

## Policy & Finance Committee 11 April 2022

**Title:** Town Council Five Year Plan & Objectives 2019-2024 review

**Purpose of the Report:**

To provide a reminder of background context in respect of the development of the Five Year Plan & Objectives 2019-2024 and considerations in respect of its review.

**Contact Officer:**

Mark Saccoccio, Town Clerk  
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<b>Corporate Objective/s</b>	LLTC Five Year Plan – Aim 2: To recognise and embrace the growth of our community and to seek to influence the local authority and partners to ensure adequate infrastructure provision.	
<b>Implications:</b>		
<b>Financial</b>	Yes	Funding for objectives primarily as set out in the Council's Five Year Financial Plan.
<b>Human Resources</b>	No	
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>	Yes	Objectives delivered through annual committee work plans alongside delivery of core operations and planned projects/activities.
<b>Procedural/Legal</b>	Yes	LLTC is eligible to use the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011).
<b>Risk/Health and Safety</b>	No	
<b>Environmental Aims</b>	Yes	Some objectives are linked to environmental and sustainability agendas.

### 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Should the Committee be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 Firstly, to consider objectives 1-10 of the Town Council's Five Year Plan and Objectives which are primarily within the remit of this Committee and to consider recommending any changes to the current adopted Plan to Council (see Appendix A)

- 1.2 **Secondly, to consider the recommendations made by other standing committees in respect of objectives 11-48 of the Five Year Plan (see paragraphs 3.4-3.6 and appendices B and C).**
- 1.3 **Thirdly, to consider any proposals for new, additional objectives to be added to the Five Year Plan & Objectives 2019-2024.**
- 1.4 **To consider overall recommendations to Council in respect of the Town Council's Five Year Plan and Objectives 2019-2024, taking into account the considerations set out within the report and including any recommendations, if appropriate, regarding allocation of financial and human resources to deliver the Council's objectives.**

## **2 BACKGROUND/CONTEXT**

- 2.1 In 2007, the Town Council published its Big Plan for the town following months of extensive public consultation. The Big Plan was intended as “a comprehensive statement of improvements local people would like to see in the town over the next twenty years”. The Plan was divided into 14 areas including planning, green infrastructure, traffic and transport, health and social care, town centre, sport and leisure, culture, children and young people. It summarised existing infrastructure, issues in the town, planned developments and outlined 300 proposals (42 in respect of traffic and 48 in respect of greening), including examples such as:

“improve access between the town and surrounding parishes”

“provide safe drop zones close to local schools”

“promote the provision of a local child development centre”

“secure a reduction in the incidence of vandalism”

Some 2,500 local people took part in the development of the Big Plan.

- 2.2 An updated Big Plan II was published in 2011 as the town plan for 2011-2017. The 14 areas became 13, with education and jobs merged into one category. Big Plan II carried forward 80 proposals including many from Big Plan, which were considered in greater depth by a sub-committee during 2012-2013.
- 2.3 Towards the end of the designated lifespan of Big Plan II, the Town Council began to consider next steps. A report to Council on 11 January 2016 summarised that 29 Big Plan II proposals had been completed, 10 remained ongoing and 41, while supported, could not ultimately be delivered without the involvement of other parties.
- 2.4 As a result of this analysis, the Council resolved to change its approach by creating its own Three Year Plan for 2015-2018, focusing on 41 projects and objectives which it could deliver within its own finances, resources and legal powers. To underpin a delivery focused agenda, a 5 Year Financial Plan was created; its purpose to provide clarity in the way projects were to be funded. In

doing so, to forecast with greater accuracy the impact capital spend projects would have on council funds.

- 2.5 This change in approach led to the successful delivery of a number of goals over the relatively short three-year period, with examples including:
- Expanding the reach and scope of the TACTIC centre through a hub and spoke model
  - Establishing a thriving Best Bar None scheme to support the night time economy
  - Implementing a range of cemetery service improvements including a fully self-funded mausoleum
  - Supporting organisations providing services to young people in the town with the £150k Youth Promise grant
  - Moving towards largely paperless meetings through investment in technology
- 2.6 The success of the Plan for 2015-2018, with many objectives achieved, led to the development of the next Town Council Plan for 2019-2024. This was intended to be a living document but one which provided a framework for the next Council administration. Having scoped out the overarching principles of the plan, resident feedback was sought through a face-to-face survey conducted in the autumn of 2018.
- 2.7 Following approval by the public of the four areas of focus, the Plan for 2019-2024 was adopted in January 2019. Despite the impact of the pandemic over the last eighteen months, some 11 of the 49 projects have been completed with several others underway. Examples include:
- the creation of a town ranger service
  - town centre wi-fi (including footfall monitoring)
  - creation of the living history trail
  - investment in outdoor gym equipment within our parks
  - refurbishment of Pages Park pavilion
  - expansion of the memorialisation services
  - delivery of a Changing Places pod facility in Parson's Close
  - defining a customer services strategy
  - upgrade of cctv to our parks
  - renewed the Council's Gold accreditation status as an exemplar council within the parish council sector
  - the declaration of a climate emergency
- 2.8 In recognition that more strategic, larger scale projects and aspirations could not be delivered by the Town Council alone, the Partnership Project List (based on the previous evidence from Big Plan and the later 2018 survey) was later developed in 2019 and endorsed by the Town Council in September 2020. This has recently been reviewed and a revised document adopted on 31 January 2022.

2.9 In September 2019 the Five Year Plan and Objectives was reviewed by Policy and Finance Committee and by Council. The below was agreed, but some objectives were impacted by the delays arising from the Covid-19 pandemic:

2020-2021

- Town Ranger service *Now in place following restructure*
- Drinking water fountains *Deferred due to pandemic*
- Changing Places facility in Parson's Close Recreation Ground *Delivered*
- Additional memorialisation options *Delivered*
- Scoping work for older people's projects *Delivered and workstreams now added to 2021-22 and 2022-23 as endorsed by the responsible committee*

2021-2022

- Inclusive adventure playground *Project underway*
- Consideration of overflow car parking at Linslade Memorial Playing Fields and Garden of Remembrance *Options for parking enforcement were being explored with the local authority with a view to determining if additional parking capacity is really needed*
- Projects for young people *Survey undertaken in Autumn 2021*
- Projects for older people *(delivery underway into 2022-23)*

2022-2023

- An additional mausoleum, subject to interest *(self-funding)*
- Continued delivery of projects for older people *(£50k allocated)*
- Delivery of projects for young people resulting from the 2021 survey *(£25k allocated; some expenditure agreed but further consultation work suggested)*

The remaining projects were deemed longer-term (post-2022).

2.10 Provision for objective delivery was made in the Five Year Financial Plan, last updated November 2021 as below:

Future Projects	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Totals
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	
<b>Democratic and Central Services</b>						
IT Provision	2,916		7,500	25,000		38,332
<b>Grounds and Environmental Services</b>						
Playground Refurbishments	53,422	37,000	37,000	37,000	37,000	278,747
Open Spaces Improvements	79,496					
New Play Equipment	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	
Parsons Close Adventure Playground						0
CCTV	40,000					40,000
Cemetery Chapel & Lych Gate				125,000		0
Drinking Water Fountains	25,000					25,000
Potential Youth Capital Project *			250,000			250,000
<b>Cultural and Economic Services</b>						
Living History Trail	11,608					11,608
Pigeon Project	40,000					40,000
Older Persons Project	50,000	30,000				80,000
Younger Persons Project	25,000	25,000				50,000
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>372,442</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>339,500</b>	<b>232,000</b>	<b>82,000</b>	<b>813,687</b>
<b>External Funding (PWLB)</b>						<b>0</b>
<b>Budget Requirement</b>	<b>372,442</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>339,500</b>	<b>232,000</b>	<b>82,000</b>	<b>813,687</b>

\* In accordance with Objective 45 of the 5 Year Plan which will be subject to future parish engagement

- 2.11 In July 2021, approximately half way through the lifespan of the Five Year Plan, proposed updated wording was approved by Policy & Finance Committee. The current version can be viewed on the Town Council website here: <https://www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk/town-council-objectives/>

### 3. UPDATE

- 3.1 At its meeting held 29 November 2021, Council received a document presented by the Liberal Democrat group and intended to prompt discussion of whether the existing Five Year Plan should be abbreviated and priorities assigned beyond those already outlined in the five year financial plan.
- 3.2 Council made the following resolution (Minute reference 276):

**RESOLVED that the revised Five-Year Plan Objectives as submitted by Councillors Owen and Goodchild be supported as a basis for review at main committees and brought subsequently back to Council.**

- 3.3 The Grounds & Environmental Committee, Cultural & Economic Committee and Planning & Transport Committee reviewed the existing adopted Plan and the proposed amendments at meetings held during March 2022.

- 3.4 At its meeting on 6 March 2022, the Grounds & Environmental Committee made the following recommendation (minute reference 164/GE):

*After discussion it was agreed that completed objectives could be shaded in a different colour so it was obvious they were no longer being worked on. It was also requested that where possible, objectives be stated in greater detail in terms of how they would be delivered and measured.*

**RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee that no changes be made to objectives 28-48 in the Council's Five Year Plan and Objectives, other than the addition of some detail/clarification to objectives where possible.**

- 3.5 At its meeting held 9 March 2022, the Planning & Transport Committee made the following recommendation (minute reference 280/P):

**RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee to consider proposed amendments to objectives 11-16 of the Five Year Plan and Objectives as set out in the attached document (see Appendix B).**

- 3.6 At its meeting held 13 March 2022, the Cultural & Economic Committee made the following recommendation (minute reference 128/CE):

*It was generally agreed that objectives remained ongoing and should not be deleted. Following discussion, a number of proposed amendments were recommended to be put forward to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration.*

**RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee to consider proposed amendments to objectives 17-27a of the Five Year Plan and Objectives as set out in the attached document (see Appendix C).**

*The Committee discussed two proposed additional objectives. It was felt that jobs for young people was referenced in the TACTIC work plan and that the Good Neighbour scheme already existed (known locally as Helping Hands). It was suggested that these could be given further consideration by the Policy and Finance Committee if additional detail could be provided by the Liberal Democrat group.*

- 3.7 Policy & Finance Committee is asked to firstly review and consider objectives 1-10 which fall within its remit. The discussion document submitted to Council by the Liberal Democrat group is **attached at Appendix A.**
- 3.8 Committee is also asked to consider the recommendations put forward by other standing committees and any proposals for additional objectives and to make final recommendations to Council for its consideration.
- 3.9 The below section sets out factors the committee may wish to take into account when considering changes to the adopted Five Year Plan and Objectives.

## 4. CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Current employee work streams are based on four factors: core operations, actions arising from the current year Risk Register Action Plan, decisions taken by committees/Council and the corporate objectives as set out above.
- 4.2 Core operations can be defined as:
- Public open spaces, play areas, sports facilities & pavilions
  - Allotments
  - Cemeteries
  - Market
  - Community events
  - Community grants
  - Civic role of Town Mayor
  - Communications
  - Public conveniences
  - Defibrillators
  - Town centre Trails
  - Teenage Advice and Information Centre
  - Town centre and business support
  - Planning & transport liaison with Local Authority
  - Community safety liaison with Bedfordshire Police
- 4.3 In addition, the Council is required to meet a number of legal obligations in respect of financial reporting, auditing and compliance. Timescales for this work are usually fixed and inflexible. Statutory obligations generally fall within the responsibility and workload of the senior management team and would include, for example: financial monitoring and management, complaint handling, personnel matters, Freedom of Information requests. Much of this work is significantly time consuming.
- 4.4 Actions arising from the Risk Register Action Plan include:
- Byelaws to be updated
  - Cemetery safety survey
  - Documentation of procedures (risk of staff loss)
  - Data protection audit
  - Lack of clarity on the future management of public open spaces and facilities associated with the eastern urban extension
  - Buildings ten-year maintenance plan
  - Decision to be taken regarding future of the skate park due to deteriorating condition
  - Programme of replacement of market equipment
- 4.5 Decisions taken by Committee may result in work outside of and in addition to core operations and scheduled projects/activities. Recent examples include projects arising from Welcome Back Fund grant monies, investigation into

creation of a Neighbourhood Plan or the decision to form a working party holding several additional meetings per year. Work activity may also be directed by older resolutions; for example the inclusion of works to the cemetery chapel and lych gate in the five year financial plan is as a result of a decision made by Committee in September 2017 following a condition survey of those assets.

- 4.6 Delivery of objectives and additional projects/activities as determined by Council is in accordance with the standing committees' agreed annual work plans and within the financial framework of the annual revenue budget and the five year financial plan.
- 4.7 There are currently some 40 members of staff undertaking activities as defined by job descriptions and contracts of employment. Employees and core operations are managed by seven managers and two supervisors in accordance with employment law and adopted Council policies. Management responsibilities will include recruitment, induction, training, 1-1s, appraisals and application of other staffing related policies.
- 4.8 In any recommendations put forward by Committee for changes to the existing Five Year Plan and Objectives, consideration may need to be given to both financial and human resources, or to the re-prioritisation of existing financial plans and work plans.
- 4.9 Committees are reminded that the Town Council as a parish council has limited legal powers and duties. Its eligibility to use the General Power of Competence offers greater scope but this does not override any pre-existing limitations set out in law. Committees may wish to give careful consideration to the legal powers and duties of both the Town Council and other statutory bodies in determining objectives and priorities.

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to consider the existing Five Year Plan objectives and any recommendations for changes or additions and to make recommendations to Council accordingly.
- 5.2 Following discussion at a number of meetings, it is proposed that the Policy & Finance Committee during municipal year 2022-23 gives consideration to the process for developing the next plan to follow for 2024 onwards, as this will help inform the direction of the next Council administration from May 2023.

**End.**