

Report to the Transformation & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Report Author: Mark Bailey
Job Title: Head of Business improvement & Partnerships
Email: mark.bailey@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk
Telephone: (01782) 742751

Introduction

The Council Plan proposed is for the period 2014-15, which is to be used as a preparation year for the council to undertake further work to ensure it is fit for the future and prepared to face the expected and unexpected challenges of 2015-20 as part of the ongoing 20/20 vision work.

Background

A new style Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Plan was developed for 2013-14 to reflect some of the changes in the political and economic environment and the work undertaken in a review replaced the Corporate Plan document.

This Council Plan for 2014-15 has two sections, and is attached in its entirety at appendix *. The first section sets out the challenges facing the Council and the second section details the measures and activities in order to monitor progress of the plan.

The vision and priorities remain unchanged from the ones in the previous plan and are:

The vision: *To create a borough that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe.*

The priorities:

- A clean, safe and sustainable borough,
- A borough of opportunity,
- A healthy and active community and
- Becoming a co-operative council delivering high quality, community-driven services

Questions to be Addressed

These are some of the considerations noted when refreshing the Council Plan for 2014-15:

- Challenges facing the council in the years ahead such as finance and service provision
- Ensuring that the council is ready to take control and plan for the future
- Addressing local needs and ensuring they are met
- Ensuring that the council's strategies underpinning the Plan are reviewed and aligned to the Council Plan
- Encouraging and supporting communities and organisations to have the confidence to take control of their own lives and the area they live in
- Developing outcomes that are relevant to the actions and activities of both internal services and our partners
- The need for SMART indicators and project plans that encourage activity and progress towards our future plans and financial aims without the use of restrictive targets.

Outcomes

There were originally seventeen outcomes which on reflection appear too detailed and do not allow adequate links to the valuable work of our partners and all services. The proposed outcomes detailed in the next version of the Council Plan could be:

Priority: A clean, safe and sustainable borough

- *Our Borough will be safer*
- *Our Borough will be cleaner*
- *Our Borough will be sustainable*

Priority: A borough of opportunity

- *Newcastle is a great place to work*
- *Newcastle is a great place to do business*
- *Newcastle is a great place to live*

Priority: A healthy and active community

- *Everyone has the chance to live a healthy, independent life*
- *Everyone has access to high quality leisure and cultural facilities/(activities)*
- *Everyone has the opportunity to get involved in their community*

Priority: Becoming a co-operative council delivering high quality, community-driven services

- *Your council is efficient, open and innovative in its work*
- *Your services are designed and delivered co-operatively*
- *Your community is strong and well supported*

These are clear, easily communicated outcomes that allow simple links to the strategic direction of council services, communities and partner organisations.

Supporting Information

Officers have developed the Council Plan, its content and layout, taking into consideration their findings and information from previous work undertaken and by the need for the council to be in a strong position to establish and progress plans. To ensure the document reflects the overall ambition of the council over the next year, the following areas will be focused on:

- Review of the Plan's structure;
- Involvement of stakeholders in the process
- Review the vision of the council;
- Review the four key priorities (to be relevant and meaningful);
- Review and challenge the outcomes ensuring they are linked to priorities;
- Ensure the key strategies of the council are linked to the plan;
- Acknowledge changes which impact on the content
- Inclusion of demographic and other "profile" data, and other changes observed that suggest trends

Invited Partners/Stakeholders/Residents

Added to the information from the activities above is ongoing communication with stakeholders. The council's regular consultations - administered and analysed by the Borough Communications Section in 2012/13 - and the recent budget consultation has been used in the development of the Plan. In addition, services undertake satisfaction surveys on a regular basis to inform the management of service delivery, and this information has been included in the Plan's development.

Constraints

One of the main constraints to consider in the development of the Plan this year is balancing reductions in funding with the provision of quality services and managing increases in demand for services.

The financial restraints for the coming year and how the council intends to deliver identified savings are detailed in the Revenue & Capital Budgets 2014-15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). These activities will be monitored regularly and considered in service planning and other planned activities to ensure the savings are realised.

Conclusions

The Council Plan is the over-arching document which informs and guides the council and acts as the major planning document behind any budget proposals, longer-term strategic plans and also the service planning process. The Council Plan for 2014-15 will be a transitional plan, where preparation and planning is undertaken to ready the council to meet the demands and challenges to service delivery in the borough (as part of the 20/20 Vision

work). Faced with the likely financial restraints leading up to 2020, decisions and planning for the next Council Plan 2015-20 will commence at the beginning of 2014-15 with a timetable of activities to ensure the council is in a good position to meet the expected and unexpected challenges and be fit for the future.

Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)

Communications, Transformation & Partnerships – Cllr Gareth Snell

Background Materials

Working papers held by officer in Council Plan 2014-15 files

Appendices

Draft Council Plan –To be presented at the meeting.