

For general release

REPORT TO:	Scrutiny & Overview Committee 14 January 2020
SUBJECT:	STRATEGY FORWARD PLAN
LEAD OFFICER:	Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnership
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Tony Newman, Leader of the Council
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnership

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:

The ambition of the strategy framework is to strengthen the basis by which all strategies, policies and plans are created for the Council, and therefore it will support all priorities outlined within the [Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#).

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	The Committee is provided with an update on the development of a Strategy Forward Plan to inform their own Work Programme.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	The Committee is asked to note the development of the Strategy Forward Plan.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The policy team has undertaken an audit of the council's strategies, policies and plans, which has enabled the collation of these strategic documents into a register, with adoption and review dates. As a result, a 3 year work programme has been developed for strategy, policy and plan development with buy-in across the organisation.
- 1.2 It is intended that this forward plan will assist with Scrutiny & Overview Committee forward planning allowing room for Scrutiny to add value at the earliest possible stage of strategy development. In addition it is also expected that this will feed into the forward planning process for Cabinet meetings.

2. COUNCIL STRATEGY

- 2.1. The Council adopted 'Our Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022' in October 2018. This strategic document sets out the ambitions, key priorities and objectives for the organisation. This strategy highlights our vision and acts as our business plan for delivery until 2022. It speaks to a number of priorities that sit across all of our key areas of work, and is supported by a thorough delivery planning process.

- 2.2. Our longer-term vision will be set out in our Community Strategy moving forward. The Community Strategy will outline a clear strategic vision for the borough over the next ten years, and will provide detailed objectives to be delivered. Crucially, this will be a partnership document that will seek alignment to ensure a joined up approach to delivery across the borough.
- 2.3. Although our Community Strategy and Corporate Plan will outline the majority of our ambitions, the Council does require other strategies, policies and plans to guide delivery of services. In addition, these strategic documents are often created to support the delivery of a specific programme of work, and this may be decided or influenced by changes to operational practices, or a challenge or gap that is identified.
- 2.4. There are a number of additional reasons for the development of supporting strategies, policies and plans. Some documents are required by legislation (new or changes to existing), and others are defined by best practice. Some are needed to provide more detail about how we will work to deliver something. All of these will guide business improvements across all service areas, in addition to as the detail outlines in our business as usual plans.
- 2.5. The work that is underway to embed new ways of working will play a crucial role in the development of strategic documents moving forward. Our new ways of working allow us to operate with partner organisations more effectively, as well as working more closely with local communities and residents. Moving forward, any strategy, policy and plans that are created and implemented will be done so with these new ways of working in mind, in addition to a review of our existing strategy and policy.

3. STRATEGY REVIEW

- 3.1. As an organisation, there are a number of factors that influence our decisions to create, change and update strategy, policy and plans, including local, regional and national policies that all local authorities must respond to. We are mindful that our strategy must be flexible to adapt to the changing needs of our residents and communities, whilst remaining on top of new legislative changes, and most importantly, remaining ambitious in setting the direction for delivery across the borough.
- 3.2. It is important that, when developing strategic documents, consideration is given to our learning from previous approaches. Local government has seen significant change over recent years, particularly in terms of funding, statutory requirements and prioritisation from central government. This means that it is more important than ever to undertake regular reviews of the Council's strategies, policies and plans to maintain effective service delivery, with an ambitious mind-set that allows room for growth.
- 3.3. In order to develop a clear plan for regularly reviewing strategies, policies and plans the policy team has undertaken an audit of existing documents. This identified 81 strategies, 28 plans and 36 policies. These were reviewed with a particular focus on strategies and plans, and identified for keeping, reviewing or archiving. As a result, there is a significant reduction in the number of strategies, and the remaining strategies, plans and policies will provide a stronger 'golden thread', improve links between strategies, remove duplication and ensure a clearer focus on priorities.

4. STRATEGY AND POLICY FORWARD PLAN

- 4.1. Following the audit, the policy team developed a forward plan that responds to the need to regularly review existing strategies, plans and policies to be retained, as well as allowing room for new/ emerging strategies, and those that have already been identified for the future based on current and emerging need. This provides clearer oversight for our Cabinet and Executive Leadership Team, and allows for collaboration and join up to be central to our approach to strategy development.
- 4.2. Some key strategies will be led by the policy team, with service input, but the majority will be led by the relevant services, with policy input. The level of policy resource required will be agreed on a case by case basis and subject to change. This approach will improve the connection and coordination of our strategies and policies.
- 4.3. Within the forward plan, contingency capacity has been included to respond to any emerging issues or reviews that are not in the plan.
- 4.4. The current 3 year plan is attached as Appendix 1. This has been developed in agreement with the Cabinet, Executive Leadership Team and Directors. This forward plan will improve our approach to strategy and policy development and review, ensuring that these documents stay focused on corporate priorities, statutory requirements and best practice.
- 4.5. In developing the forward plan, the following definitions have also been developed to support future strategy and policy development:

Strategy is a high level overview of objectives opted from a number of plans, in order to achieve the organisational goals and objectives. Strategy is a high level plan of action with key measures of success and timeframe.

Policy is a set of common rules and regulations, which forms as a base to take day to day decisions. Policy is a principle of action.

Plan is the action base for delivery – it is the definition of how we will achieve our objectives, goals and ambitions at an operational level. It commits the organisation to action, with clear timescales and resourcing.

- 4.6. It is anticipated that the strategy and policy plan will assist with the forward plan for Scrutiny & Overview Committee.
- 4.7. The forward plan is indicative. It is recognised that there will be occasions when a strategy or policy needs to be brought forward for earlier review, or where it is necessary to delay the development of review to a later date. In addition it is also expected that this will feed into the forward planning process for Cabinet meetings.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Strategy & Policy Forward Plan

CONTACT OFFICER: Gavin Handford – Director of Policy & Partnerships

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Appendix 1: Strategy & Policy Forward Plan

2020:

Children, Young People & Families Plan
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy (merged with Community Safety Strategy)
Croydon Growth Zone Delivery Plan
Skills and Employment Action Plan
Air Quality Action Plan
Croydon's Sports and Physical Activity Strategy
Communications Plan or Strategy
Early Years Plan
South London Waste Plan (Sutton lead)
Communities Strategy
Equalities Strategy
Autism Strategy
Housing Strategy
Homelessness Strategy

2021:

Health and Wellbeing Strategy
Corporate Plan 2022-2026
Croydon Carers Atrategy (to become a plan)
SEND Strategy
Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

2022:

Local Implementation Plan (LIP)
Croydon Cycling Strategy (to become a plan)
Library Plan (review)
Housing Asset Management Plan
Digital Strategy
Internal Audit Strategy
Culture Plan
VCS Strategy