

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES

OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 19th March, 2015

61

**DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING -
CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN**

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Planning, and Executive Director, Michael Rich presented a progress report on the Council's new Corporate Plan and its implementation.

The Deputy Leader advised that in recent years the Council had produced a one year Corporate Plan. This had allowed it to reflect the needs and aspirations of the Borough's communities in the setting of its priorities each year. These priorities were aligned with budgets and ensured that the Council's key priorities and projects were achievable. Following the Local Government Association's Peer Challenge a recommendation was made that the Council set out plans on a longer term basis. A four year Corporate Plan was one element of the Council's response to this which, along with a revised medium term financial plan and strengthened transformation programme, would enable the Council to plan effectively for the financial and policy challenges it faced.

The Deputy Leader also noted that the new Corporate Plan contained targets and objectives that would be achievable. The new Corporate Plan set one year specific projects as well as providing the outline for longer term strategic four years aims. The plan also contained key measurements and milestones for assessing performance against as well as highlighting key achievements to date.

With the adoption of the new Corporate Plan by Council on 26 February, 2015, Executive Director, Michael Rich outlined the steps that would now be taken to implement it. The Executive Director advised that the new plan would act as a "golden thread" running through and linking the corporate plan with individual and team objectives as well as the new streamlined Employee Personal Development process. There would also be a new approach to performance management which in the past had been IT driven and not always effective. The Executive Director also noted that the new plan would encourage more joined up working from Council departments to achieve corporate objectives more effectively, and that this was a further movement away from the strongly

demarcated departmental structure that had operated for many years at the Council.

The Executive Director advised members that there would be an increased focus on engaging staff with the new plan and that the internal communications strategy would be used to increase awareness and ownership of the plan by staff. In conclusion the Executive Director noted that the new plan would be reviewed following the local and national elections in May 2015 and then subsequently each year to reflect shifting policy and local circumstances, allowing the plan to stay relevant to current needs.

Members thanked the Deputy Leader and the Executive Director for outlining the implementation of the plan noting that the new Corporate Plan was a very impressive document and was a great improvement on previous plans which had been unwieldy and hard to deliver on.

Members asked how the plan would work to develop better broadband access in areas of the borough as businesses were being put off from setting up and staying in Chesterfield due to the poor broadband connection in some areas. The Deputy Leader agreed that broadband speeds and connectivity needed to improve and that Derbyshire County Council were also involved with working with broadband providers to improve broadband connectivity, speeds and access. It was also noted that work was ongoing at the Innovation Centres to improve their broadband access.

Members also asked if there were any plans to provide free Wi-Fi access in the town centre for the benefit of business and shoppers, like there was in other local towns such as Mansfield, where there had been free Wi-Fi in the town centre since 2013. Executive Director, James Drury accepted that Chesterfield was a bit behind other areas in this field but that work was happening to look at a sustainable solution for this for Chesterfield. Members asked if it would be arvarto that would provide this service in the town centre but were advised by the Executive Director that as this initiative would be separate to the Council's IT service it could be provided by another provider.

Members asked how the Corporate Plan would work to improve internet access for tenants, especially vulnerable tenants as the roll out on Universal Credit made having internet access essential in order to claim benefits. The Executive Director advised that these concerns would be addressed in the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy.

Members also asked several questions about on whether individual and service area plans would link into the Corporate Plan to deliver effective joined up working. The Executive Director advised they would link together and that this requirement would be reinforced to managers.

Members thanked the Deputy Leader and the Executive Director, Michael Rich, for attending and answering their questions

RESOLVED -

1. That the progress report be noted.
2. That the Deputy Leader and Executive Director Michael Rich be invited to the September meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum to provide a progress report on the implementation of the Corporate Plan.
3. That after the progress report has been received members will decide how often progress reports should be presented at the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.
4. That the creation of a project group to look at how the Corporate Plan is working at addressing the problem of deprivation in the borough be considered at the next meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.
5. That the creation of a project group to look at how the council offers concessions on fees for chargeable services be considered at the next meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.
6. **That the creation of a project group to look at how the Corporate Plan is working at developing the Town Centre, including the upgrading of the outdoor market be recommended to the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for consideration.**
7. **That the creation of a project group to look at how the Corporate Plan is working at increasing the supply and quality of housing in the borough be recommended to the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for consideration.** *(emphasis added)*