

This Report will be made public on 12 October 2022

Report Number **C/22/52**

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 20 October 2022  
**Status:** Non key Decision  
**Responsible Officer:** Charlotte Spendley – Director of Corporate Services  
**Cabinet Member:** Cllr David Monk – Leader of the Council

**SUBJECT: Creating Tomorrow Together – Corporate Action Plan (2021-24)  
Progress Update on Actions**

**SUMMARY:** This report provides a progress update on work undertaken so far to deliver the high-level actions documented within the Council's Corporate Action plan that covers the three-year period (2021-24).

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The Council has a key role to play in making the district an even better place to live, work and visit. The action plan is designed to set out how the Council intends to deliver against the three year priorities defined within the corporate plan to ensure the primary needs of the district and residents are met
- It is essential that the Council has an action plan in place so that it can inform operational plans, financial plans, strategies and policies over the medium term.
- This report provides members with an update on our progress towards the three year (2021-2024) actions agreed.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note report C/22/52.
2. To note the Corporate Action Plan progress updates set out in Appendix 1.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's current corporate plan 'Creating Tomorrow Together' 2021-30 was adopted by Full Council on 24th February 2021 (Report ref: A/20/10). The plan provides a strategic direction to the Council for the nine years from its adoption in 2021 to the end date of 2030 and places a strong emphasis on a series of service priority actions to be delivered within the initial three-year period to 2024 that will support the district's recovery in the aftermath of the pandemic. The plan was developed with input from a cross party working group of members and further shaped through public consultation in order to refine the priorities and aspirations for the district over the plan period.
- 1.2 The Corporate Plan is built on four key service ambitions and six guiding principles that underpin the Council's long-term ambitions to ensure resilience and prosperity through the next decade. The service ambitions and their supporting 2030 visions are set out below:

Service Ambition	2030 Vision
<b>Positive Community Leadership</b>	Local leadership in community services will be recognised for the vital contribution in creating a sense of place, health and wellbeing. This will be a shared ambition with partners across our communities.  Local leadership will address many of the inequalities that exist between our communities and we will have improved access to services in our most deprived neighbourhoods. A strong and distinctive sense of place will prevail.
<b>A Thriving Environment</b>	We will be recognised as an outstanding place and known as a green exemplar council. Across the district, we will ensure excellent accessible open spaces for all. We will have invested in green infrastructure to enhance our superb natural environment and the council itself will generate net zero carbon emissions.
<b>A Vibrant Economy</b>	Folkestone & Hythe will have a thriving, distinctive and dynamic economy. It will have capitalised on major investment, will have responded positively to the structural challenges facing high streets, and will enjoy a diverse range of economic opportunities in its towns and rural areas. Building on its excellent connectivity it will attract more, higher value employment, driving aspiration and demand for skills.
<b>Quality Homes and Infrastructure</b>	Residents in Folkestone & Hythe will have better access to a wider choice of homes. New development will embrace high standards of sustainability and the district will be delivering planned, high-quality housing with the necessary infrastructure to meet identified need, anchored by an ambitious new Garden Town at Otterpool Park

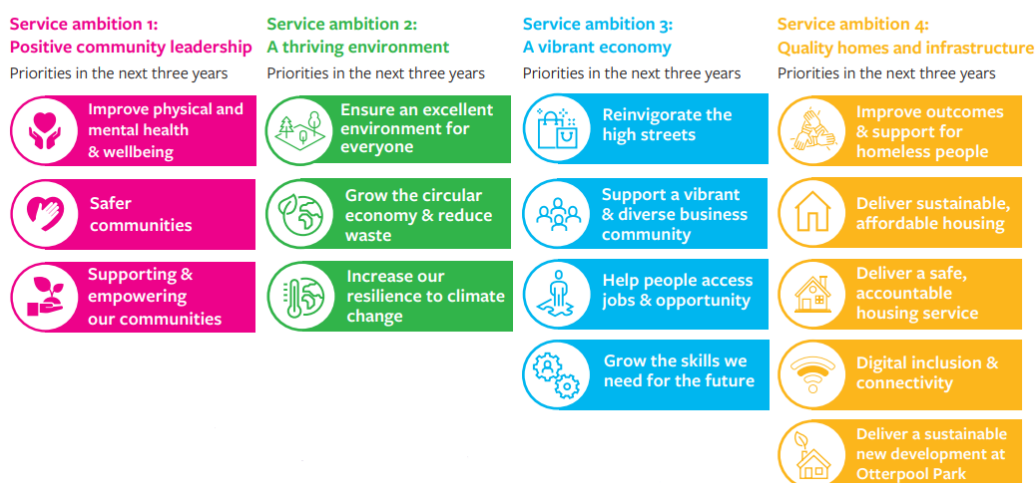
- 1.3 The Plan also adopted six Guiding Principles, which would apply to the approach taken by the Council in undertaking its duties and these are:

1. **Sustainable Recovery:** We will do all we can to ensure a strong recovery for the district from the effects of COVID.

2. **Locally Distinctive:** We will protect the special distinctive and diverse nature of our district - working with our key partners to enhance it.
3. **Greener Folkestone & Hythe:** We will encourage and create a more sustainable district consuming fewer natural resources.
4. **Transparent, Stable, Accountable & Accessible:** We will be financially sustainable and communicate effectively with our communities in an accessible way.
5. **Working Effectively with Partners:** We will engage with partners to understand the vital role they play and work collaboratively with them to ensure the best outcomes for our residents.
6. **Continuous Improvement:** We will embed a culture of continuous improvement, seeking feedback and being innovative and creative to find new ways to deliver services.

1.4 To ensure the Council begins delivery on its long-term strategic direction each of the four service ambitions set out within the plan have a number of priority areas identified within them and these priorities will be the focus of Council activity over the remainder of the three-year period to 2024. A summary of these priorities is set out below:

## Creating Tomorrow Together: Corporate Plan 2021-30



1.5 In order to support the delivery of the service ambitions and the three-year priorities, as set out above, a supporting Corporate Action Plan document was developed and formally adopted by Cabinet in October 2021 (report ref: C/21/40). This set out a series of high-level actions that the Council will work towards achieving under service priorities identified for three-year period to 2024. The high-level actions in the plan have identified associated milestones, timescales, owners and external stakeholders. The stakeholders are not an exhaustive list and as projects evolve and develop officers will continue to assess appropriate stakeholder engagement.

1.6 The development of the corporate action plan also provided an opportunity to refresh the approach to key performance indicators (KPIs) and identified a number of relevant KPIs for monitoring. These were adopted by members and formed the foundation of quarterly corporate performance reports provided to members of both the Finance & Performance Sub Committee

and Cabinet to enable scrutiny of council performance against strategic deliverables in accordance with the action plan.

- 1.7 The Corporate Action Plan is not only designed to demonstrate the key work the council will undertake to deliver against its identified priorities but provides a wider corporate focus for departmental service plans, key performance indicators and individuals' objectives annually, creating the essential 'golden thread' throughout the organisation as defined by the Council's Performance Management Framework.
- 1.8 The Corporate Action Plan will continue to be worked upon by officers for the remainder of its term to 2024.

## **2. Corporate Action Plan – Progress Update**

- 2.1 This report sets out the first 'work in progress' update against the high-level actions documented within the action plan since its adoption in October 2021. It should be noted that a number of new factors have emerged outside the remit of the action plan since it was adopted, including the ongoing cost of living crisis, decarbonisation requirements and a reduction in staffing resources that have posed an ongoing challenge to the delivery of the council's agreed priorities.
- 2.2 Action owners documented within the action plan were contacted in late August to provide their progress updates against the high-level actions assigned to them. The information provided by action owners set out in appendix 1 represent a series of work in progress updates and not a completed status report as the work of the action plan continues over the remainder of the three-year period to 2024, where it will be comprehensively reviewed alongside the Corporate Plan priorities. All progress documented within appendix 1 should be read in conjunction with quarterly corporate performance reports in order to provide the complete picture of overall performance.
- 2.3 Some of the update highlights of each theme within the action plan are as follows.
- 2.4 The first theme encompasses actions associated with **Positive Community Leadership** as follows:
  - i. **Secure a new health centre at FOLCA site:** Heads of Terms with the end user for new health facility were approved at Cabinet in September 2021 and design work for the new facility is going through process of sign off with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).
  - ii. **Build & open a new, modern leisure centre at Princes Parade:** Detailed design and construction procurement for the new leisure centre has now been completed. The signing of the contact for the main leisure centre is expected before the end of 2022. A separate contract and operating agreement for the new leisure centre have been agreed in draft form with its execution linked to the signing of main construction contract for the leisure centre. The build completion is now forecast for 2024.

- iii. **Implement the Play Area Strategy:** Work has been continuing to transfer strategic and non-strategic play areas to Town and Parish councils. Major improvements have been made to Cheriton Road Recreation Ground, Morehall Recreation Ground and a full refurbishment of Oak Drive Play area in St Mary's Bay have been undertaken through funding secured from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

As part of wider work under the strategy, a public consultation was undertaken between July and August 2022 on the proposal to develop a new Priority Play Area and associated services at East Cliff/ The Warren in Folkestone.

- iv. **Deliver new Coastal Destination Project at Coast Drive in Littlestone:** The project to bring forwards 108 new beach chalets, kiosk, toilets, water sports concession and improved parking is currently at the pre-planning and design stage. Consultants have now been employed to carry out environmental surveys, undertake detailed design and structural engineering. A planning submission for the project is due to be submitted towards the end of 2022 with works now intended to commence in Spring 2023.

- v. **Ensure our staff are appropriately trained:** All council staff are now required to complete mandatory safeguarding courses, both child and adult, as well as Prevent. Bespoke face to face training sessions were delivered to all grounds maintenance staff for the very first time earlier on in the year and key staff are further trained on specific courses, including Domestic Abuse, Modern Day Slavery and suicide awareness.

The council's policy on safeguarding was renewed in Autumn 2021 and approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Full Council. A safeguarding advice sheet for contractors has been updated, and work has commenced on creating a new safeguarding website for external use. The staff intranet has also been comprehensively updated with supporting guidance and documentation.

- vi. **Retaining the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation including compliance pluses for our work with vulnerable customers:** The accreditation was retained after the successful second surveillance visit was completed on 6 September 2021. All 15 compliance pluses (awarded in 2020 and 2021) were also retained, an additional 2 were awarded at the visit, bringing the total to 17, the highest number to date. Work is now underway for reapplication of the accreditation and the first surveillance visit is to take place in October 2022.

- vii. **Support vulnerable customers through wider welfare and outreach projects utilising intelligence, appropriate analytics and data to support a wider group of residents with targeted support:** The use of council data by the Welfare Team has enabled:

- 129 households to be identified since April 2022 for increased support which resulted in additional awards of council tax reduction to the value of £30,349.

- Financial Support Payments: Between April and July 2022 the Council have supported 179 households by providing payments to the value of £91,000 for their Council Tax charges (not Council Tax Reduction).
  - Discretionary Housing Payments: Between April and July 2022 the Council have supported 168 households to the value of £98,360 in support for additional rental related payments (not Housing Benefit).
- viii. **Develop a sustainable future for the community hub model of service delivery:** The Hubs are continuing to work across the district to support vulnerable people with ongoing welfare needs including signposting to services, loneliness/isolation befriending calls and dealing with emergency needs, for example food and fuel. The hubs are continuing to step up when new demands arise including: Ukraine support, Operation Brock, food poverty/cost of living interventions (UK Shared Prosperity Fund role) and District Food Network involvement. The council will continue to support the hubs in accessing funding opportunities to support their work as and when opportunities become available.

2.5 The second theme encompasses actions associated with **A Thriving Environment** as follows:

- i. **Develop a district wide Climate Strategy:** A project proposal for the District-wide Carbon Plan was agreed by Cabinet in March 2022. Since its agreement a Carbon Innovation Lab (CI-Lab) has been established with interested groups from the district to guide the work. A number of meetings of the CI-Lab have been held and they are beginning to draft up an outline of the plan with the timetable and format of the plan to be determined by the CI-Lab.
- ii. **Increase the number of green flag awards for recreational spaces:** A total of three green flags were retained for the Coastal Park, Royal Military Canal and Radnor Park. Building on this success, a fourth Green Flag for recreational space in the district was awarded to Kingsnorth Gardens in Folkestone during the 2021/22 year.
- iii. **Work with Kent County Council to progress the two schemes awarded funding under the Active Travel Part 2 scheme through to implementation:** Construction of the section of the Cinque Ports link at Dymchurch that was awarded funding under tranche two of the scheme is to begin mid-September 2022. Stakeholder consultation is also to be held towards the end of September 2022 to take forward design work on the Cheriton to Folkestone Central scheme (the second scheme awarded as part of the funding).
- iv. **Introduce EV charging points to district car parks:** The roll out of new EV charging points by the contractor Connected Kerb commenced in February 2022. A total of 59 EV charging points in 16 car parks have been completed so far. A further ten sites are to be commissioned by end of the year.

- v. **Minimise waste & usage for our estate:** The Carbon Action Plan agreed by Cabinet in February 2021 sets out a number of actions that the council will undertake (immediately, in the short-term and in the medium to long-term) to tackle emissions from the council's estate and operations. The following progress has been made on reducing the use of plastics and other office consumables:
- Use of plastic cups for water coolers have been stopped with plastic cups no longer being purchased once old stock has been phased out.
  - Cleaning solutions are now being bought in 5 litre bottles, including dish soap and hand soap.
  - The desk sanitisers are also being bought in a 5 litre bottles so that staff are able to dilute into refillable 750ml spray bottles.
- vi. **Roll out Street lighting LED upgrade project:** Work on upgrading the adoptable assets (321) is nearly complete. The adoptable assets are scheduled to be transferred to KCC in October 2022. Work on non-adoptable assets (723) is to commence in September 2022. 31% of the overall project is now complete with full completion scheduled for March 2023.

2.6 The third theme encompasses **A Vibrant Economy** as follows:

- i. **Folkestone Town Centre Place Plan:** The plan setting out the long-term vision for the town centre was completed and approved by Cabinet in September 2021. A supporting action plan to take forward the projects identified within the Place Plan is ongoing and a Levelling Up Fund (LUF) application was submitted by the council under the banner 'Folkestone – A Brighter Future project' in the summer. A decision from government on this application is expected by end October 2022.
- ii. **Improve incubation support for new businesses:** The new Romney Marsh Business Centre (RMBH) was opened in December 2021. A total of 2 offices have been occupied to date, with both occupants having applied to the RMBH grant scheme and been successful. The sum of £17,107 has been awarded from the scheme to date.
- iii. **Develop 5,802sqm new employment space at Bigginswood:** Officers have been successful in obtaining £1.15M from the Brownfield Release Fund under One Public Estate. The remediation contract for the site has been awarded and is expected to be completed in June 2023. At this point the site will be handed over to both the residential and commercial developers. The legal work on the sale contracts has commenced, with exchange of contracts expected this Autumn.
- iv. **FHDC local contracting policy:** Work has started on objectives set out within the council's procurement plan that outlines measures to increase local businesses participation and maximise climate and social value considerations in our tender process including: the publication of tenders on Kent Business Portal to encourage local businesses participation; a 5% weighting applied to net zero; and social value evaluation criteria as well as

collaboration with the council's legal team to incorporate low carbon emission clauses into the council's standard template agreements.

2.7 The fourth theme encompasses **Quality Homes and Infrastructure** as follows:

- i. **Identify new funding opportunities for the continuation of support services for vulnerable homeless people:** The Council continues to work with local partner agencies to assist people who are rough sleeping in the district, helping them to access accommodation and support services to enable them to move toward a more settled way of life. The local partnership includes Dover District Council, The Rainbow Centre, Porchlight and Serveco. The partnership has successfully secured ongoing funding from the Government to deliver a range of outreach and support services across the Folkestone & Hythe and Dover Districts.
- ii. **Deliver our Next Steps Accommodation Programme:** A total of four units with intensive support have been delivered to date. Work is ongoing to identify other potential suitable accommodation.
- iii. **Increase the supply of affordable homes for rent and low-cost home ownership:** In 2021/22, a total of 44 affordable homes were delivered by the Council and its partners. The number was under target due to impacts of the Covid pandemic which impacted on available labour and associated materials shortages. In Quarter 1 of this year, 33 additional affordable homes were provided in the district. This includes 17 homes for shared ownership purchase. Approximately 120 additional affordable homes are due to complete in the district during the 2022/23 year.
- iv. **Improve the condition of private sector housing across the district:** In 2021-22 a total of 287 private sector homes were improved in the district as a result of intervention by the Council. A further 77 private sector homes have been improved during Quarter 1 2022/23. Under the housing enforcement policy three civil penalty notices have been issued this year for non-compliance with improvement notices.
- v. **Develop the Housing Asset Management Strategy:** The new strategy covering the period 2022-27 was approved by Cabinet in January 2022 and sets out the vision for the HRA estate, new builds, and our response to carbon reductions along with supporting actions.
- vi. **Undertake full stock survey to ascertain current baseline position:** Phase 1 stock condition surveys were completed December 2021 and Phase 2 surveys were completed in March 2022 to establish a baseline position for the HRA housing stock. A draft 30 Year HRA Business Plan is currently under review and yet to be approved. The findings of the stock condition surveys undertaken will be incorporated into this business plan.
- vii. **HRA New build to include new technology that will reduce its carbon footprint and improve management of compliance:** Work is underway to deliver 30 additional council homes for rent and shared ownership purchase on the Highview site in Folkestone. The properties will benefit



from a range of technologies which will help to minimise the carbon footprint of the homes. The specification of these properties is to reflect carbon net zero in use properties with a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of 100.

- viii. **Adopt the Core Strategy Review:** The council's Core Strategy Review was found 'sound' by the planning Inspectors examining the plan in February 2022, and it was then adopted by full Council on 30 March 2022.
- ix. **Otterpool Park: Agree framework for the Strategic Land Agreement and Funding Agreements between Council and Delivery vehicle:** The Service Level Agreement (SLA) is completed. Funding agreement is in the process of being finalised. The next step is the completion of a Phase Delivery Strategy, and this work is underway. Funding agreements are being progressed and are in the final stage of completion.
- x. **Otterpool Park: Consider the proposed Planning Application:** Following submission of updated information, the planning application is undergoing the statutory public consultation process.

### 3. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

3.1 A summary of the perceived risks associated with the report are as follows:

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
The Council's High level actions set out within the action plan are not met.	High	Low	The actions have been developed by the departments and in turn should inform their service and individual team plans.  Monitor progress of the action plan and key performance indicators and take remedial action for those areas where targets and actions are unlikely to be achieved.

### 4. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

#### 4.1 Legal Officer's Comments (EC)

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

#### 4.2 Finance Officer's Comments (LK)

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

#### 4.3 Human Resource Officer comments (RB)

There are no direct Human Resources implications emanating from this report. The council's People Strategy has been created in order to support the achievement of the Corporate Action Plan and associated KPIs.

**4.4 Diversities and Equalities Implications (GE)**

There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report. The report is designed to provide an update on how the council is delivering against three-year priorities documented in the Corporate Action Plan.

**4.5 Climate Change Implications (AT)**

No direct implications arising from this report. The report provides an update on the Council's performance against the actions set out in the Corporate Action Plan (October 2021). The report does not propose new projects, policies or strategies but provides an update on actions that are already in progress. Some of the environmental projects that the council is currently undertaking are summarised in the report in paragraph 2.4, 'A Thriving Environment', and in Appendix 1, Service Ambition 2, 'A Thriving Environment'.

**5. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

Gavin Edwards, Performance & Improvement Specialist

Telephone: 01303 85 3436

Email: [gavin.edwards@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:gavin.edwards@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1:** Creating Tomorrow Together – Corporate Action Plan (2021-24) Progress Update on Actions (DRAFT)