

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Cabinet - 23 July 2014

1. COUNCIL PLAN 2014/16

Submitted by: Head of Business Improvement, Central Services and Partnerships

Portfolio: Communications, Policy & Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

For Cabinet to consider the proposed new Council Plan (covering the period 2014-16) and to recommend that the Plan is presented to Council at its meeting on 17 September 2014. This follows a review of the Plan's outline by the Finance, Resources & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee (FRPSC) on 17 June 2014. Cabinet is also asked to recommend that the Plan is presented to FRPSC at its meeting on 1 September 2014 for further consideration.

Recommendations

(a) That Cabinet considers and approves the draft Council Plan for 2014/16 (found at Appendix xx)

(b) That Cabinet recommends the Plan is presented to the Finance, Resources & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on 1 September 2014, and to Full Council on 17 September 2014 for final adoption.

Reasons

This report covers the development of the new Council Plan 2014-16. The Plan is currently being developed and will cover the period up to March 2016.

A version of this report was previously presented to FRPSC at its meeting on 17 June 2014.

The Cabinet approved version of the Council Plan presented today will also be presented to FRPSC on 1 September 2014 and presented for final adoption at Council on 17 September 2014.

1 Background and Key Issues

- 1.1 A Council Plan for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough (formerly the Corporate Plan) 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.
- 1.2 The Council Plan for 2014-16 builds on previous versions and has two main sections. The second section details the key activities in order to monitor the plan.
- 1.3 The first section includes the vision and corporate priorities for the Borough Council.
- 1.4 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)

2 Key Issues

2.1 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

3 Development of the Council Plan

3.1 The Council Plan has been developed by examining its content and layout, taking into consideration information from previous work undertaken and the need for the Council to be in a strong position to establish and progress its plans.

3.2 The Plan retains the existing vision for the Council - "to create a Borough that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe" and its existing four corporate priorities.

3.3 The Plan also contains a new set of twelve outcomes to measure and monitor the impact of the Council's work (whether alone or in partnership with others) on these outcomes.

3.4 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:

Priority: 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

The council is efficient, open and innovative in its work

Services are designed and delivered co-operatively

Communities are strong and well supported

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

4 Supporting Information

- 4.1 To supplement information provided by this refresh of the Plan, communication will also be maintained with key stakeholders. For instance, the Council's regular consultations - administered and analysed by the Borough Council's Communications Section - and the recent budget consultation has been used in the ongoing development of the Plan.
- 4.2 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.

5 Timetable for delivery

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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 presented 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

5.4 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.

6 Other Issues

6.1 The main issue to consider in the development of the Plan for Newcastle 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.

6.2 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 (MTFS). These activities will be monitored regularly and considered in service planning and other planned activities to ensure the savings are realised. It is envisaged that the Council Plan will inform the budget setting process over the period from 2014-16.

6.3 By adopting the Plan at this stage in the corporate planning cycle, the Council will be better able to align resource allocation with the agreed strategic priorities

7 Options, Proposal and Reasons for Preferred Solution

7.1 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.

7.2 The Council Plan 2014-16 will be a transitional plan, whereby preparation and planning will be undertaken in order to effectively prepare the Council to meet the longer term demands and challenges to service delivery in the borough (as part of the 2020 Vision work).

7.3 Faced with the likely financial restraints leading up to 2020, decisions and planning for the next Council Plan (2016 onwards) will commence at the beginning of 2015-16 with a timetable of activities to ensure the council is in a good position to meet expected and unexpected challenges and be fit for the future.

7.4 Members are asked to consider the Plan and this covering report and recommended that it be adopted by Full Council in September 2014.

7.5 In considering the Plan/report, Members can: -

Option 1: Approve the Council Plan 2014-16 and its contents as provided

This is the recommended option, albeit with further modifications and additions to be made as required by Council

Option 2: Request significant further changes to the Plan before the document can be approved and adopted

This is also recommended, although Members should be aware that this will delay the process of publishing the Plan and will also have an effect potentially on other related processes and activities in 2014-16.

8. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

8.1 Officers have drafted this plan in line with current codes and legislation.

9. **Equality impact**

9.1 There are no differential impacts in this report.

10. **Financial and Resource Implications**

10.1 The Plan will be the key document informing the development of the overall Budget Strategy of the Council.

11. **Major risks**

11.1 The Plan will be considered against the overall Risk Management Strategy of the Council. This is also done as part of the Service Planning process.

12. **Key Decision information**

12.1 This report is in the Forward Plan.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Final version presented to Cabinet (July 2014) (Appendix x)

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 Working papers held by the Business Improvement Officer (Performance & Procurement) in 'Council Plan 2014-16' files

Management sign off

Each of the designated boxes need to be signed off and dated before going to the appropriate Executive Director/Head of Service for final sign off.

	<u>Signed</u>	Dated
Financial Implications Discussed and Agreed		
Risk Implications Discussed and Agreed		
Legal Implications Discussed and		

Agreed		
H.R. Implications Discussed and Agreed		
ICT Implications Discussed and Agreed		
Report Agreed by: Executive Director/ Head of Service		