**South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council**

**Council 4th October 2021**

**Draft response to ABC Draft Corporate Strategy**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the draft Corporate Plan to 2024

The positive is that many of your objectives and outcomes resonate with those defined in our own Community Plan to 2023. As such, we have been able to link our future activities closely with the achievement of the overarching Ashford Ambition

The SWAN Community Plan was informed through an analysis of the feedback from resident surveys along with an analysis of such things as crime data and interpretation of the Multiple Deprivation Index. In reality it is useful to know that the ABC plan picks up on key issues affecting the SWAN area.

As a new Council it is encouraging to know that, in terms of the bigger picture, we are doing the right things and supporting the idea of “Team Ashford”

The negative is that whilst we may have arguments with some of your conclusions on several individual objectives, the overriding impression of the document is one dominated by local government speak and short on the thing that is likely to be “on top” for most people in 2022 and beyond - ie the cost of delivering the plan

From a professional perspective we consider it to be an impressive document but we are concerned that people won’t understand some the terms used. For example to us, the word “Outcome” is commonplace but we are not convinced that all readers will understand its meaning.

We would suggest that the content is reviewed and the plan is written in plainer English to make it more readable and give the added value of engaging more people in local government

2 points

1. A description of where funds come from is useful to a limited degree as it demonstrates the Council’s attempt to support local taxation with external funding but meaningless to the vast majority. How many people understand what “Interreg” means or what the Climate Change Delivery Fund is for example?
2. The Council considers the document to be short also on performance measures. You have very clearly defined objectives but the only performance measures we can find attributed to them are time related.

Consequently, the SWAN Council feels that although the plan resonates with our own proposed actions and interventions

1. the document would be more meaningful as a communications tool if it was written with the broadest target audience in mind
2. the document would also be more meaningful if it contained a wider assortment of both quantitative and qualitative performance targets. Clearly a lot of work has gone in to defining what should be included in the Ashford Ambition document but how are taxpayers expected to gauge the degree of ambition if they are not given the base and projected target data?
3. it should contain a simple calculation of the projected cost to an average Band D property for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years.

Sue Mullan

Chair SWAN Community Council