

Report to Finance and Governance

5th July 2018

Establishing Strategic Priorities for the Council

Recommendation

1. That the Council:
 - a. Agrees its priorities for medium term planning.
 - b. Agrees to communicate these priorities and progress in achieving them to residents on a regular basis.

Report

2. The majority of Councillors took part in a strategic planning workshop on the 15th March. A report of the workshop is attached at Appendix 1. At the workshop a collective view was taken of the priorities for action that should inform the Councils work in the short to medium term. Following the workshop all Councillors were asked to rank these in priority order. The outcome of this exercise is attached at Appendix 2.
3. The Town Council is currently leading the preparation of Neighbourhood Plan and Councillors will also wish to take into account the views emerging from the current consultation. A summary of the consultation outcomes is at Appendix 3. Appendix 4 draws out relationships between the priorities of the Town Council and the views emerging through the Neighbourhood Plan consultation.
4. Members of the public were also invited to comment directly on the draft priorities. 27 people provided their ranking of priorities and Appendix 5 contains a comparison of their response with the draft priorities on Appendix 2.
5. The public response to both the Neighbourhood Plan and the draft Priorities consultation broadly supports the 10 priorities the Council has identified and the priority order in which they have been presented. In terms of the order the Council may wish to consider:
 - a. Moving 'Introducing Traffic Calming' higher up the priority order – although the implementation of the 20mph scheme in July may reduce the importance of this to local people in the future.
 - b. Moving 'Making the Town Attractive for Visitors' higher up the priority order.
 - c. While 'Plan for Car Parking in the Town' not a high priority for people commenting on the priorities it was a high priority for people commenting on the Neighbourhood Plan so it may be appropriate to leave it as a middle ranked priority.
 - d. Moving 'Eye has the physical infrastructure it needs and that it is well used' further down the priority list.

Conclusion

6. Finance and Governance Committee is invited to reconsider the draft Council priorities in the light of public comments and to recommend a final list to full Council in July. Once approved they will form the basis of medium term financial planning for the 2019/20 to 2021/22 period.

Peter Gould

Appendix 1

Eye Town Council – Strategic Planning Workshop - 15th March 2018.

Present:

Colin Ribchester
Mick Robins
Caroline Byles
Richard Berry
Peter Gould
Andrew Evitt
Joan Mann
John Blake
Michael Burke
Mike Smith
John Walker
Maryanne Henderson

In Support:

Wendy Alcock, Ian Haines and Andy Robinson.

The group received presentations on the role of the Town Clerk, the standards required to become a Quality Council, the role of Medium Term Financial Planning and a rolled forward budget for the next three years. The range of the role of the Town Clerk was noted and there was a discussion about the benefits of Quality Council status and having the 'Power of general competence'. It was noted that the rolled forward budget needed balancing funding to be taken from reserves and that the annual deficit was roughly the cost of serving the public loan.

Town Councillors were asked to consider what they would like the Town Council to achieve while they were Town Councillors. They were subsequently asked to consider whether there were any other challenges that the Town faced that its residents would want the Town Council to address on their behalf. The following list of priorities emerged:

Priority	Description
1. A plan for car parking in the town	This would address the need for additional off street spaces, the management of existing off street car parking and the management of on street car parking.
2. A plan for green spaces and recreational areas	This would cover the management and maintenance of green spaces such as The Pennings and the riverside behind the Fire station and improvements to the Town's

	play areas such as The Moors Play area and the Pocket Park.
3. Addressing the needs of young people	This would include facilities and youth 'clubs'/activity sessions. It could also include something like a youth council or a youth development company for training and increasing employment prospects (building on Eye Works for You?).
4. Community safety	Police presence, reduced drug use and anti-social behaviour and making Eye a safe place for residents and visitors.
5. Traffic calming	Including a 20 mph area and zebra crossings.
6. Ensuring the Town Council's assets benefit the Town.	This could include increasing income from the Town Hall, increasing the take up of the allotments or looking at disposing of land holdings.
7. Ensuring Eye has the physical infrastructure it needs and that it is well used.	This could cover better use of Hartismere Hospital, low cost and specialist housing to meet local needs, a Primary school fit for the future, sports facilities, a fully used community centre, a dog park, new or refurbished public toilets the new library.
8. Support for the community sector	To ensure for example that there is support for lonely older people and for young people (see above).
9. Making Eye an attractive place for visitors	A Town attractive for its townscape, historic environment and entertainment. Eye as a centre for Arts.
10. Using the Neighbourhood Plan to influence planning and investment decisions.	Including the amount and type of development identified in the Local Plan and the allocation of the investment that comes with it. One example is redeveloping the Chicken Factory in the Town.

There was a discussion about the organisations that the Town Council would need to work with to effect change in most of the areas discussed. It was noted that an awareness of the priorities of these organisations to improve the chances of co-operation and funding would be beneficial.

Town Councillors were asked to indicate through a 'line out' whether they thought the Town Council had clear set of priorities, whether the people of Eye would know what the Town Council's priorities were and whether the Town Council had a robust evidence base on the views of local people on which to base its priorities. The majority of members indicated through their position on the line that priorities were not very clear, that the public did not know about them and that a robust evidence base was not in place.

There was then a discussion about how this position could be improved:

How should Eye Town Council identify its priorities?

It was agreed to put the priorities discussed earlier into list, to consider which ones were most important by email, to bring a draft Plan to the April meeting and then publish for comment and discuss with residents at the Town meeting in May when the plan would be finalised.

It was also agreed that not everything could be achieved and that there was a need to take a corporate view of priorities and then allocate projects/tasks to the relevant committees. As part of the prioritisation it was important to look at the strategic priorities for SCC, MSDC, CCGs and other relevant agencies to ensure the best strategic fit.

How should Eye Town Council express its priorities?

Use the Annual town meeting to create an annual process. Produce a plan annually and put on the website etc, Communicate progress regularly using the Eye Magazine, Eye 2 Eye, the Website and social media.

- Eye Town Council

How should Eye Town Council fund its priorities?

A 5 year funding plan is required that covers the Town Council's budget and use of its assets, grant funding from MSDC and other sources, investment from development through CIL/S106. **AR 17/3/18**

Appendix 2

Eye Town Council Strategic Planning

Following the workshop on the 15th March 9 Town Councillors have ranked the priorities identified at the meeting. Each ranking has been given a score of 1 to 10 where 1 is highest priority and 10 is lowest priority. These scores were added together and divided by 9 to give the average ranking of importance:

(Lowest score=highest importance)

1. Using the Neighbourhood Plan to influence planning and investment decisions (2.2))
2. Ensuring Eye has the physical infrastructure it needs and that it is well used (3)
3. Ensuring that the Town Councils assets benefit the Town (4.5)
4. Addressing the needs of young people (4.7)
5. Support for the community sector (5.4)
6. A plan for car parking in the Town (6.2)
7. Introducing traffic calming (6.7)
8. Preparing a plan for green spaces and recreational areas (6.9)
9. Improving community safety (7)
10. Making Eye an attractive place for visitors (8.1)

Appendix 3

Eye Neighbourhood Plan - Summary of Consultation Response

- The historic centre may be more appreciated by those living in that part of the town than those living in newer Eye.
- More integration required - walking cycling routes and design?
- Eye's green spaces are valued and need to be protected and maintained.
- Car parking and traffic management/calming are key concerns
- Most people were against more large housing developments but accepted a need for small scale/organic growth and affordable housing. Many recognised a need to provide housing for young people and some wanted to bring together different parts of the town and create social housing in the centre. Another wanted infrastructure to go with the housing including school places and recreational facilities.
- The young people at Eye Works for You wanted social and specialist housing for their needs. There was also a comment by e-mail that there are 20 young adults in Eye with additional needs that will need somewhere to live.
- Yes to a leisure/sports centre
- Big yes for redeveloping the chicken factory site
- Yes to a new primary school
- Hartismere Health and Care should be better used for health

Appendix 4 – Comparison of Current Town Council Priorities, with each other and emerging Neighbourhood Plan Community Priorities

Current Town Council Priority Order	Related Town Council Priorities	Match with Issues Raised in Neighbourhood Plan Consultation
1. Use the Neighbourhood Plan to Influence Change.	The Neighbourhood Plan will help address all of the other priorities to some extent, particularly 2, 6, 8, 9 and 10.	The Neighbourhood Plan will help address many of the issues raised in consultation.
2. Ensuring Eye has the physical infrastructure it needs.	An infrastructure and investment plan is being developed as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process. Related to priority 6.	A leisure centre and swimming pool is strongly supported. Strong support for better car parks and for improved toilets. Strong support for moving the primary school and for Hartismere Health and Care to be better used.
3. Ensuring the Town Council's assets benefit the Town.	Maximising the value of the Town Council's assets could help achieve priorities 2, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10.	
4. Addressing the needs of young people.	Could be supported through funds raised through priority 3.	Not emerging as a major issue overall – although young people have clear ideas for what could be done to provide better facilities to them. Improvements to the Moors Playground receiving a high number of votes.

5. Support for the community sector.	Could be supported through funds raised through priorities 2 and 3.	Not addressed in the consultation.
6. A Plan for Car Parking in the Town.	Related to priority 2 and 10.	A high priority for local people.
7. Improving Community Safety.	Related to priority 8.	Not addressed specifically in the consultation and not emerging as a public concern so far.
8. Introducing Traffic Calming.	Related to priority 7.	A high priority for local people.
9. Preparing a plan for green spaces and open spaces.	Related to priority 10.	A number of comments that more support is needed.
10. Making Eye an Attractive Place for Visitors.	Related to priority 6, 8 and 10.	Making Eye attractive to visitors seems to be a higher priority to local people and Town businesses. Strong support for redeveloping the Chicken Factory for housing and car parking.

Appendix 5 - Comparison of Town Councillors view on priorities with public responses average view on priorities (Average vote in brackets)

Town Councillor Ranking of Priorities	Public Ranking of Response (27 responses)
1. Using the Neighbourhood Plan to influence planning and investment decisions (2.2))	From 1 to 1- Using the Neighbourhood Plan to influence planning and investment decisions (3.5)
2. Ensuring Eye has the physical infrastructure it needs and that it is well used (3)	From 7 to 2 - Introducing traffic calming (3.8)
3. Ensuring that the Town Councils assets benefit the Town (4.5)	From 4 to 3 - Addressing the needs of young people (5.1)
4. Addressing the needs of young people (4.7)	From 3 to =4 - Ensuring that the Town Councils assets benefit the Town From 5 to =4 - Support for the community sector From 10 to =4 - From Making Eye an attractive place for visitors (All 5.5)
5. Support for the community sector (5.4)	
6. A plan for car parking in the Town (6.2)	
7. Introducing traffic calming (6.7)	From 2 to 7 - Ensuring Eye has the physical infrastructure it needs and that it is well used (5.7)

8. Preparing a plan for green spaces and recreational areas (6.9)	From 8 to 8 - Preparing a plan for green spaces and recreational areas (6.7)
9. Improving community safety (7)	From 9 to 9 - Improving community safety (6.9)
10. Making Eye an attractive place for visitors (8.1)	From 6 to 10 - A plan for car parking in the Town (7.1)