



**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 4 NOVEMBER 2021**

ENGAGEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Strategic Plan (2022-26), a copy of which is appended to this report. A 12-week public consultation is set to commence on 1 November 2021, subject to approval being given by the Cabinet at its meeting on 26 October 2021.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Strategic Plan is complemented by the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which sets out a financial plan supporting the priorities in the Strategic Plan, as well as by the Strategic Change Portfolio which outlines how the Council will transform local services in response to national and local drivers for change whilst seeking to maintain or improve outcomes. The Plan is also underpinned by Departmental Business Plans and strategies which provide further detail on how the Council will deliver the aims and actions in the Plan.
3. On 6 December 2017, the County Council approved the current Strategic Plan (2018-22). This Plan was based on five aspirational outcomes which described the County Council's vision for Leicestershire. On 15th May 2019, the County Council declared a climate emergency. On 8 July 2020, the County Council approved a revised version of the Plan (still to expire in 2022) to reflect the Council's declaration of a climate emergency, with recognition that it would need to be revisited as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Background

4. The Strategic Plan sets out the Council's ambitions and priorities for the next four years. It outlines what it aims to achieve and how it intends to do it.
5. The current Plan is due to expire in 2022. Work has been undertaken to review and refresh the Plan and to re-assess the Council's strategic priorities, particularly in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Plan Structure and Contents

6. The draft Plan (2022-26) is based on five strategic outcomes which describe the Council's vision for Leicestershire. Each outcome includes four or five sub-outcomes which will need to be achieved to deliver the outcome.
7. The outcomes are broad and aspirational, reflecting the County Council's significant and wide-ranging responsibilities and capacity to influence. Therefore, to ensure that the Plan provides a clear strategic direction for the Council, it also includes specific aims and actions to deliver each outcome over the next four years.
8. The Plan also includes a section on 'enabling services' which is intended to highlight the contributions of the County Council's corporate functions (e.g. Finance, Legal, HR) to outcome delivery as well as sustaining good governance. This is followed by a section on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which highlights the Council's aims and actions to maintain a balanced budget whilst protecting frontline services and weathering the coronavirus crisis. Finally, there is a section on the Strategic Change Portfolio, summarising the aims and actions of the four key pillars of this internal transformation programme.

Strategic Outcomes

9. The outcomes, which are detailed below, are intended to broadly reflect the remits of departments and the portfolios of lead members. However, successful delivery of the Plan will rely upon departments sharing ownership of the outcomes in addition to the outcomes being reflected in all relevant Council plans and strategies.

- 'Clean, Green Future' Outcome: *Reflects the need to protect and enhance the environment and tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable resource usage.*

Sub-outcomes:

- People act now to tackle climate change;
- Nature and the local environment are valued, protected and enhanced;
- Resources are used in an environmentally sustainable way;
- The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally-friendly.

- 'Great Communities' Outcome: *Aims to ensure Leicestershire has thriving, inclusive communities in which people support each other and take responsibility for their local area.*

Sub-outcomes:

- Diversity is celebrated and people feel welcome and included;
- People participate in service design and delivery;
- Communities are prepared for and resilient to emergencies;
- Cultural and historical heritage are enjoyed and conserved;
- People support each other through volunteering.

- ‘Improving Opportunities’ Outcome: *Aims for all children to get the best start for life and to have access to a good quality education. Also aims for everyone to have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.*

Sub-outcomes:

- Every child gets the best start for life;
 - Every child has access to good quality education;
 - Families are self-sufficient and enabled to be resilient;
 - Everyone is able to aim high and reach their full potential.
- ‘Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure’ Outcome: *Aims to ensure that we build a productive, inclusive and sustainable economy at the cutting edge of science, technology and engineering. Also reflects the need for our infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing population and economy.*

Sub-outcomes:

- There is close alignment between skills supply and employer demand;
- Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable growth;
- Leicestershire is an attractive place where businesses can flourish;
- Economic growth delivers increased prosperity for all;
- Leicestershire has the right homes in the right places to meet needs.

- ‘Keeping People Safe and Well’ Outcome: *Aims to ensure the people of Leicestershire have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing. Also reflects the need to ensure people are safe and protected from harm.*

Sub-outcomes:

- People are safe in their daily lives;
- People enjoy long lives in good health;
- People at the most risk are protected from harm;
- Carers and people with care needs are supported to live active, independent, and fulfilling lives.

Governance

10. The Council’s current Strategic Plan (2018-22) is also based on five strategic outcomes. Its implementation has been led by Outcome Advisory Boards (OABs) responsible for supporting alignment of Departmental Business Plans with the outcomes. A review of this approach identified that the OABs have not influenced Business Plans and seem to have lacked clarity on their specific roles and priorities. This has led to the increased focus in the revised Strategic Plan on defining specific aims for each outcome, as well as the development of a new governance model.
11. The revised model is based on Outcome Boards, which will no longer aim to advise Departments on the contents of their Business Plans. These Outcome Boards will instead focus primarily on monitoring the Council’s progress in delivering the aims of their respective outcomes, providing six-monthly reports to Corporate

Management Team to highlight key achievements, challenges and priorities. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees will continue to receive quarterly updates on performance for the areas they cover. The Outcome Boards will also have the capacity to review and inform Council strategies whilst they are being developed, to help ensure that they reflect the aims of their respective outcomes.

Highways and Transport

12. Highways and Transport services are recognised in the Strategic Plan as a key enabler of economic growth, net-zero carbon emissions, improved public health and community resilience. The outcome in the Plan with the most direct links with the Council's Highways and Transport services is the 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure' outcome. However, the aims and actions of Highways and Transport services are also embedded throughout the Plan.
13. For example, the '*Clean, Green Future*' outcome includes, for sub-outcome 5.1 'People act now to tackle climate change and protect the environment' an action for the Council to work with partners to expand zero and ultra-low emissions vehicles and charging and promote sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling. Similarly, sub-outcome 5.4 'The economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly' includes actions to encourage and support active and sustainable travel options, where appropriate, by learning from best practice and encouraging the uptake and use of electric vehicles and micro-mobility as appropriate, including through provision of infrastructure. Further, the '*Great Communities*' outcome includes, for sub-outcome 6.3 'Communities are prepared for and resilient to emergencies' a commitment for the Council to maintain its Resilient Highways Network, targeting works to ensure that traffic is kept moving despite disruptive events (e.g. severe weather).
14. The '*Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure*' outcome includes the following aims and actions of relevance to Highways and Transport services.

Sub-outcome 8.2 'Leicestershire has the infrastructure for sustainable growth'

Aim: Infrastructure capacity and capability supports growth and net zero carbon emissions.

Actions include:

- We will continue to provide safe, suitably maintained highways that support and encourage new housing development and economic growth and employ a flexible approach to reviewing, amending, and developing the network to reflect changing travel demand and traffic patterns.
- We will maximise opportunities from technological innovations; utilising evidence gathered on the Major Road Network and from key radial routes to support end to end journey planning and better traffic management.
- We will continue to press Government for long-term funding streams to help us maintain our highway assets and support passenger transport services.
- We will work in partnership with local bus operators to promote and champion the provision of affordable, frequent, and high-quality passenger transport services and support with the recovery of the passenger transport market following the Covid-19 pandemic by identifying opportunities to provide access to essential services in the most cost effective and efficient way

- We will engage with the freight and logistics sector, to better understand the needs of the sector and ensure that schemes are developed which support the efficient movement of freight into, around, and out of Leicestershire
 - We will work with partners through Midlands Connect to invest in strategic road and rail improvements to reduce congestion, improve journey times and support housing growth (e.g. Midlands Rail Hub proposal - rail infrastructure improvements to provide better rail links across the Midlands).
 - We will continue engaging with HS2 Ltd to ensure that Leicester and Leicestershire's interests are protected and/or advanced throughout construction.
 - We will encourage and support active and sustainable travel options, where appropriate, by learning from best practice and encouraging the uptake and use of electric vehicles and micro-mobility as appropriate, including through provision of infrastructure.
15. The '*Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure*' outcome also includes aims and actions to maintain confidence and momentum in the development of strategic sites and the Freeport. It includes recognition that focusing development in major strategic locations will enable the Council to plan for new housing and employment along with new and improved roads and public transport. Sub-outcome 8.5 'Leicestershire has the right homes in the right places to meet needs' also includes an action for the Council to explore ways to secure financial contributions through development to support essential infrastructure such as highway capacity.

Consultation and Timetable for Decisions

16. Development of the Plan has so far included engagement with lead officers for supporting strategies and the current (2018-22) outcomes, Department Management Teams, Corporate Management Team and Mrs. P. Posnett CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations.
17. Subject to Cabinet approval at its meeting on 26 October 2021, a 12-week public consultation on the Plan will begin on 1 November 2021 and run until 21 January 2022. As part of the consultation all of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Commission (from 1 -17 November), key partnership boards such as the Children and Families Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board (17 and 25 November respectively) will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft Plan.
18. Residents, community groups and partner organisations will also be invited to provide feedback on the draft Plan through a variety of methods including a public survey and meetings in which the Plan will be presented and reviewed.
19. Findings from the consultation will be used to inform development of the final Plan and it is intended that, in March 2022, a report will be presented to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration and then to the Cabinet presenting the outcome of the consultation and seeking agreement for the revised draft Plan to be submitted to the County Council for approval on 18 May 2022.

Resource Implications

20. All actions within the Plan are from existing service/business plans and strategies. As such, there should not be any additional resource investment required to deliver the Plan beyond that which has already been approved.
21. However, as referenced in Section 11 of the Plan ('Monitoring Outcome Delivery'), officer resources will be required to monitor delivery of the Plan and ensure that the strategic outcomes are reflected in and supported by all relevant underpinning Council plans and strategies. These tasks will be carried out by Outcome Boards, consisting of representatives from departments and corporate services. As delivery of the Plan will require continued collaboration with partner services, representatives from the Outcome Boards will interact with relevant partnership boards to monitor outcome delivery and promote integration of strategies.
22. The number of Outcome Boards has been reduced following a review of outcome delivery arrangements. Therefore, fewer officer resources will be required than have been utilised to monitor and support delivery of the current (2018-22) Plan.
23. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the Plan and will have a further opportunity to comment following the public consultation (prior to the March 2022 Cabinet meeting).

Conclusions

24. It is recommended that the Committee provides its views on the draft Strategic Plan (2022-26) as set out in the Appendix, including the content highlighted in this report.

Background papers

[Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan \(2018-2022\)](#) (Previous Plan)

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

25. None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

26. A screening assessment of the Strategic Plan concluded that a full impact assessment is not required. The Strategic Plan is a high-level document which reflects the content of existing Council plans and strategies in order to set out a clear summary of the Council's overall ambitions and delivery approach; it does not include new actions which could have Equality and Human Rights Implications.
27. The Plan will, however, have a positive impact as it promotes Equality and Human Rights, primarily by including, within the section on the 'Great Communities' outcome (see sub-section 6.1), specific aims and actions to deliver the sub-outcome: 'diversity is celebrated, and people feel welcome and included'. This sub-outcome highlights issues around community cohesion and hate crime along with specific actions which

the Council will deliver over the next four years to address these issues. Equality and Human Rights are also embedded throughout the Plan.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

Crime and Disorder Implications

28. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report. The Plan promotes community safety by including, within the section on the 'Keeping People Safe and Well' outcome (see sub-sections 9.1 and 9.2 of the appendix), specific aims and actions to deliver the sub-outcomes 'people are safe in their daily lives' and 'people at the most risk are protected from harm'.

Environmental Implications

29. The Plan raises the profile of environmental issues by including, within the section on the 'Clean, Green Future' outcome, aims and actions to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss and promote sustainable resource usage. Aims to ensure infrastructure supports the transition to net zero carbon emissions are also reflected in the section on the 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure' outcome (see sub-section 8.2 of the appendix).

Appendices

Appendix: Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan (2022-26) **(Revised Plan)**

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