

7. SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2018-23

REPORT OF: HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES
Contact Officer: Matthew Bird, Sustainability Officer
Email: Matthew.Bird@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477370
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth
Date of meeting 7 March 2018

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides Members with a proposed Sustainability Strategy for the period 2018 – 2023.

Recommendation

2. ***The Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider the proposed Sustainability Strategy 2018-2023 and recommend its approval by full Council at the meeting on 29 March 2018.***

Background

3. Sustainability balances economic, environmental and social considerations. It is about creating opportunities for all residents in Mid Sussex to prosper whilst at the same time ensuring that services, infrastructure and communities are resilient both now and in the future. It is also about ensuring that limited resources are used efficiently and not wasted.
4. There have been a number of recent legislative changes and Government initiatives in relation to sustainability. These include the Government's Clean Growth Strategy 2017, which has the aim of continued growth in GDP combined with reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Also "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment." which was issued in January 2018. This is framed in the context of Brexit and the Government's previous commitments to continue EU environmental rights on a UK legal basis and to uphold obligations from international treaties. Specifically in relation to local government responsibilities it makes reference to using and managing land sustainably; clean air; mitigating and adapting to climate change; and minimising waste.
5. Mid Sussex District Council has been proactive in delivering a number of sustainability initiatives including:
 - Promoting corporate energy efficiency and exploring opportunities for renewable energy technologies such as the installation of solar panels at Oaklands.
 - Expanding the recycling service and green waste collection
 - Initiating fuel poverty initiatives such as Heat for Health
 - Supporting local businesses to improve their sustainability by working through the Sustainable Business Partnership
 - Maintaining and upgrading green spaces and measures such as the Green Circle Network
 - Monitoring air quality and implementing the Air Quality Action Plan for Stonepound Crossroads, Hassocks.
 - Installing electric vehicle charging points and investigating further opportunities

6. Although important in their own right, these and other sustainability actions have not been implemented as part of a coordinated sustainability approach. Delivering and monitoring actions such as these needs to be part of a coherent framework to ensure that they are targeted and better linked to the Council's priorities. This is the purpose of the Sustainability Strategy.

Sustainability Strategy 2018-23

7. The Draft Sustainability Strategy is included at Appendix 1 and includes an Action Plan, which is split in to three themes:
 - Sustainable Council
 - Sustainable Environment
 - Sustainable Communities.
8. The **Sustainable Council** theme focuses on the areas where the Council can improve its own performance to reduce environmental impacts through the managements of buildings and public spaces and the Council's procurement. Specific examples include improving the energy and water efficiency of the Council's buildings; higher rates of recycling in the Council's offices; sustainable staff travel; reducing the use of environmentally harmful products; factoring in climate change in business continuity planning.
9. **Sustainable Environment** looks at areas where the Council can promote sustainable development and economic growth, mainly through Planning Policy and the District Plan. Examples include the development of green spaces; adoption of policies in the new District Plan to deliver sustainable housing and infrastructure; promotion of the use of electric vehicles; the provision of more cycle routes; monitoring and improving air quality
10. **Sustainable Communities** refers to addressing sustainability issues by working with the community to change people's behaviour and raise awareness. Examples include working to increase recycling and waste minimisation; addressing fuel poverty by helping to reduce the cost and use of energy; and the promotion of sustainable transport.
11. Appendix 3 provides the metrics by which actions in the plan will be measured.

Monitoring progress to the Strategy

12. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth will receive regular updates on progress to the Strategy. It is proposed that an annual Sustainability Progress Report is prepared and considered by this Scrutiny Committee. It is also proposed that the existing Member Sustainability and Climate Change Advisory Panel be reconvened. The Panel's current terms of reference include advising on progress to the sustainability programme of work and receiving updates on national and regional sustainability initiatives.
13. Updates on the action plan will be reported at the quarterly Sustainability Officer Group meetings.

Policy Context

14. The Sustainability Strategy is consistent with the Council's statement of main purpose and Corporate Priorities, particularly the priorities of Sustainable Economic Growth and Strong and resilient communities.

Other Options Considered

15. The option of not having a Sustainability Action Plan was discounted because the plan draws together existing and planned activities to provide a coherent and systematic approach to implementing sustainability.

Financial Implications

16. Resource implications are identified in the Strategy Action Plan, with most actions to be delivered from within existing budgets. Measures such as improving the energy efficiency of the Council's buildings will deliver savings. Resources will be supplemented by any external funding which is able to be secured.

Risk Management Implications

17. The Sustainability Strategy will help to mitigate the risks of the Council not fulfilling its statutory sustainability duties.

Equalities and Customer Services Implications

18. The Sustainability Strategy includes measures to benefit specific vulnerable groups including actions to assist those in fuel poverty.

Other Material Implications

19. None.

Background Papers

20. None.