

Please ask for: Matt Berry

Extension No: 4589

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10 February, 2021

Dear Councillor,

Cabinet

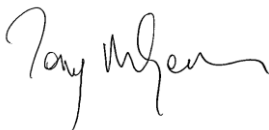
5:00 pm on Wednesday, 17 February 2021

Meeting to be held via Remote Access

This meeting is required to be held because the Council on 10 February, 2021 did not agree the Cabinet's recommendations in respect of the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2021-22 to 2023-24 without the need for referral back in light of an Alternative Budget submitted by the Conservative Group.

You are invited to attend this meeting for consideration of the matters itemised in the following Agenda.

Yours sincerely,



T. McGovern,
Managing Director

To: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Alcott, G.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.P.T.L.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Pearson, A.R.	Community Safety and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Johnson, T.B.	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Newbury, J.A.A.	Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader
Martin, Mrs. C.E.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Kraujalis, J.T.	Housing Portfolio Leader

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A G E N D A

PART 1

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

To declare any personal, pecuniary or disclosable pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct and any possible contraventions under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

3. General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2021-22 to 2023-24

The Council at its meeting on 10 February, 2021 agreed that an Alternative Budget proposal submitted in accordance with the Budget Procedure Rules be referred back to Cabinet in respect of the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2021-22 to 2023-24, for Cabinet to give further consideration to its proposed budget.

Members are requested to refer to the reports and other papers circulated for the meetings of Cabinet on 28 January, 2021 and Council on 10 February, 2021.

www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/meetings/agendas-reports-minutes/102/2021-01-28

www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/meetings/agendas-reports-minutes/98/2021-02-10

Copies of the Cabinet recommendations of 28 January, 2021, including an amendment moved by the Leader of the Council at the Council meeting, and the Conservative Group's Alternative Budget Proposals are attached for information.

4. Corporate Plan 2021-24

In considering its proposed Budget and the referral back to Cabinet of the Alternative Budget, Cabinet are asked to determine if any changes are required to the Corporate Plan attached.

Copy of the Report to Council of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 4, numbered 6.1 – 6.37).

Extract from Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet of 28 January, 2021

General Fund

68. General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2020-21 to 2023-24

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 7.1 – 7.71).

The Leader of the Council reported that a sum of £346,000 had been set aside for works to footbridges in the District and the Rugeley Boardwalk, to recognise concerns raised by a number of Councillors. The schemes would need to be costed by Officers and a report brought forward to Cabinet at a later date for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the following be recommended to Council, at its meeting to be held on 10 February 2021, as part of the formal budget setting process:

- (A) The level of net spending for the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2021-22 be set at £14.664 million; with indicative net spending for 2022-23 and 2023-24 of £14.364 million and £14.529 million, respectively.
- (B) The detailed portfolio budgets as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.
- (C) The forecast outturn net budget of £15.408 million be approved.
- (D) The use of Government Grants in 2021-22 of £2.261 million.
- (E) To note that although indicative figures existed for the use of Government Grants for 2022-23 and 2023-24, they could not be accurately determined at this stage with each element of Government funding being subject to review.
- (F) The working balances be set at £0.812 million, £1.147 million and £1.176 million for 2021-22 to 2023-24, respectively.
- (G) A Council Tax of £225.64 be recommended for 2021-22, with indicative increases of 1.95% to the level of Council Tax for 2022-23 and 2023-24.
- (H) The Council's Tax base be set at 29,136.82.
- (I) The revised Capital Programme as set out in the updated Appendix 3 (attached) and Appendix 4 of the report.

Additional recommendation moved by the Leader of the Council at the Council meeting of 10 February, 2021:

- (J) The IT monthly allowance for newly elected Members be replaced, dependent on their requirements, by the provision of an iPad, tablet or laptop, and suitable training, with effect from the 2021 local elections with existing Members having the choice to opt into this scheme or continue to receive the IT allowance if they so wish.

Reasons for Decisions

The Council was required to set a balanced budget for 2021-22 set in the context of a sustainable medium-term financial plan.

				<u>Appendix 3</u>
<u>Capital Programme 2020-21 to 2023-24</u>				
	Total Programme Revised	General Fund	Section 106	
	£000	£000	£000	
HOUSING GF				
Disabled Facilities Grants	4,680	4,680	-	
Private Sector Decent Homes	27	27	-	
Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Pathway Project	230	230	-	
Total Housing General Fund	4,937	4,937	-	
ENVIRONMENT				
Home Security Grants	37	37	-	
Wheelie Bin Replacement	416	416	-	
Replacement Vehicles - cleansing	15	15	-	
Replacement Vehicles - countryside	68	68	-	
Car Park Improvements	292	292	-	
Replacement Vehicles - Grounds	77	77	-	
Total Environment	905	905	-	
CRIME AND PARTNERSHIPS				
CCTV	67	67	-	
Total Crime & Partnerships	67	67	-	
CULTURE AND SPORT				
Additional Cemetery Provision	1,410	1,410	-	
Stile Cop Cemetery Modular build	60	60	-	
Hednesford Park Improvements (part s106)	174	155	19	
Stadium Development (Phase 2)	401	276	125	
Relocation Arthur Street Play Area (s106)	3	-	3	
Multi Use Games Area, Laburnum Avenue (s106)	121	-	121	
Heath Hayes Park/Pitch Refurbishment	115	-	115	
Replacement Vehicles - Cemeteries	51	51	-	
Play Area and Open Space Rugeley	48	5	43	
Play Area and Open Space Penny Cress Green	186	-	186	
Rugeley ATP	844	422	422	
Cannock East (CIL)	210	-	210	
Commonwealth Games Mountain Bike	50	50	-	
Commonwealth Games Legacy	50	50	-	
Rugeley Swimming Pool	300	300	-	
Rugeley LC Boiler	190	190	-	
Total Culture and Sport	4,213	2,969	1,244	
ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND PLANNING				
Economic Development & Physical Assets	176	176	-	
District Investment	5,645	5,645	-	
Lets Grow Grants	38	38	-	
Hawks Green Rationalisation	204	204	-	
Total Economic Regeneration and Planning	6,063	6,063	-	
CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT				
Financial Management System	350	350	-	
Total Corporate Improvement	350	350	-	
TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION				
Prince of Wales Theatre	53	53	-	
Rugeley Pedestrian Cycle Linkage (S106)	219	-	219	
Total Town Centre Regeneration	272	53	219	
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	16,807	15,344	1,463	

72. Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, Annual Investment Strategy and Capital Strategy 2021-22

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 11.1 – 11.38).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Council, at its meeting to be held on 10 February 2021, be recommended to approve:
 - (i) The Prudential and Treasury Indicators.
 - (ii) The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement.
 - (iii) The Treasury Management Policy.
 - (iv) The Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22.
- (B) It be noted that indicators may change in accordance with the final recommendations from Cabinet to Council in relation to both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budgets and Capital Programmes.

Reasons for Decisions

The Council was required to approve its treasury management, investment and capital strategies to ensure that cashflow was adequately planned and that surplus monies were invested appropriately.

Cannock Chase Council

Council Meeting

10 February 2021

General Fund Budget Resolutions

Alternative Budget Proposal by Councillor Olivia Lyons

Conservative Group Leader

An alternative General Fund Budget, as proposed by the Conservative Group, is detailed below and, in light of this alternative budget, Council is recommended to refer the Cabinet's Budget recommendations for further consideration.

General Fund Revenue Budget 2020-21 to 2023-24

The Alternative Budget is attached as Annex 1 and replaces Table 3 of the Cabinet Report Item No.7 Dated 28/01/21.

In accordance with the above the following changes are made to the Recommendations to Council as per Paragraph 2.1 of the above report.

- (a) the level of net spending for the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2021-22 be set at £14.722 million; with indicative net spending for 2022-23 and 2023-24 of £14.372 million and £14.353 million respectively.
- (b) the detailed portfolio budgets as set out in Appendix 2 (as amended by the changes as contained in Annex 2).
- (f) the working balances be set at £0.812 million: £1.147 million and £ 1.361 million respectively

General Fund Capital Programme 2020-21 to 2023-24

The amendments to Appendix 3 of the Cabinet report are attached as Annex 3 with the revised Table 7 (Uncommitted Capital Resources) of the report attached as Annex 4

In accordance with the above paragraph 2.1 (i) of the Recommendations to Council is amended to read

- (i) the revised capital programme as set out in **Appendix 3 (as amended by the changes as contained in Annex 3)**

The changes to the Cabinet's Revenue Budget are attached as Annex 2 and can be summarised as follows:

Proposals for Savings

The Conservative Group proposes that the following saving option is implemented:

- **Members IT Consumable allowance is deleted.**

In light of the forecast deficit in 2022-23:

- **the shared services provision is extended to other services**
- **the Council promotes the use of working from home / "hot Desking" (post pandemic) and undertakes a rationalisation of office accommodation e.g. civic centre bungalow, to reduce costs and increase the potential for lettings to other bodies**

Growth Proposals

The Conservative Group proposes that the following growth options are implemented:

- **I Pads are provided for all Members together with appropriate training.**
- **An ongoing Parks and Open Spaces maintenance/remediation budget is created.**

Use of Reserves

The Conservative Group proposes that the Budget Support Earmarked Reserve is utilised to fund the cost of the I Pads and the initial costs of the Parks and Open Spaces maintenance/ remediation budget in 2021/22

The changes to the Cabinets Capital Programme are attached as Annex 3 and can be summarised as follows:

New Schemes

The Conservative Group proposes that indicative resources are earmarked within the Capital Programme for the following scheme:

- **Refurbishment of Elmore Park Toilet Block**

Conservative Group Budget

Table 3: General Fund Draft Budget 2021-22 to 2023-24

	Budget 2021-22	Budget 2022-23	Budget 2023-24
	£000	£000	£000
Net Expenditure			
Portfolio budgets	14,975	14,864	14,442
Investment interest	-82	-166	-208
Technical items	-171	-326	119
Net Spending	14,722	14,372	14,353
Less: Government Grants			
NNDR Multiplier	-159	-159	-159
Lower Tier Grant	-130		
COVID Grant	-541		
Income Guarantee Grant	-14		
New Homes Bonus	-1,417	-850	-316
Budget Requirement	12,461	13,363	13,878
Financing			
Business Rates	-5,409	-5,226	-5,333
Council Tax Income	-6,574	-6,770	-6,971
Council Tax Support Grant	-120		
Total Financing	-12,103	-11,996	-12,304
Less Transfer from Reserve	-358		
Budget Shortfall / Transfer from Working Balances		-1,367	-1,574

Table 5: Level of Working Balances

	31/03/21	31/03/22	31/03/23	31/03/24
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance B/fwd.	1,000	1,294	1,294	-73
(Applied) in Year	294		-1,367	-1,574
Balance C/fwd.	1,294	1,294	-73	-1,647
Minimum	-1,000	-812	-1,147	-1,361
Surplus to Support Budget	294	482	-1,220	-3,008

Conservative Group Budget

Amendments to Portfolio Budgets (Appendix 2 of Budget Report)

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Detail</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>2021-22</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>2022-23</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>2023-24</u>
		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
	<u>Culture and Sport</u>			
1	Parks & Open Spaces			
	Premises Related Expenditure			
a.	Provision of maintenance /remediation budget	50,000	25,000	25,500
	<u>Economic Development & Planning</u>			
6	Public Buildings			
	Income			
b.	Provision of potential lettings income re Hot Desking and rationalisation of office accommodation e.g. Bungalow	-	-	TBD
	<u>Leader of the Council Portfolio</u>			
1	Democratic Services			
	Expenditure			
c.	Remove Members IT Consumable Allowance	-16,350	-16,510	-16,680
d.	Provide I pads to all Members	24,500		
9	Excluded Items			
	Expenditure			
e.	Development of further Shared services			-185,130
	TOTAL	58,150	8,490	-176,310

Conservative Group Budget

Amendments to Capital Programme (Appendix 3 of Budget Report)

		Total Program Revised £'000	General Fund £'000	Section 106 £'000
	<u>Culture & Sport Portfolio</u>			
	Additional schemes			
A	Elmore Park Toilets	100	100	-
		100	100	-

Conservative Group Budget

Amendments to Table 7: Uncommitted Capital Resources

	General Fund £000	Section 106 £000
Capital resources brought forward at 1 April 2020	9,494	1,697
Capital Receipts	711	
Section 106/CIL		970
Capital Grants	4,282	
Joint Investment Fund	214	
Contributions	532	
Revenue contribution to Capital Outlay		
Use of Reserves	222	
Draft Capital Programme 2020-21 to 2023-24	(15,114)	(1,463)
New Schemes	(100)	
Remaining resources at 31 March 2024	241	1,204

Report of:	Head of Governance & Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Judith Aupers
Contact Number:	01543 464411
Portfolio Leader:	Leader of the Council
Key Decision:	Yes
Report Track:	Cabinet: 28/01/21 Council: 10/02/21

**Council
10 February 2021
Corporate Plan 2021-24**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report presents the Corporate Plan for 2021-24, developed following stakeholder engagement on the priorities and objectives agreed by Cabinet on 15 October 2020. This Plan will replace the existing Corporate Plan 2018-23.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Members approve the Corporate Plan 2021-24 set out at Appendix and its inclusion in the policy framework of the Council.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council's current Corporate Plan for 2018-23 was developed nearly 3 years ago. Whilst good progress has been made in the delivery of our priorities, the impact of the pandemic in 2020 on the District, the local economy, our community and the Council's finances has been significant.
- 3.2 A comprehensive Recovery Strategy was agreed in May 2020 and has guided the work of the Council in recent months. One of the key actions set out in this strategy was to review the Council's current priorities to ensure that they take account of the impact that the pandemic has had on the District. Rather than simply refreshing the existing Corporate Plan which is due to run to 2023, a full review was undertaken to produce a new Corporate Plan for 2021-24.
- 3.3 In October 2020, Cabinet approved public engagement on priorities and objectives for a new Corporate Plan for 2021-24. This allowed the Council to take a strategic

look at how the pandemic situation may change life on an ongoing basis for our residents, businesses and the Council as an organisation.

- 3.4 We used this engagement with the community and our stakeholders to inform and involve them in determining the priorities and objectives of the Corporate Plan. It provided us with the opportunity to explain why we are undertaking the production of a new plan now and what this will aim to do and, importantly, provided an opportunity to actively listen to the views of those we engaged with.
- 3.5 The Corporate Plan setting out the Council's priorities for 2021-24 is set out at Appendix 1 The emphasis of the new plan is on recovery and rebuilding the District. The good progress made in delivering the priorities set out in the current corporate plan has been affected but the Council has set out a new plan, which seeks to learn from the pandemic and to reshape our aspirations for the future.
- 3.6 As the pandemic is still ongoing, the full impact on the District and the Community cannot yet be assessed and fully understood. The actions outlined in the Corporate Plan will be kept under review and adjusted as the picture becomes clearer to allow the Council to be responsive and flexible to the evolving situation.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.7 Adopting a new Corporate Plan for 2021-24 allows the Council to focus on actions to deal with the impact that COVID-19 has had on Cannock Chase District and provides a medium-term focus on key areas of recovery. It will lead to a longer-term and ambitious approach to the future of the District following on from this recovery.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Corporate Plan 2021-24 will replace the current plan and establish refreshed priorities.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 On 23 May 2018, the Council's Corporate Plan for 2018-23 was approved. Whilst good progress has been made in the delivery of our priorities, the impact of the pandemic in 2020 on the District, the local economy, our community and the Council's finances has been significant.
- 5.2 A comprehensive Recovery Strategy was agreed in May 2020 and has guided to work of the Council in recent months. One of the key actions set out in this strategy was to review the Council's current priorities to ensure that they take account of the impact that the pandemic has had on the District. Rather than simply refreshing the existing Corporate Plan, which is due to run to 2023, a full review was undertaken to produce a new Corporate Plan for 2021-24.
- 5.3 Good corporate planning will ensure that the Council has a clear framework within which actions can be taken and which achieve the greatest impact on agreed priorities and objectives within the resources available. This is increasingly important due to the impact of the pandemic on the Council's already challenging

financial situation. “Re-setting” our existing Corporate Plan to focus on recovery will help move towards more ambitious plans in the longer term.

- 5.4 Through workshops with the Cabinet and the Recovery Overview Board, the needs and challenges facing the District were considered and three priorities were agreed. For each of these priorities a set of objectives has been determined setting out what the Council wants to achieve.

Engagement

- 5.5 The priorities and objectives agreed with Cabinet in October were used as the basis of stakeholder engagement during November and December. The engagement period was from 19 October to 30 November 2020. As part of this process we ran an online survey - with paper copies available on request - and held a series of online focus groups. The survey received 83 responses and 40 people took part in focus groups. The focus groups were held with a variety of stakeholders including the community, young people, staff, members and the third sector. We also received two additional submissions from the Chase Community Independents and Hednesford Town Council. The survey and Focus Groups were promoted through a press release, the District Round Up, social media posts, emails to contacts and posters in libraries. With the Focus Groups we had difficulties in recruiting people to take part in the community, young people and staff sessions, resulting in some sessions being cancelled. This could have been for a variety of reasons including time, resources, being held online and Covid. This is an area to look at for future Council engagement.
- 5.6 In summary, respondents to the survey and the focus groups generally agreed with the three proposed priorities. There was broad support for the Environment/Climate Emergency to be considered as a separate priority.
- 5.7 A series of themes arose from the engagement some covering all the priorities and some specific to an individual priority. These are set out below.

All priorities

- A lot of the objectives interlink with each other across and within the priorities.
- What we engaged on was lacking in detail.
- There was no explanation of what short/medium and long term meant and some felt objectives were given the wrong timescales.
- Voluntary Sector – the importance on working with, supporting, building on relationships and engaging with the voluntary sector was discussed under each priority. There was a focus on the benefits of networking and sharing information and not losing the momentum following Covid.
- Bringing the community back was a concern raised under two of the objectives. This was about how to get people involved in groups and activities following Covid.

Supporting Economic Recovery

- Over 75% of survey respondents tended to agree or strongly agree with the objectives apart from social housing with only 58.5% tending to agree or strongly agree with this objective.

- The need to think about jobs for young people and the quality of jobs available across the district. The impact of Covid is currently unknown.
- The need to adapt and change poor town centres and also consider what the positive and negative impacts of McArthurGlen could be.
- Social housing will be more important following Covid but the quality of the houses and pressures on surrounding infrastructure should be considered.
- Clean and green should be incorporated into all of the objectives.

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

- Over 90% of survey respondents tended to agree or strongly agree with providing opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles and supporting vulnerable people and engaging with our communities. 80.5% tended to agree or strongly agree with creating a greener, sustainable community and environment.
- The importance green open spaces and parks and protecting and maintaining them.
- Physical and mental health.
- Thinking outside the box with regards to obesity levels.
- Importance of partnership working.

Financially Resilient District

- Over 75% of survey respondents tended to agree or strongly agree with the objectives set out under this priority.
- The objectives are common sense, business as usual, the Council is obliged to do this.
- Look local – procuring locally, in house services, using local services.

5.8 The results of the engagement are set out in more detail in Appendix 2.

Changes made to the Priorities and Objectives

5.9 Further consideration has been given to priorities and objectives in light of the engagement feedback and the following changes have been made:

All priorities

- (i) A significant part of the engagement response made the case for greater consideration of environmental issues – from parks and open spaces to climate change. This was discussed with the Cabinet and Recovery Overview Board prior to engaging with the public and has been re-visited in light of the comments made during the engagement process.

The importance of the environment and the Council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 is recognised and it is considered that this is better approached by embedding it in all of the Council's priorities and actions rather than having it as a standalone priority.

Clear reference has been made to the environment and / or "green recovery" under each of the priorities.

- (ii) The references to short, medium and long term have been removed from the objectives. Indications of the timescale for delivery will be set out in supporting actions plans.
- (iii) Reference has been made under each priority to the work that the Council does in partnership with other public sector bodies and voluntary organisations

Supporting Economic Recovery

- (iv) The reference to Increasing “social housing” has been changed to “affordable housing”
- (v) Well designed and connected communities – the reference to connected has been removed
- (vi) In relation to specific comments made, the following actions have been added to support delivery of this priority
 - Maximising the economic benefits of the opening of McArthurGlen Designer Outlet West Midlands.
 - Ensure our Local Plan policies achieve higher design and environmental standards with new housing developments
 - Ensure our local communities secure benefits from new developments and investment in local infrastructure

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

- (vii) Supporting vulnerable people – the reference to “engaging with our communities” has been removed from the objective description and actions setting out engagement with the voluntary sector have been added. This also addresses the engagement comments made about the need to work with the voluntary sector
- (viii) In relation to specific comments made, the following actions have been added to support delivery of this priority
 - Encourage and support people of all ages to have active and healthy lifestyles to improve and maintain their physical and mental wellbeing:
 - Maintain and improve our parks, green spaces and countryside so that they remain attractive and enhance our quality of life

Financially Resilient District

- (ix) The reference to District in the priority has been changed to “Council”. This allow this priority to focus on the changes the Council needs to make to the way in which it operates. The financial resilience of the District will be picked up via the work on the priority for “Supporting Economic Recovery”.

- (x) The following objectives have been removed and embedded into the actions that will support the delivery of the other objectives
- maintaining a robust corporate infrastructure which underpins the delivery of critical services
 - To realign and attract resources that enables the Council to facilitate an economy, community and environment that is more resilient in the future
- 5.10 During the engagement period, work has been ongoing to develop the Corporate Plan for 2021-24. A key part of this work has been the development of actions to support the delivery of the priorities and objectives and performance measures. The high level actions are set out in the Corporate Plan and help to explain in more detail what the Council intends to do over the next 3 years. This addresses the general comments made during the engagement about the lack of detail; reference has been made to some of these in the points above where they relate to comments made through the engagement process.
- 5.11 The full Corporate Plan for 2021-24 is set out in Appendix 1.
- 5.12 Detailed delivery plans to support each of the priorities and objectives, setting out the timeline for implementation are now being developed and the intention is to bring these to Cabinet for consideration in March and to Council for approval in April.
- 5.13 As the pandemic is still ongoing, the full impact on the District and the Community cannot yet be assessed and fully understood. The actions outlined in the plan will be kept under review and adjusted as the picture becomes clearer to allow the Council to be responsive and flexible to the evolving situation.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Due regard will be given to the Council's financial position when determining the actions to deliver on the priorities and objectives for the new Corporate Plan.

Production of the plan will be met through existing resources including design and publication of the plan.

6.2 Legal

The Corporate Plan forms part of the Policy Framework within the Council's Constitution. The new Corporate Plan will replace the existing plan.

6.3 Human Resources

A key action in the Corporate Plan is the development of an Organisational Development Strategy. The purpose of the Strategy will be to review the existing skills and resources of the Council's workforce and to use this data to determine what additional skills and resources are required to support delivery of the Council's services and the projects set out in the Corporate Plan.

6.4 Risk Management

The Council's Strategic Risk Register sets out the risks the Council faces in delivering its priorities. This has been updated to reflect the impact of the pandemic and continues to be monitored. It will be reviewed alongside the development of a new Corporate Plan.

6.5 Equality & Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the development of the Corporate Plan and engagement has formed a key part of this.

6.6 Climate Change

The Corporate Plan outlines the way in which commitments to addressing Climate Change are being addressed through the Priorities and Objectives of the Council. This will be supported by a 10 year costed action plan, developed with a Citizen's Assembly, which was agreed in principle in October 2019 following the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council in July 2019. This will provide a broad framework for the Council, other partners, stakeholders and local people to take a range of actions to address the challenge of achieving carbon net zero by 2030.

7 Appendices to the Report

Appendix 1: Corporate Plan 2021-24

Appendix 2: Results of engagement

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet 21 May 2020 – Approach to Recovery Planning from the Impact of Covid-19

Report to Cabinet 15 October 2020 – New Corporate Plan 2021-24

Cannock Chase Council

Our Corporate Plan 2021-24

Foreword

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on our community and the Council itself. A Recovery Strategy was put in place in May 2020 to respond to the pandemic, plan for the restoration of services and to look ahead to reshape our services in the future.

As part of our recovery planning, it was agreed to bring forward work on reviewing our priorities and set out a new Corporate Plan for 2021-24 to replace our existing Corporate Plan. This will allow us to take a strategic look at how the pandemic has affected our residents, businesses and the Council as an organisation. We have reset the Council's priorities and objectives and look forward to planning for long term and ambitious improvements for the District.

The impact of the pandemic has been overwhelming as people's daily lives have been restricted, loved ones have been lost, businesses have had to close with some not re-opening and jobs have gone. However, more positively the pandemic saw the emergence of a tangible community spirit and volunteers willing to help those in need with food and pharmacy deliveries and other support.

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has, nevertheless, been significant and it is uncertain how quickly the economy will recover. It is highly likely that the pandemic will have a significant impact on key sectors within Cannock Chase, but at present it is not fully known if these impacts will be short-term or whether they may lead to longer term structural change. Sectors particularly affected include retail, wholesale, tourism, hospitality, transportation and storage, construction and manufacturing.

COVID-19 had an impact on how the Council worked too. Many of our employees quickly switched to working from home and Council meetings moved online. We continued to provide essential services throughout. New services and support were set up to co-ordinate support for our vulnerable residents and local businesses. Financial support has also been provided to businesses that had to close during the national lockdowns and advice was given as they re-opened, helping them be Covid secure.

We need to consider what sort of future we want for the District and how the pandemic might affect our daily lives for some time to come. It is likely that a `new normal` will emerge rather than just reverting to life as it was before and it is essential that we learn the lessons from the pandemic in order to address the fragility of the District and ensure that we can be more resilient.

This Corporate Plan is an opportunity to look differently at the future. We will consider our priorities for supporting our community, building on the volunteering and community spirit that has been evident. We will take the opportunities that have arisen as our community, businesses and the Council have found new ways of working together.

The lack of a financial settlement from the Government beyond 2021-22 creates a period of financial uncertainty for the Council. The significant loss of income and the increased costs of the impact of COVID-19 has put pressure on financial reserves, with deficits forecast for 2022-23 and 2023-24. To meet these, the Council will need to develop savings options over the next 12 months.

In light of the effects of the pandemic, our Corporate Plan for 2021-24 is therefore focussed on recovery and building resilience. This plan is about getting the District back on track, revisiting our plans and reshaping the future. We want to realign the resources we have and attract new resources to enable the Council to facilitate an economy, community and environment that is more resilient in the future and maximises the opportunities available to it.

Three priorities have emerged from our planning and our engagement with the community. They are:

- Supporting Economic Recovery
- Supporting Health and Wellbeing
- Financially Resilient Council

In 2019 the Council made a commitment to becoming net carbon neutral by 2030. Rather than adopting this as a standalone priority, it will be at the heart of all three of our priorities and will be embedded into our objectives and action plans for the future.

Above all we want our District to be an attractive place to live and visit; we want it to be economically successful and environmentally sustainable; we want local people to have a healthy and active lives.

Clearly we cannot achieve this on our own; we will be working closely with partners from the public sector, private sector and voluntary organisations in delivering the priorities and this is reflected in the actions set out in the detailed plan that follows..

This document sets out these priorities in more detail, explains why they are important, what we want to achieve, the actions we will take, and how we will measure our success. With so much uncertainty about the long-term effects and impact of the pandemic this plan will provide a clear framework to develop our actions to achieve the greatest impact on agreed priorities and objectives within the resources available.

Councillor George Adamson, Leader of Cannock Chase Council (photo)

and

Tony McGovern, Managing Director of Cannock Chase Council (photo)

Cannock Chase in numbers

(to display as an infographic)

An estimated 101,594 residents in 2020

An estimated 43,952 households in 2020

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 2 Special Areas of Conservation

Over 1,000 acres of parks, open spaces, sports, conservation and play areas

3 Town Centres with 347 Town Centre Units

5,118 Council Homes

Unemployment rate of 5.6% below the England average of 6.3%, October 2020

108 new affordable homes built in 2019-20 including 9 Council new builds

1.2million domestic bins emptied in 2020 (based on 70 per cent of bins being put out for collection each week)

3,430 Business Enterprises in 2020

433 planning applications April 2019 - March 2020

95 CCTV Cameras Monitored in 2019-20

96% of food premises rated 3 stars or better 2019-20

32 Public car parks across Cannock Chase, 12 of which are pay and display

(add in map / key infrastructure here)

What we have achieved in the last three years

In the last Corporate Plan (2018-23) we set ourselves two priorities; set out below are the key achievements made in the last three years under those priorities.

Promoting Economic Prosperity

- In October 2018 construction work started on the £160m McArthurGlen Designer Outlet in Cannock. The first retail units are due to open in February 2021. **(photo)**
- In January 2019 Cannock Chase achieved the highest economic growth within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) area.
- Cannock Chase is named a Commonwealth Games venue for the mountain biking event at Birmingham 2022. **(photo)**
- The Council paved the way for the return of further education to the District with a new Cannock Chase Skills and Innovation Hub at the Cannock Campus of South Staffordshire College.
- The Council helped to secure £500,000 for a new Cannock Chase Engineering Academy for South Staffordshire College in Cannock.
- The Council helped South Staffordshire College secure Government funding for a new Digital Skills Academy, from Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP).
- Walkers, cyclists and canal users benefit from improved links into Rugeley town centre thanks to £218,960 funding allocated from a remaining Section 106 agreement with Tesco.
- The Council agreed to spend £200,000 to improve its car parks.
- A Cannock Town Centre Development Prospectus was approved to highlight opportunities for potential developers. **(photo)**
- Approval was given to spend £94,000 on environmental improvements for Cannock town centre.
- The shutters of empty shop units in Cannock town centre received a makeover.
- Pay by phone service and contactless ticketing machines introduced in car parks.
- Work got underway to build 44 new homes on former Council depot land in Hawks Green. **(photo)**

- A £211,000 grant from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) was received to support employment and skills in Cannock North Ward. **(photo)**
- Outline planning permission was given to ENGIE, the Rugeley Power Station site developers, in January 2020 for mixed-use redevelopment of the site. **(photo)**

Improving Community Wellbeing

- Phase 1 of £1.3m Stadium Park opened in September 2018 with adventure play area, BMX pump track, footpaths, running routes, green gym equipment, new entrance gates and fencing, CCTV cameras, and community allotments with an allotment building. **(photo)**
- Community Safety Partnership launches `Say Something, See Something` campaign to tackle adult and child abuse. **(photo)**
- £1m development of Chase Leisure Centre for brand new, multi-use functional spaces and a state-of-the art cycle studio.
- Six Green Flag Awards for parks. **(photo)**
- Proposed play area and open space improvements to the Cema in Norton Canes approved.
- Council funding approved towards new mountain bike trail at Birches Valley as legacy project for Commonwealth Games.
- Football Foundation grant announced to help cover costs of providing new artificial grass pitch in Rugeley.
- In xxxx, work started on a new cemetery in the District. **(photo)**

Our Priorities for 2021-24

In this section we outline our three priorities for 2021-24.

Priority 1 - Supporting Economic Recovery

Why this is important:

The District is facing an unprecedented challenge in dealing with and recovering from the economic recession caused by COVID-19. The recession is highly likely to lead to increased levels of unemployment within the District at a level which has not been seen for decades. Key sectors in the District such as retail, leisure and hospitality are particularly vulnerable to the ongoing effects of the pandemic and are likely to be adversely impacted.

The Council has a key role to play in supporting the economic recovery of the District and to enable the creation of new job opportunities, help existing businesses to survive and grow, new businesses to start-up, and to attract new investment.

The Council has an important part to play in its role as a place shaper in planning for future growth and opportunities to create new jobs, affordable new homes and re-purpose our town centres.

Major investments such as the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet West Midlands and Rugeley Power Station continue to be critical in supporting the economic recovery of the District.

Access to affordable housing is key to creating sustainable, prosperous communities. A lack of affordable housing affects household budgets, health and education and the ability to gain and sustain employment. The Council wants to provide housing options to meet our residents' needs. Genuinely affordable housing is needed for those on different incomes. Rented accommodation is in high demand in the District and intermediate housing has a role to play for those who do not have access to social housing and cannot afford the private market.

The result will be:

- The District's economy will recover from the effects of the pandemic and capitalise upon opportunities to create green new jobs.
- Our residents will be able to access new employment and skills opportunities.
- Our town centres will be re-shaped and existing sites will be re-purposed.
- There will be an increase in affordable housing for our residents.
- There will be increased business confidence and investment.

Objective 1.1 - Supporting jobs, enterprise and skills

How we will deliver this:

- (i) Maximise the economic benefits of the opening of McArthurGlen Designer Outlet West Midlands
- (ii) Provide advice and support to local businesses to help them grow and new businesses to start-up

- (iii) Work with partners to put in place responsive employment support for newly unemployed residents
- (iv) Work to increase skills levels of residents and improve access to employment opportunities
- (v) Ensure Cannock Chase District has a sufficient supply of employment land and workspace for small businesses

Measures:

- Unemployment rate
- Youth unemployment
- NVQ 3 / 4 attainment rates
- Number of businesses supported
- Number of enrolments on Digital Academy and Engineering Academy at Cannock Campus of South Staffordshire College

Objective 1.2 - Reshaping our town centres

How we will deliver this:

- (i) Promote key Council owned sites in the Cannock Town Centre Development Prospectus
- (ii) Develop a Cannock Masterplan to identify wider opportunities for reshaping the town centre
- (iii) Progress plans for the regeneration of the former Multi-Storey Car Park / Indoor Market site
- (iv) Identify opportunities to reshape Rugeley Town Centre – capitalising upon the re-development of Rugeley Power Station
- (v) Review the Council's car parking strategy

Measures:

- Town Centre vacancy rates
- Number of residential units consented / completed in Town Centre
- Commercial and non-retail floorspace consented / completed

Objective 1.3 - Increasing affordable housing

How we will deliver this:

- (i) The £12m Housing Investment Fund will enable the Council to deliver in the region of 100 new Council properties for rent
- (ii) Work with Planning Services to ensure the Local Plan includes the necessary provisions for affordable housing contributions as part of the planning process

Measures:

- Number of Council homes delivered
- Number of Affordable Housing units delivered per annum
- Updated Local Plan policies for affordable housing

Objective 1.4 Well-designed communities

How we will deliver this:

- (i) Adoption of a new Local Plan for the District by the end of 2023
- (ii) Ensure our Local Plan policies achieve higher design and environmental standards with new housing developments
- (iii) Support our towns and parishes to plan their neighbourhoods
- (iv) Ensure our local communities secure benefits from new developments and investment in local infrastructure

Measures:

- Housing completions
- Employment land developed
- Neighbourhood Plans adopted
- Amount of CIL / S106 funds secured / allocated

Objective 1.5 Clean and green recovery

How we will deliver this:

- (i) Support our clean growth ambition by identifying and supporting businesses and sectors that can deliver green jobs and investment
- (ii) Work with public bodies and site owner to regenerate the Rugeley Power Station site and deliver 'zero carbon' ambitions
- (iii) Promotion of clean growth initiatives delivered by partners to local businesses
- (iv) Work towards developing zero carbon homes (passivhaus standard) on Council housing developments
- (v) Produce a funded retrofit (carbon zero) programme for the Council's housing stock and commence implementation

Measures:

- Reduction in carbon emissions
- Green businesses supported / 'green jobs' created
- Number of passivhaus homes delivered
- Energy efficiency levels achieved in new Council housing developments
- Number of retro fit completions

Priority 2 - Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Why this is important:

We want our residents to have the opportunity to live as healthy lives as possible for as long as possible and to live comfortably and safely in their communities. We recognise the significant effect that health and wellbeing have on happiness and life chances and that this varies considerably in Cannock Chase District.

Life expectancy at birth and at age 65 was below the national average during 2017-19, with inequalities in health and life expectancy related to deprivation across the District. The most recent Active Lives Survey data covering the period May 2019 to May 2020 estimates that around 27.8% of adults aged 16+ are physically inactive in the District, taking part in less than 30 minutes per week of physical activity. This was above the England average of 25.5%.

The restrictions that COVID-19 has placed on us has had a profound effect on the way we behave – including how people play, exercise, travel and work. Exercise and physical activity will play a key role in recovering from the pandemic. The continued provision of affordable and accessible leisure and culture facilities is an important aspect of this, so we will continue to invest in our culture and leisure facilities, parks and open spaces or through providing more online exercise opportunities and encourage greater use of our fantastic natural assets - Cannock Chase, Hednesford Hills and other open spaces, parks, green gyms and play areas. Our parks and open spaces are some of the best in the country and we are incredibly proud that six have received the accolade of Green Flag status.

The Council is committed to safeguarding all children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from abuse. The Council recognises that there are a number of individuals who have no fixed abode and are not necessarily street homeless. It is essential that these individuals have access to safe and secure accommodation, and homelessness reduction remains a top priority of the Council. Early prevention activities have been heavily invested in.

In 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency in Cannock Chase District and has set the ambitious target of creating a Net Zero Carbon District by 2030. This will and must be at the heart of everything we do going forward. To achieve our net-zero carbon ambitions we must seek new ways of doing things and seek out new approaches to delivering services and accessing investment. We must work more closely together, across the public, business and community sectors; to find solutions for the challenges we are all facing.

The result will be:

- Our leisure and cultural facilities will be fit for purpose
- A District where our residents will have the opportunity to enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle
- A healthier and more physically active population
- A District where our residents are able to live full, active, healthy and independent lives
- Vulnerable individuals are supported and safeguarded.
- There is increased awareness of the support available to homeless applicants
- We work towards eliminating street homelessness
- A green sustainable District that cares about the environment and tackling climate change

Objective 2.1 - Providing opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles

How we will deliver this:

- (i) Continue to invest in our facilities, parks and play areas:
- (ii) Work to secure external funding to support investment in our leisure facilities
- (iii) Assess the impact of COVID-19 on the Council's leisure and culture services to help transform and shape those services going forward
- (iv) Develop and deliver the Council's Health, Wellbeing and Physical Activity Strategy
- (v) Continue to provide affordable, varied and locally accessible facilities for sport and leisure:
- (vi) Encourage and support people of all ages to have active and healthy lifestyles to improve and maintain their physical and mental wellbeing:
- (vii) Work with partners to help and support our residents to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle
- (viii) Promote the use of green open spaces and our parks for exercise and activity
- (ix) Help and facilitate the delivery of a successful Commonwealth Games event in our District and to maximise the opportunities for local enterprise, culture, tourism and to raise awareness of the benefits of an active lifestyle
- (x) Maximise the physical opportunities and legacy for our residents from our investment in the Commonwealth Games 2022 Mountain Biking Event

Measures:

- Increase in physical activity in adults (%)
- Reduction in inactivity levels (%)
- Number of visits to leisure centres
- Number of memberships
- Uptake on GP referrals
- Number of leisure concessions

Objective 2.2 Supporting Vulnerable Residents

How we will deliver this:

- (i) Poverty Strategy and action plan to be developed.
- (ii) Monitor the impact and effectiveness of our new Housing Assistance Policy - Independent Living 2020 on helping older residents and those living with disabilities, to live healthier and more independent lives
- (iii) Continue to focus on prevention of homelessness in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act
- (iv) Develop the provision of homelessness services through maximisation of homelessness grant funding and other resources
- (v) Provide funding to voluntary organisations to provide free independent, impartial and confidential advice to our residents who are facing pressing issues in their lives, whether that be general advice or debt management
- (vi) Provide increased support for high risk victims of domestic abuse in partnership via the weekly local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- (vii) Raise and increase awareness of the risk of harm of alcohol and substance misuse
- (viii) Provide needs-led, person centred support to those young people engaging in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and at risk of school exclusion

- (ix) Work with agencies to develop a programme of engaging with the voluntary sector and community groups to provide advice, support and signposting for vulnerable residents

Measures:

- Numbers of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) applications and completions
- Amount of DFG assistance provided
- Numbers of homelessness preventions and cases
- Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Pathway (Housing First) Project – continued provision to Project provider (5 flats)

Objective 2.3 - Creating a greener, sustainable community and environment

How we will deliver this:

- (i) Develop an Environmental Strategy setting out how we will protect the local environment and implement our Climate Change Action Plan to reduce our impact on climate change and work towards the Council's aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- (ii) Work collaboratively to find solutions to tackling the impact of climate change
- (iii) Maintain and improve our parks, green spaces and countryside so that they remain attractive and enhance our quality of life.
- (iv) Work and empower local communities to support local projects and sustain local facilities such as play areas, parks and open spaces.
- (v) Develop our Open Spaces Strategy to support the adoption of the Local Plan by the end of 2023 - delivering green spaces as part of new residential and business developments.
- (vi) Protect and enhance our high quality and unique natural environment including our green belt, SSSIs and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- (vii) Keep our District clean.
- (viii) Promote and raise awareness to support our residents in reducing residual waste and increase recycling.
- (ix) Tackle waste crime such as fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering and increase recycling.
- (x) Complete and open our new Cannock Chase Cemetery in 2021 to meet the demand for burial space in the south of the District.

Measures:

- Reduction in carbon emissions from baseline – aiming for net zero in 2030
- Retention of six Green Flag Awards
- Recycling rate
- Reduced waste to landfill
- Reduction in number of Fines, Fixed Penalty Notices and Prosecutions for waste crime

Priority 3 - Financially Resilient Council

Why this is important:

The Council has been facing increasing challenges over the last few years in balancing its budget. The Council has seen its core funding from Government fall by 30% over the last four years and the loss of significant business rates income from the closure of Rugeley Power station. While the opening of the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet West Midlands will offset some of this reduction, the Government's funding regime only enables us to retain this income for five years. The Council prior to the pandemic was still estimating a shortfall of approximately £0.58 million in 2022/23 due to the reduction in Government funding.

The pandemic has had a considerable impact on the Council's finances and while the Council has received some additional funding from the Government that has helped to cover the additional costs incurred, the Council has lost income from car parking and other sources.

The Council has also helped to support its key contractor, Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL), which runs the Council's leisure and culture facilities. The overall impact of COVID-19 is likely to last for a number of years. The Council is facing uncertainty as to future funding and in the short term we are balancing the budget by using the Council's reserves. If the additional business rates achieved to date is withdrawn by Government, it is estimated that the Council will face a further reduction in funding of 18% by 2023-24 and will need to find a saving of a minimum of £1m in 2022/23 and onwards.

The Council has been under financial pressure for a number of years and efficiency savings have been delivered by providing services in partnership with not for profit organisations such as IHL and the sharing of back office services with Stafford Borough Council. The Business Rates Pool for Staffordshire has enabled additional income to be retained by this Council of £0.8 million in 2019/20.

Prudent financial management has meant there has been no service reductions for a number of years, but this is now looking impossible to maintain. We will continue look to deliver efficiency savings by doing things differently wherever we can, but this alone will not be enough. We will also need to look at reducing or stopping some services. The Council is committed to maintaining the services that matter the most to the public and those we have a statutory duty to provide. We will look to protect the services as much as we can and make savings from non-essential services or by increasing the income we collect.

The result will be:

- Continued delivery of those services that matter the most to the public.

Objective 3.1 To make the best use of limited resources – managing our people, money and assets

How we will deliver this:

We will make effective use of the Council's assets by acting in a manner that ensures the long-term financial viability for the benefit of our residents and the environment. In particular we will:

- (i) Review our services to ensure that they are cost-effective and efficient.
- (ii) Increase our use of digital solutions in delivering services to:
 - maximise the efficiencies arising from the change to working practices presented by the pandemic
 - provide residents with greater access to online services and assistance for those that don't have such access; and
 - encourage electronic payments or direct debits
- (iii) Develop an asset management strategy and maintenance plan.
- (iv) Identify opportunities to enhance, redevelop and transfer the Council's assets to maximise income and / or benefit to the District.
- (v) Develop an Organisational Development Strategy and action plan to provide an effective workforce.

Measures:

- Use of online forms
- Reducing the number of cheque payments
- Workforce diversity statistics

Objective 3.2 Being a financially sustainable Council that lives within its means

How we will deliver this:

We will explore and actively consider all avenues to deliver financial stability, including maximising income available to the Council. In particular we will:

- (i) Continue to manage our finances prudently, identify new sources of revenue to balance our budgets and maximise local revenue streams including council tax and business rates collection to fund services.
- (ii) Apply for all relevant grants.
- (iii) Set a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to fund Council services by a prudent mix of investment, services and tax income, while maintaining adequate reserves.
- (iv) Identify opportunities to generate additional income from our services and assets and review these annually as part of the budget setting process.
- (v) Review the schedule of existing contracts to identify opportunities for rationalisation and savings.
- (vi) Lobby for a fairer distribution of Government funding to sustain essential local services.

Measures:

- Level of council tax collected annually
- National non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected
- Value of successful grant applications, investment secured for the District
- Delivery of the Council's cost savings and income targets
- Total income from service fees and charges
- Income from new sources
- Amount of external funding secured to support the delivery of projects and programmes

Objective 3.3 Consider the impact on the environment in managing our assets and use of resources

How we will deliver this:

We will encourage our employees to think about our use of resources throughout the operations of the Council and in delivering services. In particular we will:

- (i) Undertake an assessment of our current carbon footprint and develop an action plan to reduce this.
- (ii) Develop a management plan to inform how our buildings may be most efficiently maintained and reduce our carbon consumption.
- (iii) Identify opportunities for funding for green initiatives.

Measures:

- Carbon emissions baseline
- Reduction in utilities usage

Engagement carried out to inform our priorities and objectives

We engaged with various audiences as part of the process of agreeing our priorities and objectives for 2021 to 2024.

As part of this process we ran a survey and held a series of online focus groups. Respondents to the survey and the focus groups generally agreed with the three proposed priorities.

The survey results can be found on the Council's website ([link to be inserted here](#)).

The Council's budget and funding

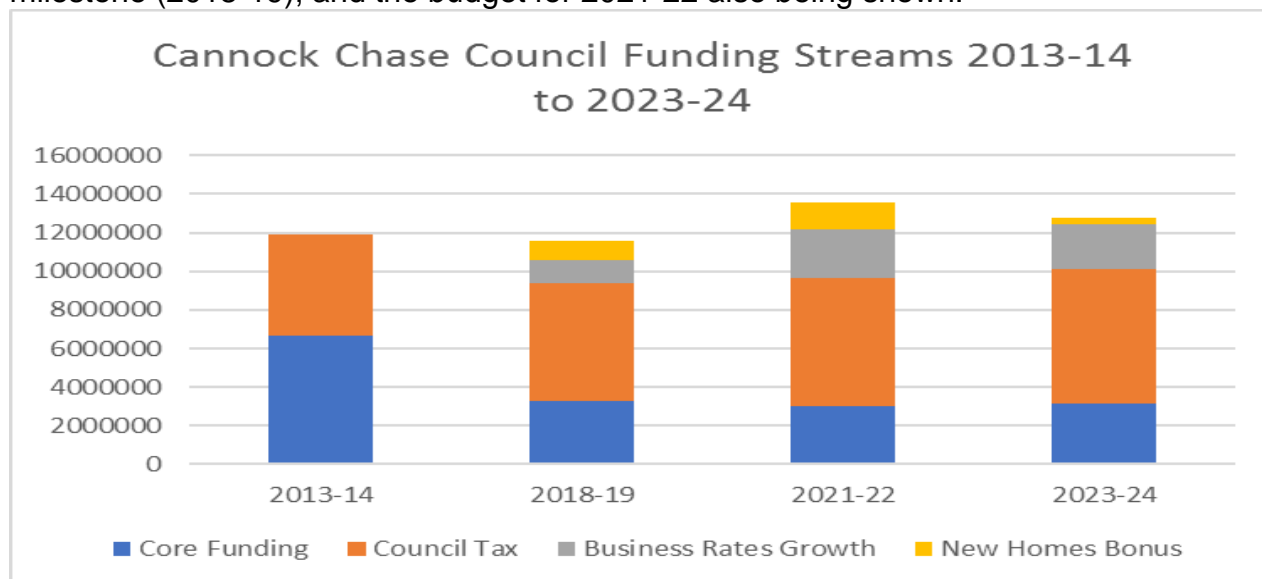
The Council undertakes two distinct roles:

- The provider of services, functions, and responsibilities for all its residents as a District Council (General Fund); and as
- A landlord for its housing stock (Housing Revenue Account)

General Fund

The provision of general services to the Council's residents is now primarily funded from Council Tax (as shown in orange below), with core Government support in the form retained Business Rates (blue), only representing 22.5% of the budget requirement. Funding for District Councils has changed dramatically to date with core Government support reducing by 54% since 2013-14 and this change is set to continue for the duration of the Corporate Plan.

The Graph below covers the ten-year period from 2013-14 to 2023-24, with the 5-year milestone (2018-19), and the budget for 2021-22 also being shown.



The timescale reflects the change in the methodology of Government funding from solely core funding (Revenue Support Grant) to an incentive regime that includes Business Rates Growth and housing growth (New Homes Bonus). Despite the Council performing well to date in both these schemes the total of government funding from 2013-14 to 2021-22 has only increased by less than 5% with Council Tax increasing by some 25%, in line with inflation over this period. Looking forward to the new funding regime from 2022-23 it is likely that by 2023-24 Government Funding in total will have reduced by nearly 13% over the ten period. This being despite the increase in business rates from the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Village

The Council has addressed reduction in funding by the sharing of services with Stafford Borough Council, the development of partnership arrangements for the management of Leisure and Cultural Services, the outsourcing of the Waste Collection Service, the sharing of accommodation with partners and reducing the cost of management. Reductions in services have been kept to a minimum despite funding falling considerably short of the costs of inflation and the increasing pressures faced by local government

The volatility in incentive funding creates great uncertainty in funding for the Council. To date the Council has faced additional pressures as a result of the premature closure of Rugeley Power Station with the loss of retained business rates to the Council in excess of £1m per annum, and the appeal against the Rateable Value for the Amazon site in Rugeley. The ongoing potential impact of COVID 19 on both Rateable Values and Business closures will provide a new challenge for 2021-22 to 2023-24.

The three year Financial plan covering this period shows material deficits between the cost of services and the funding available in 2022-23 and 2023-24, however such shortfalls are based upon the assumed changes to Local Government funding which is now only at concept stage. The level of working balances and earmarked reserves provides resilience over this period and provides transitional funding until details of the new funding regime are available.

The prudent financial management of the Council has meant there has been no service reductions for a number of years, but this is now looking impossible. We will continue look to deliver efficiency savings by doing things differently wherever we can, but this alone will not be enough. We will also need to look at reducing or stopping some services. The Council is committed to maintaining the services that matter the most to the public and those we have a statutory duty to provide. Resources will be redirected to priority areas as detailed in this Corporate Plan We will look to protect the services as much as we can and make savings from non-essential services or by increasing the income we collect.

Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account is a separate account that provides for the maintenance, management, and investment of the Council's Housing Stock, financed through rent income retained by the Council.

The HRA Financial Strategy is determined from a 30-year Business plan. The Business Plan is fully funded and will allow the Council to;

- Provide for the long-term investment in the Councils Housing Stock
- Enhance the level of planned maintenance beyond the Decent Homes Statutory Minimum
- To ensure provision is made for housing management in line with current policies and existing levels of service
- To provide additional council dwellings

Corporate Plan 2021-2024

The Corporate Plan engagement period on the proposed priorities and objectives ran from 19 October to 30 November 2020. As part of this process we had a survey and held a series of online Focus Groups. The survey received 83 responses. Eight Focus Groups were held with a variety of stakeholders including the community, young people, staff, members and the third sector. We also received two additional submissions from Chase Community Independents and Hednesford Town Council. The survey results and some themes from the Focus Groups are set out below:

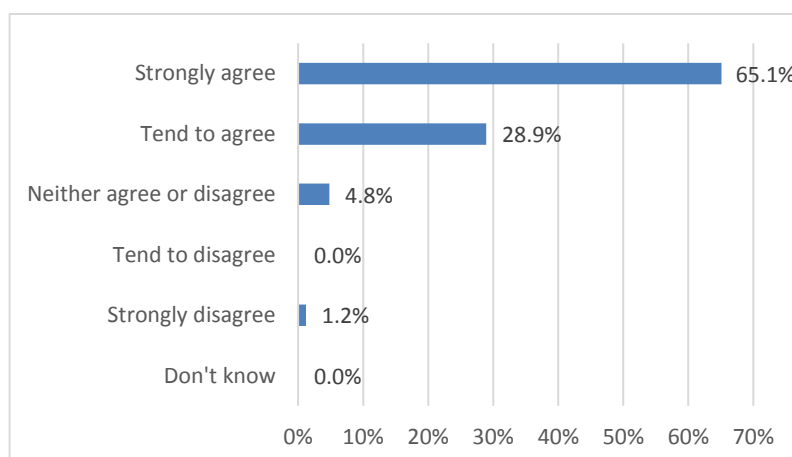
Survey Results

The survey was available online and paper copies were available on request. 83 responses were received in total and were all completed online. The results are set out below:

- 1) **How strongly do you agree or disagree that the three priorities set below are the right ones?**

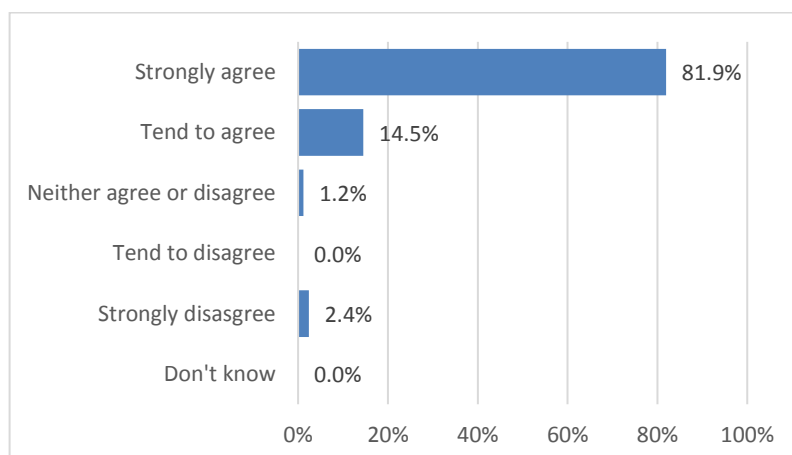
Supporting Economic Recovery

Strongly agree	54
Tend to agree	24
Neither agree nor disagree	4
Tend to disagree	0
Strongly disagree	1
Don't know	0



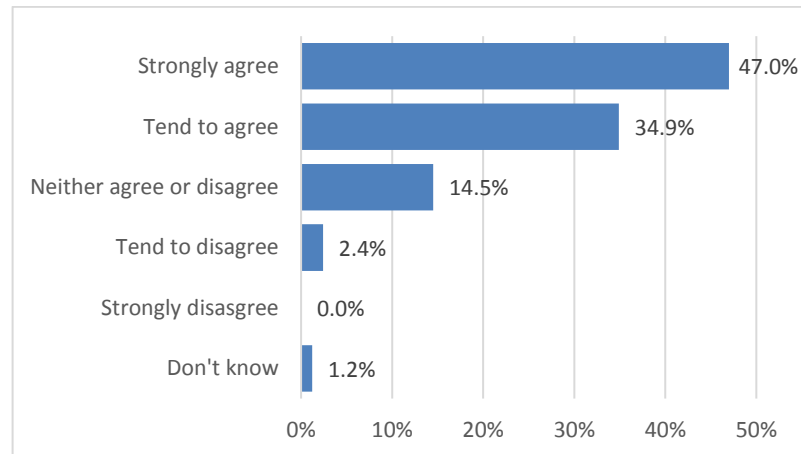
Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Strongly agree	68
Tend to agree	29
Neither agree nor disagree	12
Tend to disagree	0
Strongly disagree	2
Don't know	0



Financially Resilient District

Strongly agree	39
Tend to agree	29
Neither agree nor disagree	12
Tend to disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1



2) If you wish please provide reasons for your answer

There were 24 varied responses to this question. Themes that arose were:

- Good health and wellbeing support the other two priorities
- Economy should be the top priority as that supports the other two priorities
- All three priorities are critical and logical

3) Are there any priorities you feel are missing?

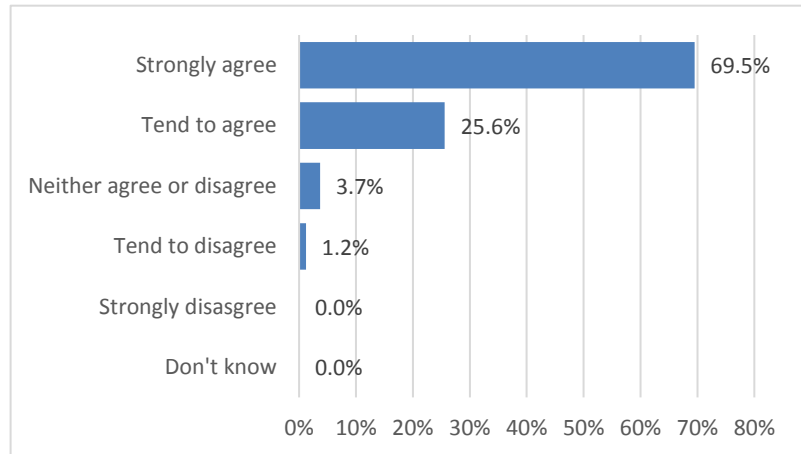
35 responses were received to this question, with 6 answering no/unsure. The main theme emerging was the environment. This was expressed in a variety of ways:

- “Environmental protection and air services”
- “Green and environmental policies are needed to make economic growth sustainable as well as a strong factor in the health and wellbeing of residents”
- “Protecting the natural environment and AONB including surrounding villages”
- “Environmental”
- “None, I don't want them to overly focus on environmental or other 'soft' issues”
- “I believe that the climate emergency should be a fourth priority. It permeates the three chosen, but I think it is important in its own right. The council have declared a climate emergency and will be carbon neutral by 2030; we can only make it happen if we prioritise it”
- “The recovery should be low carbon, sustainable and contribute the UN sustainable development goals. Growth cannot follow the BAU path. There will be choices to be made but a BAU path will be an unsustainable path and it will not deliver, wellbeing or protect resources and environmental resources/ecosystems”

4) How strongly do you agree/disagree with our proposed objectives for the Supporting Economic Recovery priority?

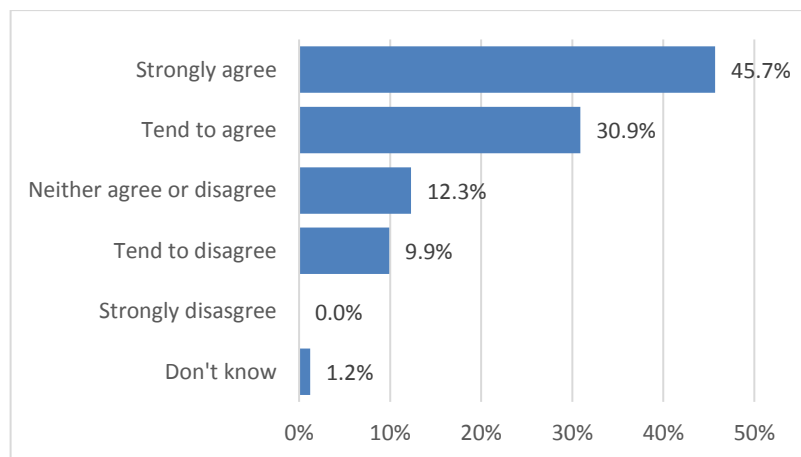
Supporting jobs, enterprise and skill

Strongly agree	57
Tend to agree	21
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Tend to disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



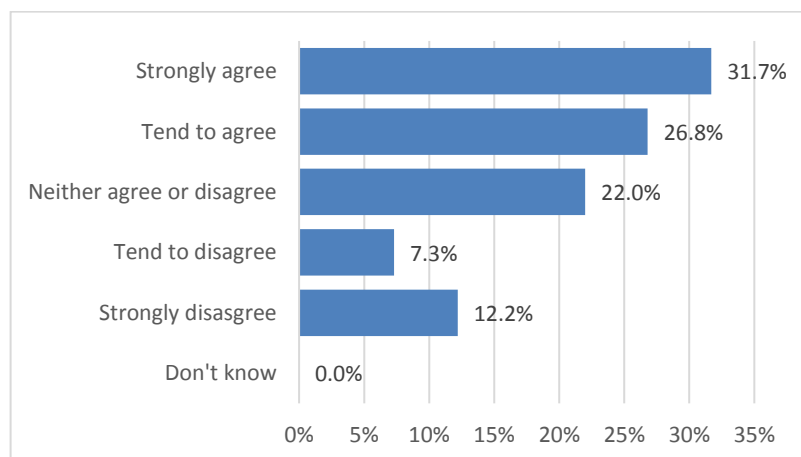
Reshaping our town centres

Strongly agree	37
Tend to agree	25
Neither agree nor disagree	10
Tend to disagree	8
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1



Increasing social housing

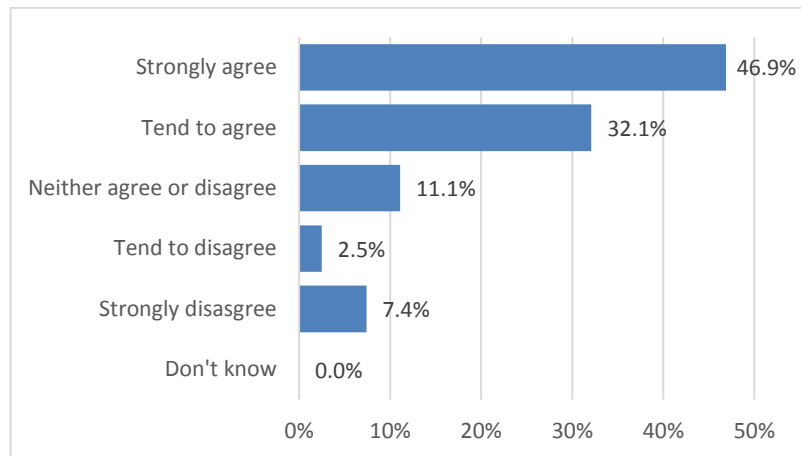
Strongly agree	26
Tend to agree	22
Neither agree nor disagree	18
Tend to disagree	6
Strongly disagree	10
Don't know	0



10 respondents strongly disagreed with increased social housing. Only 2 left comments; these were “social housing is not increasing the tax base or jobs” and the other talked about “over development”.

Clean and green recovery

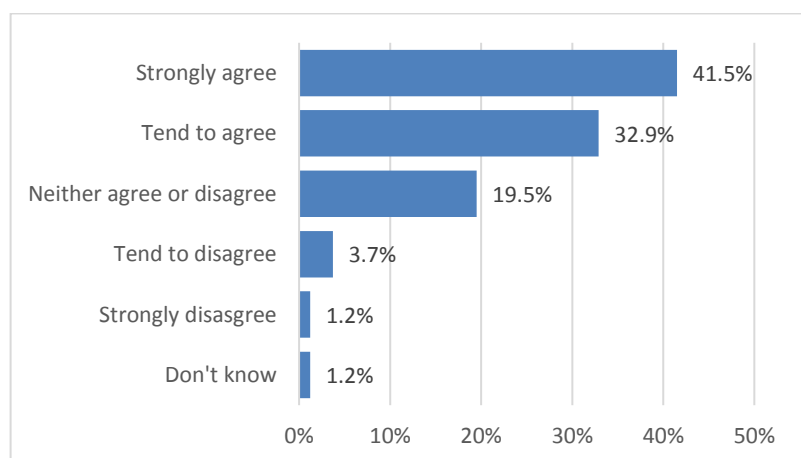
Strongly agree	38
Tend to agree	26
Neither agree nor disagree	9
Tend to disagree	2
Strongly disagree	6
Don't know	0



All respondents that strongly disagreed to this objective also strongly or tended to disagree with creating a greener, sustainable community and environment objective under the Supporting health and wellbeing priority.

Well designed and connected communities

Strongly agree	34
Tend to agree	27
Neither agree nor disagree	16
Tend to disagree	3
Strongly disagree	1
Don't know	1



5) If you wish, please provide reasons for your answer

25 responses were received to this question. Themes arising were:

- What is meant by short/medium/long term? Short term objectives needing to be long term commitments.
- Poor town centres
- Interlinking clean and green into other objectives
- Recover/promote green spaces
- Supporting jobs – needs to be long term, quality jobs, think about young people

6) Are there any objectives you feel are missing?

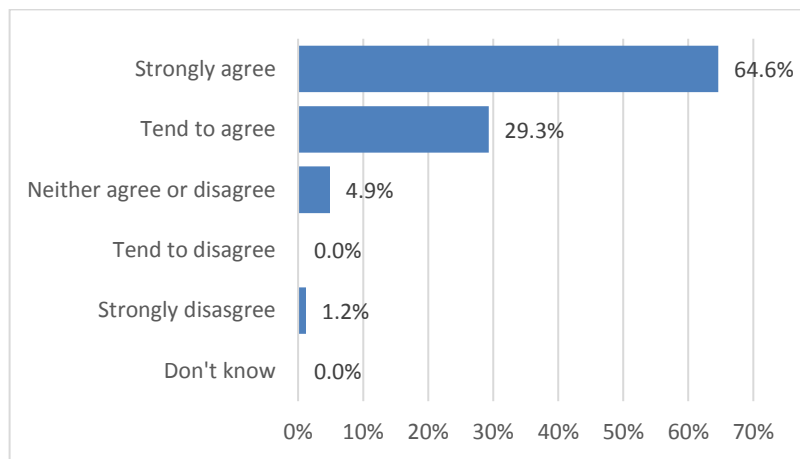
13 responses were received to this question and no themes arose.

7) How strongly do you agree/disagree with our proposed objectives for the Supporting Health and Wellbeing priority?

One person strongly disagreed with Supporting Health and Wellbeing as a priority. They also strongly disagreed with all the objectives under this priority.

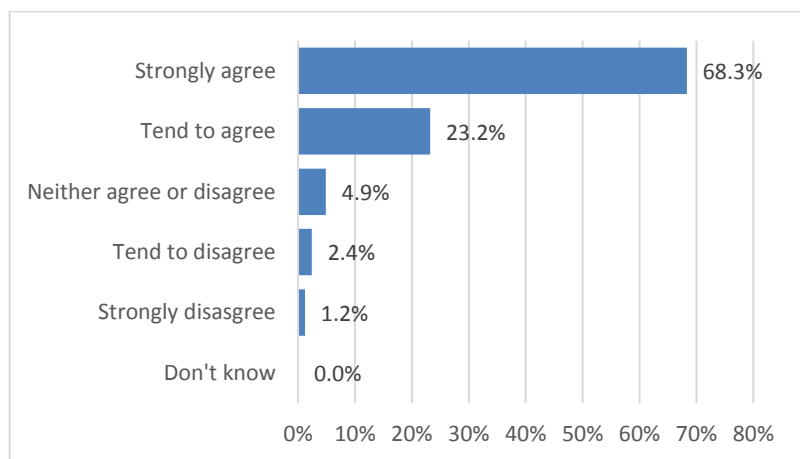
Providing opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles

Strongly agree	53
Tend to agree	24
Neither agree nor disagree	4
Tend to disagree	0
Strongly disagree	1
Don't know	0



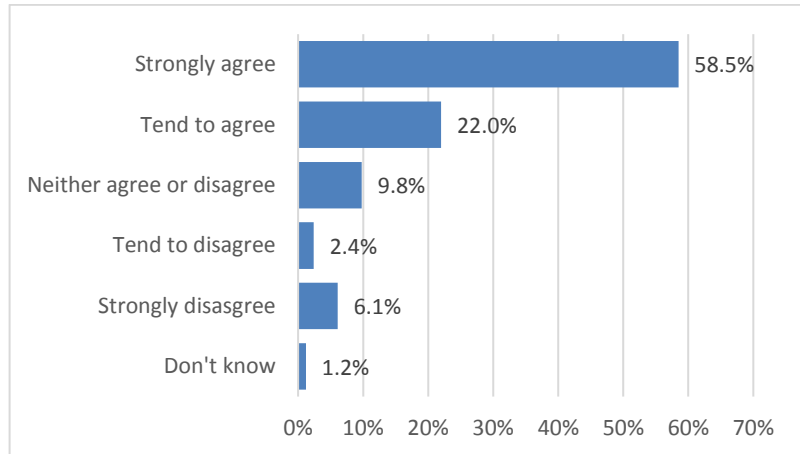
Supporting vulnerable people and engaging with our communities

Strongly agree	56
Tend to agree	19
Neither agree nor disagree	4
Tend to disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1
Don't know	0



Creating a greener, sustainable community and environment

Strongly agree	48
Tend to agree	18
Neither agree nor disagree	8
Tend to disagree	2
Strongly disagree	5
Don't know	1



8) If you wish please provide reasons for your answer

19 responses were received to this question. The main theme was the importance of green open spaces/parks (4)

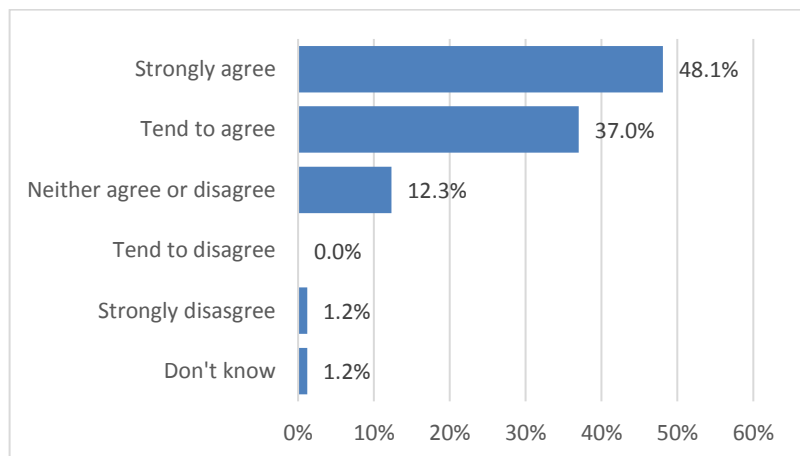
9) Are there any objectives you feel are missing?

14 responses were received and the main theme was the importance of open spaces (3)

10) How strongly do you agree/disagree with our proposed objectives for the Financially Resilient District Priority?

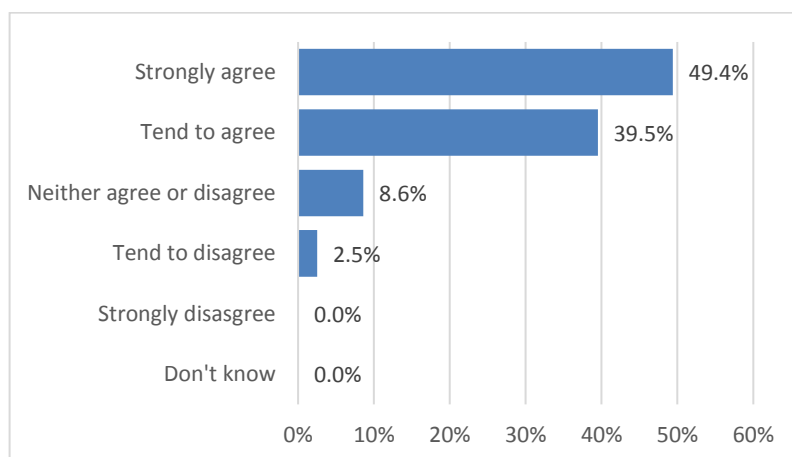
To protect frontline services by: being a financially sustainable council that lives within its means

Strongly agree	39
Tend to agree	30
Neither agree or disagree	10
Tend to disagree	0
Strongly disagree	1
Don't know	1



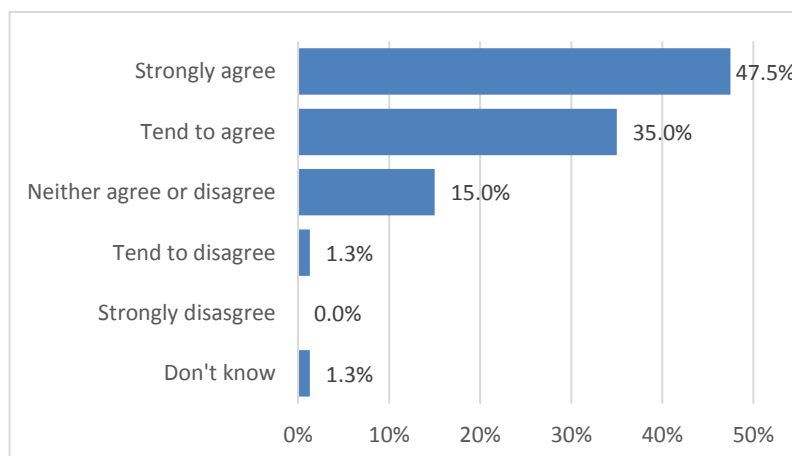
To protect frontline services by: making the best use of limited resources – managing our people, money and assets

Strongly agree	40
Tend to agree	32
Neither agree nor disagree	7
Tend to disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



To protect frontline services by: maintaining a robust corporate infrastructure which underpins the delivery of critical services

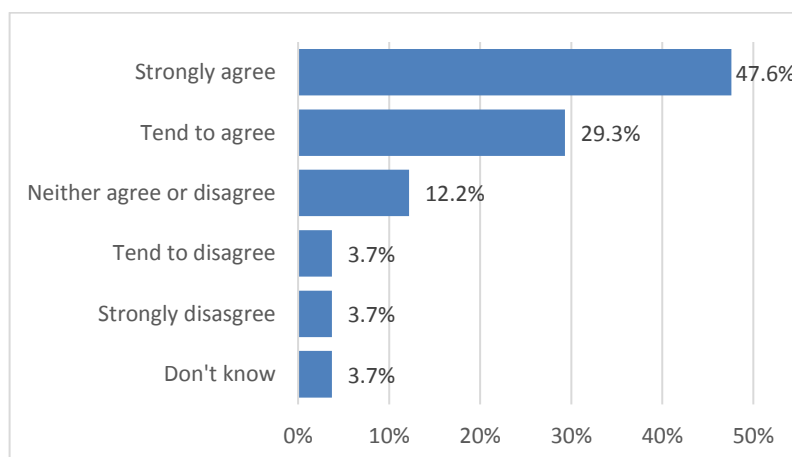
Strongly agree	38
Tend to agree	28
Neither agree nor disagree	12
Tend to disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1



The respondent that strongly disagreed left no explanation as to why they answered this way.

To realign and attract resources that enables the Council to facilitate an economy, community and environment that is more resilient in the future

Strongly agree	39
Tend to agree	24
Neither agree nor disagree	10
Tend to disagree	3
Strongly disagree	3
Don't know	3



Of those that strongly disagreed, 2 gave no explanation. The third said “Support the VCS sector to do what it does best and allow movement of resources to where its most

needed. Don't inflate salaries of council staff over activities and crucial support which directly benefits the community"

11) If you wish please provide reasons for your answer

13 responses were received. The main theme arising was that the first three objectives are common sense and should be expected (4). 2 respondents said that they did not understand the last objective.

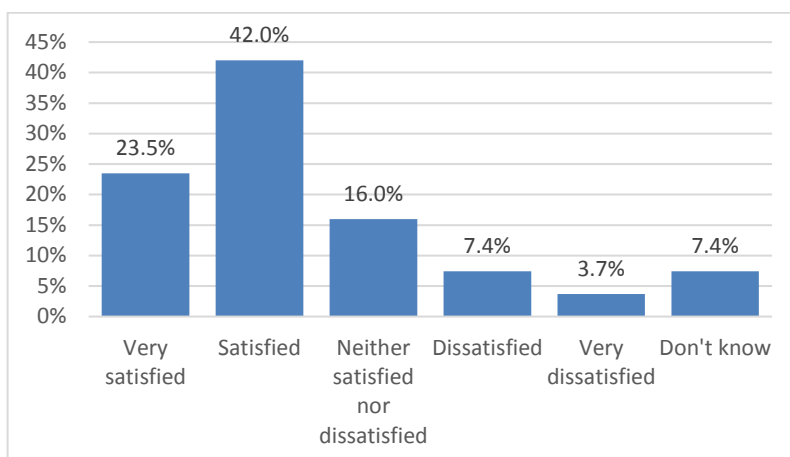
12) Are there any objectives you feel are missing?

Only 4 responses were received and they all varied.

13) Overall, how satisfied are you with the District of Cannock Chase as a place to live, visit or work?

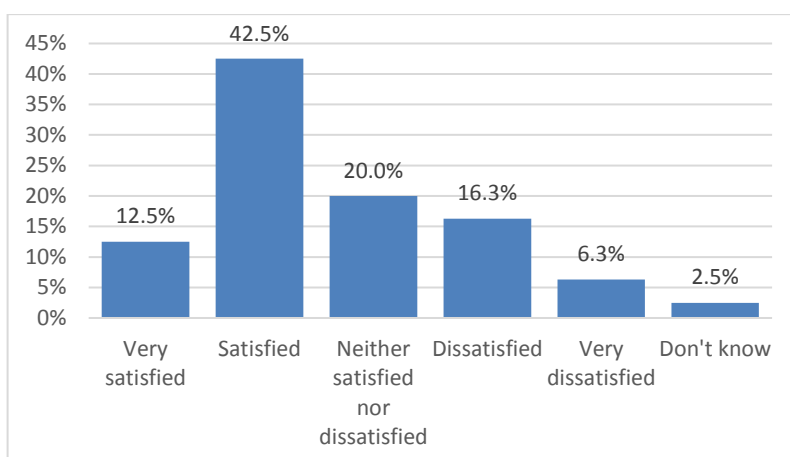
Live

Very satisfied	19
Satisfied	34
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13
Dissatisfied	6
Very dissatisfied	3
Don't know	6



Visit

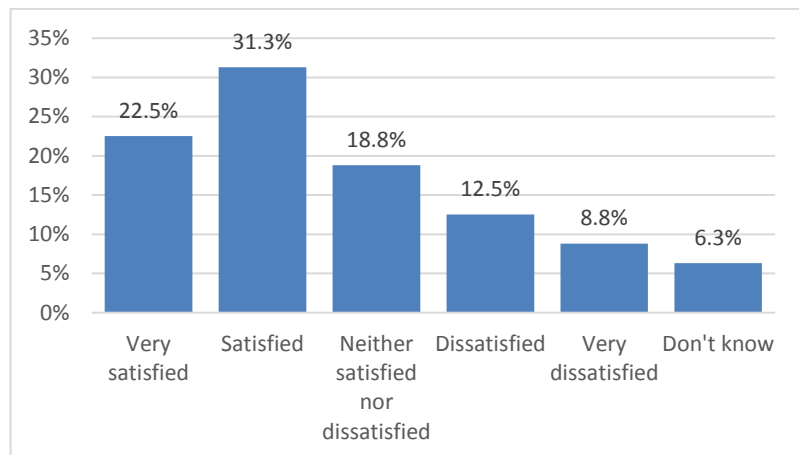
Very satisfied	10
Satisfied	34
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16
Dissatisfied	13
Very dissatisfied	5
Don't know	2



Of the 5 that were very dissatisfied with the district as a place to visit, 3 mentioned town centres as an area of concern.

Work

Very satisfied	18
Satisfied	25
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	15
Dissatisfied	10
Very dissatisfied	7
Don't know	5



14) What words would you choose to describe how you would want Cannock Chase District to be in three years time?

61 responses were received to this question. Some chose to write paragraphs about how they would choose to describe the District in three years time whilst others picked words. The most popular words used were:

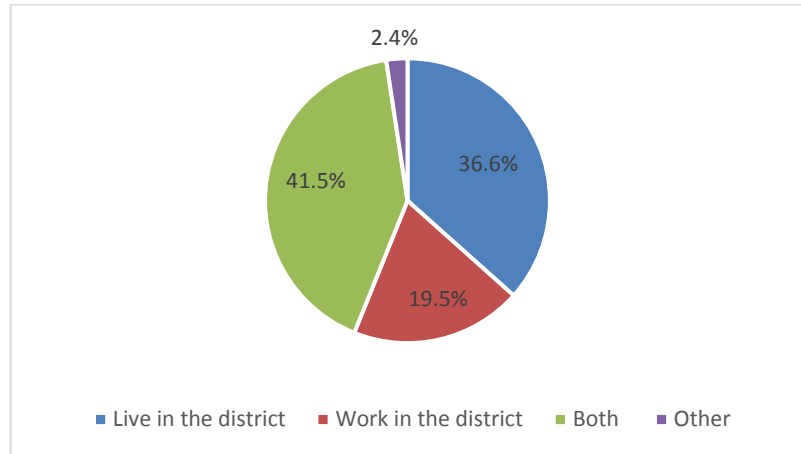
- Green/greener (7)
- Clean/tidy (7)
- Vibrant (6)
- Prosperous (5)
- Welcoming/inviting (4)
- Sustainable (3)
- Job opportunities (3)

15) Do you have any further comments/suggestions on the priorities and objectives?

25 responses were received. Responses varied with a theme focusing on town centres (4). 2 respondents felt that the language used in this survey is hard to understand.

16) Do you

Live in the district	30
Work in the district	16
Both	34
Other	2



Focus Groups feedback – Corporate Plan

Below is a snippet of some of the discussions from these groups. The full notes are available.

A few general points were raised throughout the process:

- Lack of detail in the objectives
- What is meant by short/medium and long term?
- A lot of these objectives are interlinked and tie in with each other e.g. When supporting jobs, enterprise and skills tie this in with clean and green recovery and consider clean and green when increasing social housing.

Supporting Economic Recovery

Supporting jobs, enterprise and skills

- No true picture yet of what the impact of Covid will be
- Need to think about young people and what will be available for them– encourage more volunteer placements to allow them to get experience
- Don't just focus on digital skills
- Face to face support for those not online or who can't afford to be online
- Focus on good quality jobs with less zero hours contracts
- Council and College need to engage better with employers, especially small ones (meet them)
- What skills do people need to meet these objectives?

Reshaping our town centres

- Time for a rethink – town centres are changing and won't return to how they were previously. This is not just because of Covid. What can the Council do differently?
- More cafes and restaurants
- Think about the impact of MacArthur Glen– how to utilise it to support town centres?
- Think of alternative use for vacant lots i.e. sports clubs, drama
- Have a one stop shop including VCS support in town centres
- Transport links and bringing the three towns together
- Safe and inviting

Increasing Social Housing

- What is the long term vision and how many?
- There have been delays on building and supplies due to Covid
- Social housing is going to be more important than ever post-Covid (job losses)
- Make them quality with the same look and feel of private housing
- Focus on homelessness
- Consider fuel poverty – make eco houses where tenants can afford to pay their bills and could encourage investment in to the district

- Consider pressure on infrastructure when building new properties
- Growth in communities brings in new ideas

Clean and green recovery

- This should be a focus in all that the Council does
- This is a big opportunity
- To be considered when thinking about jobs, enterprise and skills
- Link it in to all objectives

Well designed and connected communities

- What does it mean? Infrastructure or neighbourhoods?
- Build on and capitalize on relationships built with VCS during Covid
- What is the councils role within the VCS sector?
- Benefits of networking, sharing knowledge and supporting local
- Benefits of engaging with young people in community activities
- Think about digital connectivity
- How to bring community 'buzz' back post Covid

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Providing opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles

- This is difficult within Covid restrictions. Must think outside the box, promote individual activities
- Encouraging more people to get involved with mentor-led sports. Working and supporting school clubs
- Having a sports directory so people know what is available across the district. It would support teams and help the council
- Mental health is a big issue and will be bigger due to Covid
- Council stepped back on its dementia work
- Young people activity levels when they have learnt to drive
- Encourage competitions e.g. steps completed
- Obesity levels – think outside the box with projects, growing areas, growing and cooking projects with schools.
- Planning – could there be restrictions on fast food outlets?

Supporting vulnerable people and engaging with our communities

- Important to encourage people out and mixing again post – Covid. Loneliness is a bigger issue now.

- Think about support for groups and their facilities who due to Covid may need help getting up and running again. Work to make use of the volunteers now available after Covid.
- Greater focus on partnership working with VCS
- Support VCS where required i.e. skills development, signposting
- Think about effective signposting and networking. Directories date quickly. Where do people turn to in need? Do people look online or ask the council. Good communication and knowledge are essential
- Don't forget those not classed as vulnerable – a lot of projects focus on vulnerable but what about those classed as JAMS (just about managing)?
- Recognition of what has been achieved during Covid – sharing good news

Creating a greener, sustainable community and environment

- Covid highlighted the importance of parks and opens spaces, more people were out walking and using the spaces.
- Quality and maintenance is required.
- Lack of funding and resources to the parks and open space teams
- Spaces need to be kept safe
- Encourage people to look after spaces i.e. incentivised community litter picks

Financially Resilient District

- Protecting frontline services -avoids cost pressures being put elsewhere. Does it mean other services have to go in order to protect them?
- Both 'front line' and 'back office' are required to deliver services
- Objectives look like they are defending how the Council works now
- Should the objectives be focused on delivering key priorities?
- Think about keeping Cannock pound in Cannock i.e. procuring local, using local businesses
- Bring externally contracted work "in house" where possible
- Using local college to train new recruits
- The objectives are not ambitious
- May have difficult decision ahead – think about the need for change. Living in unprecedented times. What does the Council need to do?
- Think about opportunities to save on fixed costs i.e. council building
- The top three objectives should be embedded anyway
- Consider alternative funding sources i.e. private sector
- Value for money
- Invest and save
- What does objective 4 mean?
- Not detailed enough

Priorities

- Financial Resilience is too narrow – what about social, environmental and economic resilience?
- Community Safety priority
- Climate Change and Green agenda as a priority in its own right
- Such broad priorities they don't miss anything.

Staff feedback

- Consider internal partnerships and addressing internal politics
- Less risk averse
- Information sharing e.g. information to those in direct contact with people about support options available
- Internal workforce development – specific or universal. Can also help with staff retention

Commonwealth Games

- Fantastic opportunity for the district
- Need to focus on the legacy and physical and mental health implications
- The impression made could bring people back in to the district
- Be mindful of the potential impact on the Chase