

## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM TO COUNCIL

17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2014

#### 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**

To present, for consideration by Council, the proposed new Council Plan, covering the period 2014-16.

#### **Recommendation**

**That Council approves and adopts the Council Plan for 2014-16 (found at Appendix xx) either in its current form or with suggested amendments (see options in Section 5).**

#### **Reasons**

The attached Council Plan 2014-16 covers the 2014-15 financial/municipal year following Annual Council and goes on to also cover the period up to March 2016.

An outline of the Plan was presented to the Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee (FRAPS) at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The draft Plan itself was then presented to Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2014. The (Cabinet) approved version of the Council Plan was finally presented again to FRAPS on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014. Comments made at these meetings by Members have been, as far as possible, reflected in the version of the Plan presented to Council.

### **1. Background/Key Areas of Focus**

- 1.1 A Council Plan (formerly the Corporate 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.
- 1.2 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 the Plan's progress.
- 1.3 The first section includes the vision and corporate priorities for the Borough Council and is outlined here.
- 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)

1.5 The purpose of the Council Plan for 2014-16, is to do the following:

- Provide a strategic policy framework for service and financial planning for 2014/16
- Update the challenges facing the Council (financial and otherwise)
- Set out the key activities of the Council under each priority heading
- Review whether local need is being addressed by the Council
- Ensure that the Council's various strategies (which feed into the Council Plan) are still relevant and are reflected in the Council Plan
- Develop 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)
- Include 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

## **2. Development of the Council Plan**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The Plan retains the existing vision for the Council - "to create a Borough that is prosperous, clean, healthy and safe" and, as already said, its four priorities.
- 2.3 The Plan also contains a new set of twelve outcomes with accompanying measures and activities to measure and monitor the impact of the Council's work (whether alone or in partnership with others) on these outcomes.
- 2.4 The previous version of the Council Plan identified seventeen outcomes which have now been reduced to twelve. The outcomes detailed in the Council Plan 2014-16 are:

### 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 is strong and well supported*

- 2.5 These outcomes have been identified as meeting the needs of the communities of the Borough.
- 2.6 In addition, the Plan's development is aided by communication with key stakeholders to ensure that the Plan remains fit for purpose, including the work done by Communications around the annual budget consultation process. Service satisfaction surveys have also been included in the plan's development.

### **3. Timetable for delivery**

- 3.1 The Council Plan has been developed with the involvement of elected 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.
- 3.2 In contrast to previous years, a more timely approach is being adopted in terms of production of the Plan to reflect the realities of the municipal/financial year, one which will inform the service and financial planning processes accordingly. Scrutiny of the Plan's development and delivery will also be undertaken throughout the year.
- 3.3 As has been reported previously, therefore, the Council Plan has been developed along the following timetable, thereby presenting opportunities for comments and feedback as part of this process 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 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014

### **4 Constraints**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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. These activities will be monitored regularly and considered in service planning and other planned activities to ensure the savings are realised.
- 4.3 By adopting the revised approach the Council will be better able to align resource allocation with the agreed strategic priorities

### **5 Options, Proposal and Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 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.

- 5.2 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).
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 Members are asked to consider the Plan and this covering report which was approved by Cabinet at the meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2014 and endorsed by FRAPS on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014. It is recommended that it now be formally adopted by Council.
- 5.5 In considering the Plan/report, Members can: -

**Option A: Accept and approve the adoption of the new style 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 B: 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

**6. Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 Officers have drafted this Plan in line with current codes and legislation.

**7. Equality impact**

- 7.1 There are no differential impacts in this report.

**8. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 The Plan will form the basis of the implementation of the overall Budget Strategy of the Council for 2015/16.

**9. Major risks**

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

**10. Key Decision information**

- 10.1 This report is in the Forward Plan.

**11. List of Appendices**

- 11.1 Final version presented to Cabinet (July 2014) and FRAPS (September 2014) (Appendix A)

**12. Background Papers**

12.1 Working papers held by officers in 'Council Plan 2014-16' files