council Commissioners:

- **Stage 1:** having secured a mandate from the political leadership and the Corporate Management Board, officers undertook analysis of the various commitments the Council had made across its existing strategies, plans and partnership agreements, identifying common themes;
- **Stage 2:** these themes provided the basis for a series of workshops with Cabinet Members, senior officers and commissioners through which outcomes and indicators were identified, developed and refined; and
- **Stage 3:** having identified a series of potential outcomes and indicators, technical definitions were developed for each. Once defined, these indicators were subjected to an assessment of data quality and coverage. This assessment ensures that progress can be tracked using robust data and a programme of activity can be implemented to improve data quality where necessary.

Work on Stage 3 is on-going. It will continue throughout the life of the Corporate Outcomes Framework as the Council seeks to tighten the definition of its indicators and improve the quality of the underlying data. It is expected that over 90% of indicator definitions and data quality assessments will be completed by April 2014.

Work is also underway to establish arrangements for quarterly reporting against outcome indicators. The quarterly monitoring process will also provide data on sets of Council-wide organisational performance measures that assess the effectiveness of the Council as a whole. The monitoring approach will also provide an opportunity to involve Scrutiny.

As the Council's single, authoritative outcomes framework the Corporate Outcomes Framework will shape the development of all other strategies and plans. It will also guide and shape:

- a suite of Commissioning Strategies to be published in summer 2014;
- a more detailed commissioning work plan through which progress towards the outcomes will be delivered; and
- Specifications issued by commissioners to third-party service providers and in-house operational teams (Operational functions will need to form separate plans to deliver on commissioners' specifications).

Financial Implications

Whilst the Corporate Outcomes Framework sets out the Council's ambitions for Essex – the actions that the Council will undertake to secure progress will be set out in a suite of commissioning strategies to be published in summer 2014. Therefore, while there are no specific financial implications arising directly from the Framework, it will be used to direct the allocation of reducing financial resources to secure the outcomes identified.

Legal Implications

The Council is required to set the Council's overall vision and corporate strategy and the Executive will then implement this in accordance with the approved budget and policy framework. The Council is required to take account of its various duties and powers when setting its corporate vision and strategy. Individual decisions will be taken along the way in order to implement the vision and at various points careful consideration will be given to the financial, legal, equalities and other implications arising from different aspects of implementation. Consultation will need to take place where appropriate and feedback to consultation carefully considered.

Equality and Diversity implications

In making this decision the Council must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equalities Act 2010, i.e. have due regard to the need:

- (a) to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- (b) to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- (c) to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; including having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The PSED is a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s.149, it is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors.

The Corporate Outcomes Framework Vision has County-wide application, and will have County-wide impacts. At this stage there are no specific proposals and therefore it is considered premature to carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment. However, as proposals (e.g. commissioning strategies) are developed within the context of the Corporate Outcomes Framework, changes will have the potential to have a disproportionate impact on individuals within the population who have a protected characteristic.

The Corporate Outcomes Framework expresses the outcomes the Council will seek for the whole population: however, as particular programmes of activity are developed, there may be opportunities to promote equality objectives.

It will be essential to investigate all emerging proposals both for any potentially disproportionate impacts and for opportunities to promote equalities objectives. In practical terms this means that in relation to each decision it will be necessary to take the PSED into account in and to carry out an EIA in relation to the decision where it is likely to have a disproportionate impact on members of the community who have a protected characteristic.

Staffing and other resource implications

There are no staffing and other resource implications arising directly from this paper.