

South Lakeland District Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Friday, 15 January 2021
Adoption of Council Plan 2021-2026

Portfolio:	Deputy Leader of the Council
Report from:	Director of Strategy, Innovation and Resources
Report Author:	Dan Hudson – Strategy Lead Specialist
Wards:	(All Wards);
Forward Plan:	Budget and Policy Framework Decision included in the Forward Plan as published on 18th December 2020

1.0 Expected Outcome

- 1.1 The Council Plan sets out a vision, underpinned by four priorities that will guide how we work together with partners to make South Lakeland the best place to live, work and explore. The plan will guide the Council as it leads and influences in the places that matter and focuses resource where it is most effective. It provides a consistent basis for the plans, strategies, projects and decisions of the Council as Customer Connect is implemented.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee

1) consider and comment on the draft updated Council Plan 2021-2026 (appendix 1) and, subject to comments made,

2) recommend that Cabinet and Council adopt the updated Council Plan 2021-2026 (Appendix 1) as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

3.0 Background and Proposals

- 3.1 The Council Plan is the Council's most important strategic document and sets out the Council's vision and priorities. It is part of a suite of corporate documents and links closely with the Medium Term Financial Plan as well as other strategic documents such as the Commissioning Strategy, the Performance Management Framework, the Local Plan and other Council strategies, projects and programmes.
- 3.2 The Council Plan sets out the Council's long term vision and direction, provides strategic direction for other plans and strategies, underpins our influencing activity with Government and partners, enables activity to be focused on strategic objectives and provides a consistent basis for the prioritisation of resources, our commissioning and performance management frameworks and the roll-out of the new way of working under Customer Connect. It provides a concise statement of who we are and what we are about that is accessible to members, Council staff, partners and communities.
- 3.3 Following a major rewrite in 2018, the plan was subjected to light touch revisions in 2019. The 2020-2025 plan predated a number of important developments including

the Covid pandemic and its influence on the District's economy and its communities, the adoption of carbon reduction targets, the declaration of a Poverty emergency and the emergence of proposals for local government re-organisation in Cumbria.

- 3.4 The 2021-2026 plan has been reviewed in the light of the Covid Pandemic and the other major developments outlined above. Fortunately because of the long term focus of the plan, the vision and strategic priorities remain valid. Indeed the key priorities of working across boundaries, reducing deprivation and addressing the climate crisis have increased in importance.
- 3.5 One key change is a greater emphasis on strategic alignment in the context of Morecambe Bay. Co-operation on economic development, infrastructure, housing and employment growth as well as skills and knowledge is increasing and will be vital as we emerge from the impact of the Pandemic. Other potential areas of collaboration include inequality and deprivation, population health and carbon reduction. All of this will increase in importance if proposals for local government re-organisation move forward.
- 3.7 A second change is updating the plan to reflect and give additional impetus to the progress made on the Council's approach to sustainability and climate change. The plan incorporates targets for carbon reduction and provides a strategic framework for carbon reduction.
- 3.8 Another key change is a greater emphasis on fairness and reducing disadvantage and inequalities. Work on personal financial resilience needs to be redoubled as many people have been placed under financial stress as never before. The plan needs to make sure that people have access to the support they need and are directed to those most able to help.
- 3.9 The new plan is a little different in format with each priority being linked to a desired outcome, the key steps proposed to achieve it and how success will be measured. This will assist in ensuring that the plan can be presented in an accessible form. It also has a new introduction which sets out a positive picture of the District and its prospects following the Covid pandemic and explains the role of the Council in delivering the vision. It sets it in the context of the organisational renewal and the renewed emphasis on customer focus brought about by Customer Connect. Because the plan needs to be understood by a wide range of stakeholders, it explains a little more about what the Council does and the role of the various parts of the Council, communities and stakeholders in delivering the vision.
- 3.10 The revised plan retains the vision of "South Lakeland as the best place to live, work and explore". Whilst South Lakeland is already a very good place to live, work and explore in many ways for many people, there are areas where we need to do more and the plan identifies four priority areas where activity needs to be focussed to achieve the vision. These are;
 - WORKING ACROSS BOUNDARIES – DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL GROWTH ACROSS MORECAMBE BAY;

The plan reflects the fact that together with Lancaster and Barrow, South Lakeland is at the centre of a powerful economic region of more than 320,000 people. The plan seeks to use the combined weight of the whole area to secure the investment, growth and transport infrastructure that will deliver a thriving and diverse sub-regional economy with a skilled workforce, a balanced housing market to meet needs, great leisure services to encourage healthy lifestyles and a strong cultural offer. It sees opportunities to extend co-operation to health, carbon reduction and tackling deprivation and inequality.

- DELIVERING A BALANCED COMMUNITY – A SOUTH LAKELAND FOR ALL AGES;

This means addressing the challenges posed by our shrinking workforce and ageing population. It means retaining young people, attracting economically active people and young families and ensuring that housing, services and infrastructure meet the needs of older people. It also means promoting localism and helping communities to help themselves.

- DELIVERING A FAIRER SOUTH LAKELAND – A SOUTH LAKELAND FOR EVERYONE;

This means taking action to address housing, health and income inequalities and increasing financial resilience. This means working in partnership with the third sector to rebuild financial resilience following the impact of the Covid pandemic, preventing homelessness and supporting vulnerable people, addressing inequalities in access to housing, addressing issues such as accessibility to people with disabilities and working through the Cumbria Joint Public Health Strategy and through Population Health strategies in Morecambe Bay to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities;

- ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY – A CARBON NEUTRAL SOUTH LAKELAND

This means enshrining the Council's carbon reduction targets (for SLDC to be carbon neutral by 2030 and for the District to be carbon neutral by 2037) A comprehensive action plan for carbon reduction is being implemented. The Council Plan sets the strategic direction for this work and is the means by which carbon reduction is mainstreamed within the Council.

3.11 The plan will be underpinned by a comprehensive performance management framework which sets out a comprehensive range of outcomes and measures performance against these.

3.12 It is important to note that the Council Plan is a broad, strategic document which conveys vision, direction and strategic priorities. It is not intended to be a complete catalogue of everything the Council proposes to do over the next five years. These strategic priorities inform a vast range of projects, plans and strategies and services in place or progressing. These include the Local Plan, plans related to housing, economic development, health and wellbeing, climate change and financial resilience.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 The Council Plan has been developed following meetings held with Cabinet Members and Officers. Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be considered by Cabinet and Council when they consider adopting the plan in February.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 The Council could choose not to adopt the Council Plan. This would result in a loss of focus in many areas of Council activity. It would mean that the Council does not have a framework for prioritisation resulting in reduced influence, inefficiency and a reduced ability to deliver positive change for our communities.

6.0 Links to Council Priorities

6.1 The Council Plan sets Council priorities which guide other Council initiatives.

7.0 Implications

Financial, Resources and Procurement

- 7.1 The budget process is running alongside the development of the Council Plan and while the Council Plan represents the key strategic vision taken by the Council, the Medium Term Financial Plan details the Council's financial position.

Human Resources

- 7.2 The Customer Connect Programme sets out the organisational design, skills, knowledge and support that is needed to deliver the ambitions and priorities set out in the Council Plan.

Legal

- 7.3 The Plan forms part of the Council's budget and Policy Framework and requires the approval of the Council meeting.

Health and Sustainability,

- 7.4 A Health, and Sustainability Impact Assessment of the Council Plan is attached at Appendix 2.
- 7.5 Assessments will be carried out of the health, social, economic and environmental impact of individual projects linked to the Council Plan.

Equality and Diversity

- 7.6 An Equality Impact Analysis of the Council Plan is attached at Appendix 3. An Equality Impact Analysis of the Biodiversity Policy is attached at Appendix 6

Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
The Council Plan is not adopted by the Council	Compromise the delivery of the priorities, service planning and performance monitoring. The Council does not have an up to date basis for prioritisation and performance management	Ensure significant engagement and consultation has been achieved
Actions by partner organisations, necessary to deliver the Council Plan are not forthcoming	Delivery will not match expectation	Close engagement and joint working with critical delivery partners
There are insufficient resources to enable delivery of the Council Plan and biodiversity policy.	Priorities and objectives are not met	Ensure appropriate resources are available and account had of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan

Contact Officers

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Appendices Attached to this Report

Appendix No.	Name of Appendix
1	Draft Council Plan
2	Health and Sustainability Assessment
3	Equalities Assessment

Background Documents Available

None

Tracking Information

Signed off by	Date sent	Date Signed off
Legal Services	05/01/2021	05/01/2021
Section 151 Officer	04/01/2021	05/01/2021
Monitoring Officer	05/01/2021	05/01/2021
CMT	04/01/2021 (by e-mail)	

Circulated to	Date sent
Lead Specialist	N/A
Human Resources Lead Specialist	04/01/2021
Communications Team	04/01/2021
Leader	04/01/2021
Committee Chairman	04/01/2021
Portfolio Holder	04/01/2021
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A
Committee	15/01/2021
Executive (Cabinet)	20/01/2021
Council	23/02/2021