

THE MINUTE RELATING TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET FROM THE MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 16 JANUARY 2020

JOS/19/21 CORPORATE PLAN OUTPUTS

- 51.1 The Chair clarified to Members the scrutiny process for the Outputs that supported the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Members of the Committee were to take a high-level view of the Outputs and consider them in line with the Corporate Plan's six priorities, agreed by the two Councils in October 2019. The Committee would not be scrutinising details such as individual programme dates, nor considering the aspirations of political groups.
- 51.2 Councillor Morley, the Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council and Councillor Ward, the Leader of Babergh District Council, then introduced the Report.
- 51.3 Councillor Morley said that these outputs supported the delivery of the six strategic priorities in the Joint Corporate Plan, agreed by the respective Councils in October.

She and Councillor Ward believed that their successful delivery would take the Districts a long way towards realising the vision for Babergh and Mid Suffolk to be 'Places with great communities, with bright and healthy futures, that everybody was proud to call home.'

She said that each of the six priorities are supported by their own strategies, with the Environment Strategy currently under development and being influenced by the Member Working Group and the Well-Being Strategy scheduled for development in the coming months. The Economic Development Strategy was also being updated.

She emphasised that the outputs identified at this stage were not exhaustive and that the Cabinets expected to add to these over the next few years.

She also recognised that there was a lot of important 'Business As Usual' activity that contributed to the six strategic priorities, but was not specifically referenced in the Outputs. That was because the listed Outputs focussed on projects that were new and of particular strategic importance and needed to move forward in a new direction or required particular focus for other reasons.

Business 'As Usual' work would, however, continue to be important and would form part of the monitoring and reporting against the corporate indicators.

She said that in order to achieve the strategic outcomes, the administration knew how important it was to have the right resources in place. Where appropriate, the Growth & Efficiency Fund or, in Babergh, the Transformation Fund would be used. Mid Suffolk were also setting aside £500k for Climate Change initiatives to support activities that would emerge from the Member working group.

Councillor Morley also recognised the role of effective Programme and Project Management in the successful delivery of these outputs and was pleased at the progress that Officers had been making to embed this approach.

She said that they wanted every officer to understand their role in delivering the Corporate Priorities and Outputs.

There would therefore be a 'golden thread' from the Councils' Corporate Priorities and Service Plans running through to each staff member's personal objectives. Towards this end, there would be a full refresh of Service Plans and individuals' objectives and personal development plans in February and March this year.

The organisation's annual Learning & Development Plan would also ensure that teams have the right skills to deliver these outputs.

Councillor Ward then continued.

He said that he and Councillor Morley also appreciated the importance of all Members being equipped with the skills and knowledge consistent with their respective roles to support the achievement of the corporate priorities.

Towards this end a leadership development programme for the two Cabinets were being commissioned. The Leaders also strongly encouraged all Members to make use of both local Member development opportunities, as well as those provided by the Local Government Association (LGA). The Member Development Working Group was currently considering what the 2020 programme should prioritise and would welcome feedback from all Members.

He said that monitoring and reporting on the delivery of the Corporate Plan's outputs would take place in a number of ways, including through the quarterly performance reports to Cabinet.

Finally, he hoped that this forward view of key projects for the next four years, would enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to identify topics for further exploration well in advance, when developing their own forward plans.

- 51.4 The Corporate Plan's Outputs would be presented to both Cabinets in February.
- 51.5 Councillor Welham queried the outputs from 2019/20 regarding the timeline and why some of the outputs which he thought were completed were included in the Corporate Plan Outputs. He asked how outputs were measured against performance and how support would be provided for the projects.
- 51.6 Councillor Ward responded that projects for the whole of 2019/20 were reflected in the Outputs to provide a full picture or to show that they were phase one of a longer-term project. He explained that each of the six strategic priorities, which the Outputs supported, would have performance measures that would be integrated into the performance framework. He said that in some areas the Outputs were not easily quantifiable or measurable, such as communications.
- 51.7 Councillor Welham asked a further question regarding business areas which were not measurable such as support for external projects. He gave the example of support for the Museum for East Anglian Life (MEAL) which was to become a national food museum. He wondered how this would be measured.
- 51.8 The Chief Executive responded that the narrative against at least 17 Outputs indicated that they required support. These were often projects of key strategic importance for

the Districts, and although led by third parties, they benefitted from support from the Council to help them achieve their ambitions.

- 51.9 In response to Councillor Welham's and Mellen's questions on how to measure success of outputs without a set time frame for each project, Councillor Morley responded that outputs for year one already had detailed milestones. Over the next few months, the same detail would be drawn up for the projects scheduled for 2020-23 and resources allocated. Programme Boards, chaired by the Strategic Director, had already been set up to monitor the progress of the projects that delivered the Outputs. There would be quarterly reporting to Cabinet.
- 51.10 The Strategic Director said that detailed project management plans would form the basis for the projects and that approximately 50 Officers had received project management training to support this process.
- 51.11 Members continued discussing the timelines and how to measure outputs and outcomes.
- 51.12 Councillor McCraw summarised that the Corporate Plan Outputs document was a high-level document and a tool to be used by Cabinet, the Senior Leadership Team and Officers. Each project required a lot of detail, which eventually had to be translated for Members and Officers.
- 51.13 Councillor Muller suggested that a Gant chart using red, amber and green indicators, were implemented to achieve performance measures. Kathy Nixon said that this approach was already integrated.
- 51.14 Councillor McCraw reminded Members that although the Councils should not be complacent, many of the projects were already underway and had timeframes in place.
- 51.15 Councillor Welham agreed but still felt that he had expected to see projects with performance measures. He was concerned that the updates would not be accessible to the public, especially if updates would be provided at Cabinet briefings.
- 51.16 Councillor Ward responded that Internal Audit and the Joint Audit and Standards Committee would form part of the process in relation to risk management and that the performance metrics and updates on the actual delivery of the projects would all be available to the public.
- 51.17 He continued by explaining that the Corporate Plan Outputs also contained the aspirations of the Councils and what the Councils wanted to achieve in the future for their communities.
- 51.18 Members continued discussing the task groups, timelines and how to measure outcomes.
- 51.19 Councillor Scarff queried the Environment Outputs in relation to car parking in Stowmarket and asked for further details.
- 51.20 The Strategic Director explained that this was the vision for parking but that this would be a multi-disciplinary project, to which a consultant would be brought in to plan the project, before being developed between the local community and Public Realm.

- 51.21 The Strategic Director clarified further that the Corporate Plan would have a strategy and an action plan for each of the six strategic priorities. The action plans would be supported by project plans to deliver the Outputs. The strategies would also contain the outcome measures. The Councils' performance management framework would be updated with revised indicators for 2020/21 onwards to take account of the new Corporate Plan, its strategies and outputs. She suggested that these plans could be scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the future.
- 51.22 Councillor McCraw agreed with the Strategic Director, as the Corporate Plan was too high-level for scrutiny. The Senior Leadership Team and the Cabinets were to work on the priorities over the next three years and that Overview & Scrutiny would have a role in this process.
- 51.23 Councillor Scarff suggested that Overview & Scrutiny should receive the different documents for each of the six priorities, when they were completed and that the Corporate Plan and Outputs should be reviewed by Overview & Scrutiny in a year's time. However, he asked how Members in the future would be involved with the plans.
- 51.24 The Strategic Director outlined that the regular All-Member Briefing sessions could cover the different strategic priority themes. She said that there were already a number of cross-party Member working groups in place to support the delivery of a number of the outputs. For example, for the Local Plan, the Grants Review, the Climate Change work and Needham Lake Project.
- 51.25 Members debated what to recommend to Cabinet for the Corporate Plan Outputs and it was generally felt that the Outputs and the attached report should be made available to all Members in a suitable format and should include explanation of the relationship between the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Outputs
- 51.26 Various options were explored on how to get Members involved in the working groups and Member Development Sessions, as the uptake were not always high.
- 51.27 Some Members were concerned that not all Members felt they had ownership of the development of the Corporate Plan and their involvement in the detail would be essential.
- 51.28 It was agreed that all Members and Officers needed to know what the Councils were aspiring to achieve and working towards. This had to be communicated in different ways, including the website, updates through Member briefings and through Overview & Scrutiny.
- 51.29 It was suggested that the Leaders and officers were tasked with finding ways to engage with Members to encourage involvement with the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Plan Outputs, and to find ways to describe the relationship between the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Outputs to all Members in a suitable format.
- 51.30 Councillor McCraw proposed this recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Scarff.

By a unanimous vote.

It was resolved: -

That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee urges Cabinet to find a range of methods to engage with all Members to understand the linkage between the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Outputs and explain the role of Member Working Groups in developing strategies and actions plans.