

**Report to the Finance, Resources & Partnerships
Scrutiny Committee**

17th June 2014

Council Plan 2014-16



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

Introduction

This report covers the development of the new Council Plan 2014-16. The Plan is currently being worked on and will cover the period within the 2014-15 financial/municipal year following Annual Council and up to March 2016.

Background and Key Issues

A Council Plan for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough was developed for 2013-14 to reflect changes in the political and economic environment and the work undertaken to replace the former Corporate Plan document.

The Council Plan for 2014-16 builds on the previous version of the Plan and has two main sections.

The second section details the measures and activities in order to monitor progress of the plan and will be available prior the next meeting of this Committee in September 2014.

The first section includes the vision and corporate priorities for the Borough Council and is outlined here.

The vision/corporate priorities remain unchanged from the previous Plan and are:

To create a borough that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe (the vision)

- 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 (the corporate priorities)

In further developing the Council Plan for 2014-16, a number of areas are being worked on, including:

- Providing a strategic policy framework for service and financial planning for 2015/16
- Updating the challenges facing the Council (financial and otherwise)
- Setting out the key activities of the Council under each priority heading
- Reviewing whether local need is being addressed by the Council
- Ensuring that the Council's various strategies (which feed into the Council Plan) are still relevant and are reflected in the Council Plan
- Developing outcomes that are relevant to the actions and activities of both Borough Council services and the services provided by our key partners (e.g. Police, Fire, County Council)
- Including SMART indicators and well-developed project plans so that key actions can be undertaken and it can be seen when work is completed and when it is not and also to be able to measure progress against identified outcomes

The previous version of the Council Plan identified seventeen outcomes which have now been reduced to twelve. The outcomes detailed in the 2014-16 Council plan are now:

A clean, safe and sustainable borough,

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

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*

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*

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 outcomes have been identified as meeting the needs of the communities of the Borough.

The latest working version of the Plan is available to Members on request.

Timetable for delivery

The Plan is currently a work in progress with the intention to fully develop it with the involvement of members and officers with the aim of cementing priorities for the current financial year (to accord with approved service and financial plans/budgets).

More importantly, the Plan will provide the strategic policy context for the service and financial planning for 2014-16.

The decision has been taken to adopt a more timely approach in terms of its production to reflect the realities of the municipal and financial year and will inform the service and financial planning processes accordingly. Scrutiny of the Plan's development and delivery will also be undertaken throughout the year.

The following presentations, therefore, of the (draft) Council Plan will allow opportunities for comments and feedback as part of this process of development at the outset of the financial year:

- Outline of plan to Finance, Resources & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee 17 June 2014
- Draft version for approval from Cabinet 23 July 2014
- Approved version to Finance, Resources & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee 1 Sept 2014
- Cabinet response to Scrutiny comments 10 Sept 2014
- Final version to Council 17 Sept 2014
- Implementation from 1st October 2014

The budget consultation findings from 2013/14 have been used in the development of the Plan. In addition services undertake satisfaction surveys in-house on a regular basis to inform the management of service delivery. These findings have also been used in developing the Plan and also understanding the needs of residents and service users.

Constraints

One of the main constraints to consider in the development of the Plan for Newcastle Borough Council is that, like other authorities, balancing reductions in funding with the provision of quality services and increases in demand is a major challenge and potentially limits the ability of the Council to deliver against its plans generally.

The financial picture for 2014/15 and how the council plans to deliver identified savings are detailed in the Revenue & Capital Budgets 2014-15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

These activities will be monitored regularly and considered in service planning and other planned activities to ensure the savings are realised.

By adopting the revised approach the Council will be better able to align resource allocation with the agreed strategic priorities.

Conclusions

The Council Plan informs the Council's overall corporate planning and acts as the major impetus behind budget proposals, longer-term strategic plans and also the service planning process.

Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)

Cllr Mike Stubbs Communications, Policy & Partnerships

Background Materials

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

Appendices

Draft Council Plan –available on request, with final version presented to Cabinet (July 2014)