

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

13 December 2023

Report by Director of Business Operations & Partnerships

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This paper gives an update on progress to develop the Council’s long term strategic, “Vision for the Future” and seeks agreement on the next steps.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Council is asked to:
 - (a) note that Vision for the Future is being developed around three pillars: “Flourishing Families & Individuals”; “Vibrant Communities & Places”; and “Living Well”, and that work is well underway to map strategies, outcomes and analyse data for key opportunities and issues around the three pillars;
 - (b) note the continued development of the scope of each pillar in order to draft ambitions;
 - (c) agree in principle that work is undertaken to develop proposals for an expert panel to provide critical friend and sounding board support around the three pillars;
 - (d) agree that work is also undertaken to develop proposals for a community conference around Vision for the Future; and
 - (e) agree that a further report will be brought to Council once the work set out in (b), (c) and (d) has been completed.

BACKGROUND

Purpose of Vision for the Future

3. Vision for the Future (VFTF) sits at the top of our strategic planning framework. The Council and Community Planning Partnership have a range of statutory plans and strategies, Vision for the Future provides a unifying framework that brings our plans and strategies together and prevents them pulling in different directions and working against each other. It helps us to make sure that we are making the greatest positive difference to our communities that we can over the longer term, while also setting out what’s important to East Renfrewshire, by laying the foundational understanding of our challenges, assets (in the broadest sense) and strategic opportunities. An ambitious Vision for the Future gives us a “north star”, a framework for thinking about capital investment, land use, transport, communities, and a lens to think about year-to-year revenue spend, particularly in challenging circumstances.

Current Strategic Planning Framework

4. The Council's first "Vision for the Future" document was published in September 2015, providing a 10-year forward direction for the organisation. The document has undergone changes over time to take account of:
 - changing socio-economic demographics and anticipated future trends for the local area through our "Planning for the Future" analysis;
 - a broad assessment of the political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental (PESTLE) trends that impact East Renfrewshire, as well as a self-evaluation of the Council's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT);
 - Residents' priorities, as identified through the Citizens Panel and other engagement activities; and
 - future financial planning scenarios, acknowledging that finance has been and remains one of the most significant areas of uncertainty.

5. Council approved an updated 'Vision for the Future' in February 2020. The aim was to develop this vision over time, in conversation with a range of stakeholders and in tandem with important processes such as Local Development Planning and wider City Region work, with a particular initial focus on the themes of the environment/climate change and building communities. The onset of the pandemic significantly disrupted this work in recent years and a status update was given to Council in March 2022.

6. In June 2023 Council agreed, following cross-party, organisation, and partner engagement, that the three themes "Children & Young People"; "Communities & Place"; and "Promoting Wellbeing & Support the Vulnerable" should further developed to form the core of Vision for the Future. This has resulted in the three pillars outlined above. Council also agreed the outline timeline below:

Autumn 2023	End of 2023	Spring 2024	Autumn 2024
Onboard new Chief Executive	Agree Outcomes - <i>Council & CPP approval required.</i>	Year One Plan Updated Driver Diagrams (How we deliver objectives)	10/15-year ambition – building a more detailed picture of Vision for the Future and what ER will look like in 10-15 years through a range of media.
Conclude Initial Engagement	Explore Expert Panel & Place/Engagement Tools	Key Year One Projects	<i>3-year plan + measures Council & CPP approval</i>
Agree Objectives – <i>Council & CPP approval required.</i>	Assess what ERC need to change about how it works to deliver objectives.	Key Success Measures Community Conference	Update Outcome Delivery Plan, inc. key transformation + org capabilities plan + measures – <i>Council approval</i>
Start Outcome Review		Agree CPP Structure <i>Council & CPP approval required for the plan, diagrams, measures & structure.</i>	Community-Led Locality Plans (Statutory for LOIP) Implement new CPP Arrangements

Focus of current work

7. In addition to activities set out in the timeline above, work is underway to analyse socio-economic data relating to each pillar, map the outcomes contained in existing plans and strategies, and review relevant engagement and research. Work is also being undertaken to link Vision for the Future to key Council, HSCP and partnership plans and strategies including Local Development Plan 3, the Local Transport Strategy, the Council's "Get to Zero" Strategy, the HSCP Strategic Plan, Education ' Local Improvement Plan, which will help inform Vision for the Future.
8. This work is looking at what data and strategy mapping is telling us about what makes East Renfrewshire distinctive, our people, places, and economy, and help us assess whether we are missing anything or need to shift our strategic focus. This will provide a platform to consider how we can work to close the outcomes gaps, undertake prevention work, reduce vulnerability, and enhance resilience, and further embed equality, equity and rights into our work and communities.
9. Our approach to the engagement and workshops is to help build ownership of Vision for the Future, over time, among services and partners, and ultimately communities.
10. We are now approaching the stage where we will need to sense check our focus and levels of ambition. Based on this we want to secure agreement to explore two potential routes to further strengthening Vision for the Future: an expert panel and community conference.

Expert Panel

11. The idea of an Expert Panel is to bring together a group of subject experts from related fields around the three pillars. This group would act as a critical friend and sounding board around Vision for the Future's levels of ambition, our approach to delivery, and progress. These experts would come from a range of backgrounds and sectors, given our demographics and population, some may be from East Renfrewshire. This approach has been used in other areas, for example North Ayrshire Council has a Community Wealth Building expert panel. We are seeking agreement today to explore this idea further, learn from and, if appropriate, will develop proposals for how this could work for Vision for the Future.

Community Conference

12. We are also seeking agreement today to begin exploring the proposals for a community conference around Vision for the Future in 2024. East Renfrewshire has not held a community conference event for several years prior to the pandemic. In this instance the event would not primarily be about Council services, but about the three pillars – engaging local people and communities in discussion about the issues around the three pillars, the wider financial environment and how local people and communities can shape Vision for the Future and contribute to it being realised.
13. Consideration will need to be given to the scale and timing of such an event. While utilising schools may be an option, East Renfrewshire doesn't have easy access to large conferencing facilities, as a result we may have to explore smaller events. We will also have to be mindful of the timing and logistics of a UK General Election. Based on these factors, work will be undertaken to explore the options and potential scope of a community event or events.

NEXT STEPS & CONSIDERATIONS

14. As set out in June, despite the huge financial and societal challenges facing public services, working together with our statutory and community partners, we can attract, utilise, and deploy significant resources, albeit over the long term. This requires:
- a long-term horizon – at least a decade;
 - a clear vision and level of ambition that enjoys cross-party, community and partner support that is stable and consistent; and
 - a flexible delivery model which can adjust to changing circumstances while remaining true to the vision and ambition set out in the plan.
15. In developing East Renfrewshire’s Vision for the Future, we need to be mindful of the need for:
- unequivocal cross-party, partnership and community support for the ambitions within Vision for the Future;
 - ambitious and meaningful objectives which are specific to East Renfrewshire and can be easily understood by key stakeholders and local residents;
 - realistic expectations – recognising that the issues that we are seeking to address are often subject to local, regional, national, and global (macro and micro) factors that we have limited influence over and which can fundamentally constrain our ability to deliver everything that we would like to;
 - genuine partnership “muscle”, the objectives should be broad enough to require partnership working to achieve (i.e., not just be Council service delivery); and
 - clarity of what success would look like.
16. ‘Vision for the Future’ is intended to be a living document which will be regularly updated. It is a direction of travel rather than a detailed strategy. The Council doesn’t claim to have all the answers and this report shows that we are now on a journey to work with others to develop ideas and explore how we can best work together to improve the lives of people across East Renfrewshire over the next 10-15 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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- e) agree that a further report will be brought to Council once the work set out in (b), (c) and (d) has been completed.

REPORT AUTHOR

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Strategic Planning, Council 3 March 2022
- Vision for the Future, Council 27 February 2020
- Vision for the Future, Council, 28 June 2023

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