

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL – 13 NOVEMBER 2019

SUBJECT: Strategic Council Targets for the period 2019-2023

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EXTN: 37601

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Following the May 2019 elections, the formation of a new Council and a new administration, this report requests agreement for the Council's main strategic targets to try to achieve between 2019 and 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council agree the strategic targets, timetable, route to achieve them and 'Lead Member' as shown in the Appendix of the report.
2. Council note the financial impact of these new targets and seek to establish financial viability through future Medium Term Financial Strategies (MTFS).

1. BACKGROUND:

1.1 The Council's main aims currently are:



The Council Priorities and the Vision



Your services

"Providing the best services



Supporting you

we can afford to help you



Your future

improve your life"

We will continue to deliver our priorities without it costing you more by:

- Offering an improved customer experience
- Building better relationships with other organisations and the community
- Providing more digital opportunities to make dealing with us easier
- Becoming smaller but more effective

1.2 In practice, this has meant that the strategic targets for the Council's Corporate Management Team to try to achieve were to:

- Ensure a balanced budget for 2019/20 and beyond
- Complete and open the Littlehampton Wave (and the demolition of the old pool)
- Develop the Council's housing strategy
- Establish a new park in Bognor Regis (formerly Pavilion Park)
- Progress major regeneration projects
- Work toward increasing recycling rates and prepare for retendering the current contract (by 2023)

1.3 Following the May 2019 District elections, a new Council has been formed with a new administration in a No Overall Control Council (NOC).

1.4 Corporate Management Team have been working with the four Group Leaders to understand the proposed additional targets of the new Council and to propose a way forward to enable their success.

1.5 By agreeing these additional targets, the Council's Chief Executive will be able to allocate resources to try to achieve them, in an agreed way and within an agreed timetable. The Council has a positive history of succeeding with a wide range of projects delivered such as Hotham Park café, London Road Bognor Regis, Eastbank river wall (Littlehampton) and the Littlehampton Wave. Officers desire to succeed under the new administration remains firmly in place. However, it is important to recognise that:

- Council culture must remain firmly based on working together with honesty, integrity and respect for one another (both Councillors and officers). Historically, the excellent Member/Officer relations has been invaluable to ensure success for the Council and this must continue.
- The capacity of the organisation has reduced, resulting in a reduction of staff. As a result, on occasion, consultants will be utilised as a short-term response to staffing pressures. Some of these costs are identified within the Appendix. Overall, this maintains an efficient and cost effective Council.
- The Council is not financially buoyant and anticipates substantial financial reductions from 2021 onwards. Hence, these additional targets will only be achievable through a continued viable Medium Term Financial Strategy.

1.6 Progress

The Council wishes to progress the following strategic targets (through to 2023):

High Priority:

- The following two targets run through all the Council's approaches and will be a 'High' priority for the Council to develop in parallel:
 - Prepare Arun's response to the Environment and Climate Emergency
 - Refresh the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy

- To continue to deliver the Local Plan whilst developing a new planning framework to deliver the Council's priorities by:
 - Improving the level of sustainability and infrastructure in new developments and the Council's response to Environment and Climate Change. The Council will introduce additional and updated Supplementary Planning Documents and revised Development Management Policies as part of commencing a Local Plan review to reflect the change in Council priorities.
- To establish new town centre retail plans for Arundel, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton
- To actively promote a change in governance from an Executive (Cabinet) system to a Committee system at the earliest opportunity
- Maintain a prudent Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Medium Priority:

- Maximise the social houses/units we provide
- Engage better with the public by creating a public engagement strategy

Lower priority:

- To consider how best to utilise Bognor Regis Town Hall for the community
- To assist in improving the average wage of people working in Arun by exploring all potential options

1.8 The Council should also consider a 'Lead Member' for each of the targets, as a Member first point of contact for officers to discuss issues with. These Members are proposed in the Appendix.

1.9 Shown as an Appendix to the report are:

- The target
- The route through Council to be achieved
- A rough timescale and cost
- Proposed Lead Member

1.10 The Strategic Targets are not intended to be exhaustive and the only areas that the Council wishes to move forward on; they are more the initial focus for work to be undertaken by Officers. Other areas of importance include an Economic Strategy, a Sea Front Strategy, and a Tourism and Events Strategy, as well as investigating the viability of restoring a sandy beach to Bognor Regis.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

2.1 Council agree the strategic targets, timetable, route to achieve them and 'Lead Member' as shown in the Appendix of the report.

2.2 Council note the financial impact of these new targets and seek to establish financial viability through future Medium Term Financial Strategies (MTFS).

3. OPTIONS:

- 2.2 The Council agrees to the new targets, timetable, route to achieve them and 'Lead Member', as shown in the Appendix A of the report.
- 2.2 The Council does not agree to the new targets, timetable and route to achieve them, as shown in the Appendix A of the report.

4. IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 The May 2019 elections saw 37 Councils move to No Overall Control (NOC). Arun District Council is one of them. Of the 248 Councils where elections took place, 73 are now NOC.
- 4.2 This report focuses on collaboration across the Council. Members from all political parties need to have balanced discussions if they wish to achieve things during this next political (four year) term.
- 4.3 Working with our communities, the Council needs to lead and facilitate activity that helps to achieve the demands of Climate Change by 2030, which is an increasing challenge for all Councils.
- 4.4 It is, however, important that Members agree only what is realistically deliverable within the envelope of staff capacity and is financially viable (MTFS) for the Council.
- 4.5 Collaborative working will require Members to address "the bigger picture" and build consensus with one another across political divides by focusing on solutions and outcomes that they want to achieve for the Arun community. Senior officers, in turn, will work cross-party and in a cross-organisation way, providing sound staff leadership, to enable the Council's agreed targets to be met, within our tight budgets. This will all be in line with Part 8 of the Constitution, paragraph 2. 'General Conduct', specifically:
- 2.1.5. Listening to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other processional officers, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.*
- 4.6 However, a more collaborative cross-party approach often slows momentum and it is, therefore, essential that the Council focuses on fewer, achievable, targets being delivered well, rather than more targets less well. By having a shared understanding and common targets between officers and Members, achievements could be significant.

5. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

Whilst the Council remains in a position of No Overall Control, there is a high probability that political divisions could hamper progress for the good of the Arun community. Therefore, having agreed targets, in priority order, should improve the opportunity for success, for the community, Members and officers.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None