



# Northumberland

## County Council

### REPORT TO COUNCIL

DATE: 6 July 2022

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### REPORT OF GOVERNANCE REVIEW - TASK AND FINISH CROSS-PARTY STEERING GROUP – PROGRESS UPDATE

#### Report of Interim Deputy Chief Executive

Cabinet Members: Cllr Glen Sanderson and Cllr Richard Wearmouth

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#### **Purpose of report**

At its meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Council considered a report by the Leader and Deputy Leader on the Solace Independent Governance Review (The ‘Caller Review’). Following this, Council agreed to form a Cross-Party Steering Group on a task and finish basis, to consider the Council’s response to the ‘Caller Review’ and its recommendations. The Task and Finish Steering Group reported back to the County Council on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022 (report of the Leader and Deputy Leader). The report on 21<sup>st</sup> June set out an Initial Plan of Action to implement the Caller Review recommendations. Council considered and agreed the initial Plan of Action and agreed to receive a further report setting out a more detailed timetable and assessment of resources required. This Report sets out the next version of the Action Plan with target dates, Member and Officer leads as well as resources.

#### **Recommendations**

The County Council is recommended by the Governance Review Cross-Party Task and finish Steering Group to:

1. Consider and agree the Task and Finish Steering Group’s Plan of Action (attached as Appendix A) in response to the Caller Review and its recommendations.
2. Submit to the Task and Finish Steering Group for its consideration, suggested additional actions or changes to the proposed actions in the Plan of Action.

#### **Key Issues**

The Independent Governance Review (‘Caller Review’) was reported to Council at its Extraordinary meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The Caller Review and the Council’s response to its recommendations represents a critical opportunity to revise the ways in which we work, improving and strengthening our structures, governance, culture and values.

#### **Background**

At the meeting of the County Council on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Members received a presentation on the Independent Governance Review (known as the ‘Caller Review’). Following this, County Council considered a report by the Leader and Deputy Leader on the Caller Review and agreed to establish a Steering Group on a ‘task and finish’ basis to consider

the recommendations and develop an action plan to implement the recommendations. Following a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June, The Task and Finish Group reported back to an Extraordinary meeting of the County Council on 21st June 2022 with an initial action plan. At its meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> June, Council accepted the findings and recommendations of the Caller Review as well as agreeing the initial Plan of Action and to receive a further, more detailed version of the Plan.

The Steering Group has since met again on 27<sup>th</sup> June and agreed the latest version of the Plan of Action. This is set out at Appendix A. There have been some minor changes and additions to the actions though these remain largely the same as presented to Council on 21<sup>st</sup> June. Detail on resources required and target dates for commencing actions as well as Member and Officer leads have been added. The Plan of Action will continue to be modified, as new and further information becomes available (e.g. on target dates and resources). It is proposed that future reports to Full Council from the Chief Executive Officer will set out progress on delivery of the Caller Review.

### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	The corporate governance arrangements are key to all that the Council does.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Value for money, transparency and accountability are key aims of the Council. Whilst this Report contains no direct financial implications, the delivery of the individual actions in the Plan of Action will have financial implications. Any financial implications will be the subject of separate reports in relation to specific actions at the appropriate time.
<b>Legal</b>	Whilst this report contains no immediate legal implications, the delivery of the individual actions in the Plan of Action may have legal implications. Any legal implications arising from the delivery of specific actions will be brought forward in future reports.
<b>Procurement</b>	NCC Procurement policy and guidance will be applied appropriately in the delivery of the Plan of Action.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Grievances, dignity at work, sickness absences and claims can all be affected by the prevailing culture and policies of the Council
<b>Property</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities</b>	N/A
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Failure to develop and implement an action plan in response to the Caller Review recommendations could impact negatively on the Council's Strategic Risks.

<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	N/A
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	N/A
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	N/A
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	N/A
<b>Wards</b>	N/A

**Reference/Background reports for information**

8<sup>th</sup> June 2022:

[REPORT OF INDEPENDENT CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REVIEW - Report of Leader and Deputy Leader \(Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Corporate Services\)](#)

[REPORT OF INDEPENDENT GOVERNANCE REVIEW](#)

21<sup>st</sup> June 2022:

[REPORT OF GOVERNANCE REVIEW - TASK AND FINISH CROSS-PARTY STEERING GROUP - Report of Interim Chief Executive](#)

**Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Service Director Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Relevant Executive Director	N/A
Interim Executive Director of Planning and Local Services (OBO) Deputy Chief Executive	Rob Murfin
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllrs Sanderson and Wearmouth

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Appendix A Plan of Action