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# West Berkshire 2019-2023 Council Strategy: Refresh 2021

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	04 May 2021
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Lynne Doherty
<b>Date Head of Service agreed report:</b> <i>(for Corporate Board)</i>	31/03/2021
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	12 April 2021
<b>Report Author:</b>	Catalin Bogos
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	C4056

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the refreshed Council Strategy 2019 - 2023 for consideration and approval by the Council. The refreshed document articulates the progress that has been made and introduces new or updated projects to support the delivery of the Council's core business and priorities for improvement.
- 1.2 The refreshed Council Strategy reflects the changes in the social, economic and environmental context. It builds on the enhanced strategic framework developed during the first two years of the Strategy (e.g. the Environment Strategy, the Economic Development Strategy, the Communication and Engagement Strategy and the Recovery and Renewal Strategy).
- 1.3 This Strategy is the Council's overarching strategic document that sets out the priorities for improvement over the lifetime of the strategy and reaffirms our commitment to continue the delivery of the core services that people in West Berkshire need and value.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the refreshed Council Strategy covering the period 2021 – 2023, set out in Appendix B.
- 2.2 To note that the Council Strategy reflects the updated Covid-19 Recovery and Renewal Strategy.

### 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
<b>Financial:</b>	<p>The proposed work programme associated with the projects listed in the refreshed Council Strategy is funded within the MTFS.</p> <p>This Paper does not ask the Council to approve any financial allocation.</p>			
<b>Human Resource:</b>	<p>The Council is not being asked to approve any recruitment of additional staff through this Paper.</p>			
<b>Legal:</b>	<p>None.</p>			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>Risks relating to the commitments included in the Council Strategy and the associated delivery plan targets are managed through the Council's risk management framework.</p>			
<b>Property:</b>	<p>None.</p>			
<b>Policy:</b>	<p>The Council Strategy forms part of the Council's approved Policy Framework. This refresh of the Council Strategy is informed by: the progress made since the Strategy had been approved in 2019; an assessment of change in national and local context; and the other strategies and plans approved in the last two years, including the Recovery and Renewal Strategy.</p>			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				

<p><b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?</p>	✓			<p>No adverse impact is expected.</p> <p>The Strategy includes a specific priority and commitments to support everyone to reach their potential.</p>
<p><b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>	✓			<p>The Council Strategy aims to achieve a positive benefit to certain protected groups such as the elderly, disabled and children, particularly those from more challenging socio-economic backgrounds.</p> <p>The activities to deliver the strategy will be provided within the existing policy framework and will be provided by the individual service areas. The services will consider the measures and the impact of implementing the specific actions and conduct specific Equality Impact Assessments when required.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Impact:</b></p>	✓			<p>The Strategy is expected to have a positive impact on the environment as it prioritises maintaining West Berkshire as a green district.</p>
<p><b>Health Impact:</b></p>	✓			<p>The Strategy includes a number of commitments which aim to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents.</p>
<p><b>ICT Impact:</b></p>	✓			<p>The Strategy aims to support access to services through ICT and digital solutions.</p>
<p><b>Digital Services Impact:</b></p>	✓			<p>The Strategy aims to support access to services through ICT and digital solutions.</p>
<p><b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b></p>	✓			<p>The Strategy confirms that the priorities established in 2019 remain relevant and refreshes the commitments which will ensure their delivery.</p>

<b>Core Business:</b>	✓			The Strategy confirms the commitment to continue strong performance relating to the core business of the Council.
<b>Data Impact:</b>	✓			The Strategy includes a commitment to make better use of data.
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	<p>The Council considered, at their annual meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019, the feedback received following public consultation on the aims and priorities for improvement that are included/maintained into the updated Council Strategy 2019 – 2023.</p> <p>The feedback received from the Covid-19 Residents’ Survey (June 2020) has informed the refresh of the Strategy.</p> <p>As the delivery of the Council Strategy has progressed, a number of more specific strategies were produced and approved, following consultation and engagement with our residents. This informed the refresh of the Council Strategy.</p>			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 In May 2019, the Council approved a new four year Council Strategy, which contained specific priorities for improvement. The Council Strategy was subjected to public consultation.
- 4.2 Halfway through the lifecycle of the Council Strategy, a refresh is conducted to ensure that the priorities and commitments remain relevant. This includes an assessment of the progress made in delivering the priorities for improvement and the commitments initially agreed, consideration of the changing national and local context and of any feedback we have received from residents.
- 4.3 The two most significant changes in context are the Council declaring a Climate emergency in July 2019 and the Coronavirus Pandemic. The former was a natural evolution of the Council’s identification of needs and our plans, including prioritising the environment in the Council Strategy and detailing further our response in the Environment Strategy and associated delivery plans. The latter has impacted the entire world including over 200 residents in West Berkshire who tragically lost their lives, whilst others were presented with new health and wellbeing challenges. The Council worked with residents, community groups and partners to respond and minimise the effects of the Covid-19 crisis and to recover to pre-pandemic level (see Council Strategy Appendix 2. Covid-19: Supporting Our Communities). A Recovery Strategy was agreed by the Executive in June 2020. The refreshed Recovery and Renewal Strategy, which addressed in more detail the response to Covid-19, has informed the refresh of the Council Strategy and is due for approval in May 2021.

4.4 In terms of the broader economic, social and environmental context, West Berkshire remains in a relatively stronger position compared to other areas in the country and because of this, the District has been more resilient in response to the pandemic.

4.5 Council's employees, working together with residents, our communities and partner organisations, have ensured strong performance in delivery of the core business, whilst responding to Covid-19. The refreshed Council Strategy continues the focus on these core businesses for the next two years:

- Protecting our children
- Supporting education
- Ensuring the wellbeing of older people and vulnerable adults
- Maintaining our roads
- Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean
- Providing benefits
- Collecting Council Tax and Business rates
- Planning and housing
- Culture, leisure and libraries
- Economic Development

4.6 Good progress has been made in delivering the priorities for improvement and the associated commitments. This continued during the last year with some minor delays, whilst some of our workforce has been re-deployed to support residents, communities and business during Covid-19. Many of the commitments relating to the priorities for improvement included the approval of more detailed plans (e.g. the Environment Strategy, Housing Strategy, Early Help Strategy and Economic Development Strategy). The work to produce such specific strategies involved public engagement and consultation. The aims, priorities and objectives from these more specific strategies are reflected in this Council Strategy Refresh. They informed the updating of the Council Strategy commitments. However, as these developments were planned in the Council Strategy approved in 2019, the priorities for improvement remain relevant and are maintained for 2021 – 2023:

- Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes
- Support everyone to reach their full potential
- Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire
- Develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support and grow the local economy
- Maintain a green district
- Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

4.7 The attached Strategy provides the details about the plans for 2021 – 2023 to maintain the direction, set out two years ago, but adapting to the new context.

## 5 Supporting Information

The updated Council Strategy provides details about the commitments agreed initially, the progress made in the first two years of the Strategy, key details of change in context and commitments for the period ending March 2023 and is set out in Appendix B.

## 6 Other options considered

None.

## 7 Conclusion

The refreshed Council Strategy clearly articulates the progress that has been made in delivering the activities that support the Council's priorities for improvement and core business. The refreshed Council Strategy also proposes new projects and initiatives in support of the Council's priorities for improvement for the final two years of the Strategy, including strong links with the strategic framework already agreed and in particular with the updated Covid-19 Recovery and Renewal Strategy.

## 8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment

8.2 Appendix B – West Berkshire 2019-2023 Council Strategy: Refresh 2021

- Council Strategy Appendix 1. Council Strategy Delivery Plan

- Council Strategy Appendix 2. Covid-19: Supporting Our Communities

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### Background Papers:

Previous Council Strategy.

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Wards affected:** All Wards

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**Officer details:**

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**Document Control**

<b>Document Ref:</b>		<b>Date Created:</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Version:</b>	V 4 May 2021	<b>Date Modified:</b>	
<b>Author:</b>	Catalin Bogos		
<b>Owning Service</b>	Strategy and Governance / Performance, Research and Risk		

**Change History**

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1	04/05/2021	Version approved by the Council	
2			

## Appendix A

## Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

<b>What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:</b>	Approve the refresh of the Council Strategy 2019 - 2023
<b>Summary of relevant legislation:</b>	n/a
<b>Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes</li> <li>• Support everyone to reach their full potential</li> <li>• Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire</li> <li>• Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district</li> <li>• Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships</li> </ul>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name of Budget Holder:</b>	Catalin Bogos
<b>Name of Service/Directorate:</b>	Strategy and Governance Department
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Catalin Bogos
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	30 March 2021
<b>Version and release date (if applicable):</b>	

Is this a .... ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

<b>(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?</b>	
<b>Aims:</b>	The aim of the Strategy is to set out the aims and priorities for improvement that will be the focus of the council over the four years period ending 2023.

<b>Objectives:</b>	The Council Strategy is the highest level plan produced to set the strategic direction of the council for medium term and to inform more detailed planning at department and individual level.
<b>Outcomes:</b>	<p>The outcomes detailed in the strategy refer to improvements in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes</li> <li>• Support everyone to reach their full potential</li> <li>• Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire</li> <li>• Develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support and grow the local economy</li> <li>• Maintain a green district</li> <li>• Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits:</b>	<p>The primary beneficiaries are the residents and businesses in West Berkshire by being informed of the areas the Council will focus on to improve the services they receive.</p> <p>Council officers and partner organisations will be able to detail their plans based on the strategic direction set by the Council Strategy.</p>

<b>(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?</b>		
<b>Group Affected</b>	<b>What might be the effect?</b>	<b>Information to support this</b>
Age	The expected effect is that areas that require the most improvement receive the necessary focus of activity and resources.	Council Strategy 2015-2019 Responses to the consultation on the Council Strategy 2015-2019, Covid-19 Residents Survey and other consultations on strategies developed since 2019.
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		

<b>Further Comments:</b>
<p>There will be a positive benefit to certain protected groups such as the elderly, disabled, children particularly those from more challenging socio economic backgrounds.</p> <p>The activities to deliver the strategy will be provided within the existing policy framework and will be provided by the individual service areas. The services will consider the measures and the impact of implementing the specific actions and conduct specific Equality Impact Assessments when required.</p>

<b>(3) Result</b>	
<b>Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Strategy is specifically focused on addressing inequality not contributing to it.	
<b>Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No adverse impact is expected.	

<b>(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:</b>	
<b>EqIA Stage 2 required</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Owner of EqIA Stage Two:</b>	
<b>Timescale for EqIA Stage Two:</b>	

Name: Catalin Bogos

Date: 30/03/2021

Please now forward this completed form to Pamela Voss, Equality and Diversity Officer (pamela.voss@westberks.gov.uk), for publication on the WBC website.