



# Northumberland

## County Council

COMMITTEE: Council

DATE: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023

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Corporate Plan 2023-2026

**Report of Councillor Glen Sanderson, Leader of Council**

**Executive Director: Chief Executive**

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### **1. Purpose of report**

1.1 This Report presents the Council's Corporate Plan for 2023-2026. The Plan builds on the progress from the previous Corporate Plan and presents a refreshed vision, and three Council priorities. This refresh takes account of the changing operating context and the recommendations of the Independent Review of Governance ('Caller Review') which reported to Full Council in June 2022. Moving forward, the three Priorities in the Plan will set the context for the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial planning process. Service planning, the performance framework, and staff appraisal process will all contribute to achieving the priorities.

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 Full Council is recommended to:

- (i) Adopt the Corporate Plan 2023-26.
- (ii) Agree to receive and consider an annual Corporate Plan Achievements Report at Full Council in March each year.
- (iii) Agree to receive and consider an annual Corporate Plan Performance Report at Full Council at the conclusion of Quarter four of the performance cycle.

### **Link to Corporate Plan**

- **Achieving Value for Money** - the Corporate Plan embeds this priority in the Council's budgeting, service planning, performance framework and individual appraisal. The Plan aims to ensure we are delivering Best Value through efficient, effective and accessible services that respond to and meet the needs and expectations of our residents.
- **Tackling Inequalities** – the Corporate Plan embeds this priority in the Council's budgeting, service planning, performance framework and individual appraisal. The Plan aims to ensure people have fair access to the building blocks of a good life.
- **Driving Economic Growth** - the Corporate Plan embeds this priority in the Council's budgeting, service planning, performance framework and individual appraisal. The Plan aims to ensure everyone can benefit a strong and sustainable economy.

### 3. Key issues

3.1 The redrafted Corporate Plan is an opportunity for the Council to agree a Plan which builds on previous progress, presenting a refreshed vision, and the three Council priorities. This refresh is also an opportunity to take account of the changing operating context and the recommendations of the Independent Review of Governance ('Caller Review') which reported to Full Council in June 2022.

### 4. Background

4.1 In its final report to Full Council in June 2022, the Independent Governance Review ('Caller Review') recommended the Council "redraft its Corporate Plan in terms of the Administration's Goals and Objectives, moderated by the capacity of the organisation and the legislative framework".

4.2 Responding to the Caller Review, the Council's Action Plan aimed to:

- To reframe and redraft the Corporate Plan setting out a more granular articulation of milestones and outcomes to achieve the Council's priorities and demonstrating more clearly the role of service performance on delivering the Council's vision.
- As part of the annual budget setting cycle, ensure a clear 'golden thread' between the Corporate Plan, spending plans (Budget), service planning and personal appraisal.
- Develop tools where Members can see how resources are translated into actions, products and outcomes.
- Engage widely with Members, partners and residents on the Corporate Plan.
- Ensure the Corporate Plan is embedded in the organisation and with Members, through communication, engagement and training.

4.3 The Corporate Plan is attached as Appendix 1. The Plan outlines how, moving forward, the three key Priorities will set the context for the Council's Budget process, service planning, performance framework, and staff appraisal processes.

4.4 The Corporate Plan establishes three key Priorities for the Council:

- **Achieving Value for Money** - The Plan aims to ensure we are delivering Best Value through efficient, effective and accessible services that respond to and meet the needs and expectations of our residents.
- **Tackling Inequalities** – The Plan aims to ensure people have fair access to the building blocks of a good life.
- **Driving Economic Growth** - The Plan aims to ensure everyone can benefit from a strong and sustainable economy.

4.5 In achieving the three Priorities, we must also ensure we pass a healthy, clean and sustainable environment to future generations. Each of our three Priorities has a part to play in responding to the Climate Change Emergency. Climate Change threatens to disproportionately affect our poorest areas, and climate policies which are too burdensome for the poorest in society could have an unwelcome effect on inequality. Net Zero is the growth opportunity of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Northumberland can get a huge boost from the low carbon economy, and we are already creating the foundations as we work to become carbon neutral.

4.6 As part of the Corporate Plan refresh and to ensure broader engagement and embedding, we have:

- Held two all-Member Policy Conferences (January 11th and April 3rd), providing wider and deeper Member engagement in in the Corporate Planning process.
- Facilitated three Town and Parish Council meetings held to engage local members and listen to their local priorities.
- Undertaken numerous ‘Staff Corporate Plan Task & Finish Group’ sessions. This has ensured closer, cross-directorate involvement in Corporate Planning. This has also involved discussions on how the Corporate Plan will be translated, through detailed service plans, into the more granular articulation of milestones and outcomes as recommended by the ‘Caller Review’.
- Presented our Priorities and outcomes to the Council’s Health and Wellbeing Board and started conversations on how, as partners, we can share our respective corporate plans.
- Consulted residents and stakeholders on their priorities as part of the Council’s Budget and Corporate Planning online consultation, undertaken over six weeks, (December 2022-January 2023).

4.7 In addition, Officers have engaged with the Council’s Challenge Board on the Corporate Planning process and listened to the feedback and suggestions from Board Members. As a result, we extended the planned timetable from March to May 2023 to enable more engagement. During Summer 2023, we propose further staff, partner and Member engagement. The aim of this is twofold: firstly, to ensure the Plan is embedded with Members and that they are able to hold the organisation to account for delivery and performance; and, secondly to work with staff, partners and Members to evolve our Corporate Plan into a County Plan.

## **Implications**

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| <b>Policy</b>                      | The Corporate Plan sets strategic policy direction across the Council’s Services and functions and establishes the policy context for the Council’s Budget planning, service planning and appraisal processes.   |
| <b>Finance and value for money</b> | Whilst the Corporate Plan and this Report contain no direct financial implications, the delivery of the individual priorities will have financial implications. Any financial implications will be subject of separate reports in relation to specific priorities at the appropriate time.   |
| <b>Legal</b>                       | The Corporate Plan forms part of the Council’s Policy Framework. Whilst the Corporate Plan and this Report contain no immediate legal implications, the delivery of the individual priorities may have legal implications. Any legal implications arising from the delivery of priorities will be brought forward in future reports. |

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|   | The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the adoption of the Corporate Plan is a function reserved to Full Council.  |
| <b>Procurement</b>  | NCC Procurement policy and guidance will be applied appropriately in the delivery of the Corporate Plan Priorities.  |
| <b>Human Resources</b>  | Officers and Members have developed a set of shared values that will underpin everything we do. It will guide the decisions we make, the way we work with each other and the difference we make in our communities. These values are the standards by which we will hold ourselves and each other to account. They are our promise to our residents.   |
| <b>Property</b>   | Within the 'Achieving Value for Money' priority, the Corporate Plan commits to making best use of our land and buildings by maximising their impact and running them efficiently to deliver our operational objectives.  |
| <b>Equalities</b><br>(Impact Assessment attached)<br>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/><br>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> | The Corporate Plan is focused on tackling health inequalities across the County. It contains numerous commitments which will have a potentially positive impact on equalities.   |
| <b>Risk Assessment</b>  | None at this stage.  |
| <b>Crime Disorder &amp;</b>   | The plan commits to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refreshing our Physical Activity Plan so that we create places that are safer for children to play and travel;</li> <li>• Keeping our children safe through early support, assessment and delivering our statutory functions;</li> <li>• Support community cohesion where our communities feel safe and have a sense of belonging;</li> </ul> Ensuring residents enjoy where they live, with clean, well maintained and safe neighbourhoods. |
| <b>Customer Consideration</b>   | The plan commits to make Council services more available, accessible, and easy to use by our customers. This will be supported by a single customer case management system that brings together in one place our customers journeys and data.  |
| <b>Carbon reduction</b>   | Each of our three Priorities has a part to play in responding to the Climate Change Emergency. This is set out in more detail in   |

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|                             | the Corporate Plan document which aligns with the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.  |
| <b>Health and Wellbeing</b> | The Plan establishes Tackling Inequalities as one of the three key Council Priorities. The Council is committed to harnessing all its services and functions and working with partners and communities to address the factors which have the greatest influence on health and wellbeing. |
| <b>Wards</b>                | All  |

Enclosure

Appendix 1

**Background papers:**

N/a

Linked documents

- Corporate Plan 2021-24
- Independent Review of Governance Final Report

**Report sign off.**

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

|  |                      |
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|  | Full Name of Officer |
| Monitoring Officer/Legal                     | Suki Binjal          |
| Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer | Jan Willis           |
| Relevant Executive Director                  | Chief Executive      |
| Chief Executive                              | Dr Helen Paterson    |
| Portfolio Holder(s)                          | Leader of Council    |

**Author and Contact Details**

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