

**Extract from the minutes of the Cabinet 28 January 2015**

**50. Strategic Plan 2015-18**

The Chief Operating Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minute 36 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 27 January 2015.

Councillor Willetts attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. Many of the achievements listed in the Strategic Plan were not the responsibility of the Council and the success of these other organisations should be acknowledged. For example the new junction on the A12 and Phase 3 of the Northern Approach Road had been funded by Essex County Council, but this was not recognised in the Plan. The document was not a Strategic Plan but a bland wish list. A Strategic Plan should set out the priorities of the Council and identify where resources would be put to deliver those priorities. The Scrutiny Panel had highlighted the omission of the University, which was the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest employer in Colchester. It did not deal with the major issues facing the borough, such as regeneration of the town centre, the development of greater business opportunities, coordinating the various elements of public transport or dealing with the growing gulf between the prosperous and less prosperous parts of the borough.

Councillor Hunt, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy responded and highlighted that the Strategic Plan did acknowledge that the Council had worked with partners to deliver successes and he had also stressed this when presenting the Strategic Plan at the Scrutiny Panel. The Council developed strong and effective relations with partners in order to ensure that these partners devoted resources to Colchester. The Strategic Plan contained a reference to the development of the Knowledge Gateway by the University.

The Strategic Plan did set out the vision and priorities for the borough and the Council for the next three years. It was informed by considerable consultation both with residents and with officers. Details of how the Strategic Plan would be implemented would follow in the Strategic Plan Action Plan and over £500,000 had been allocated to fund delivery of the Action Plan.

Councillor T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Licensing and Culture, Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, and Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, all expressed their support for the Strategic Plan. In particular they highlighted the amount of consultation that had been undertaken and the key words “Vibrant, Prosperous, Thriving, Welcoming” that summed up what the Council was seeking to achieve. It was also highlighted that the

University was featured three times in the Strategic Plan. Notwithstanding this, Cabinet accepted the recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel.

*RESOLVED* that:-

(a) The Strategic Plan 2015-18 be agreed subject to:-

- The University being included in the Strategic Plan;
- The bullet point “Make more of the great culture and heritage in Colchester so that visitors can enjoy the history and passion” be rewritten to incorporate the creativity within Colchester and local residents.

(b) An action plan to achieve commitments in the Strategic Plan be prepared.

*RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL* that the Strategic Plan be adopted and included within the Policy Framework.

#### *REASONS*

The last Strategic Plan was published in February 2012 and runs to 2015. It now needs to be refreshed in light of changing circumstances and expectations

The Strategic Plan is one of the core statutory elements of the Council’s Policy Framework, as set out in Article 4 of the Council’s Constitution. It must therefore be adopted by full Council

The Strategic Plan sets the framework for the Council’s three year Medium Term Financial Forecast and its Capital Programme. Both the Plan and the Budget will be debated at the same full Council on 18 February 2015.

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

The current Strategic Plan expires at the end of the financial year. A new plan is required and needs to be adopted by full Council

The absence of a Strategic Plan would create a significant risk of the Council failing to identify and deliver on its core priorities.

*An updated draft of the Strategic Plan 2015-2018 taking account of the recommendations of Cabinet is attached.*