

North Tyneside Council

Report to Council

Date: 23 September 2021

Title: Council Plan Refresh

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| Portfolio(s): Deputy Mayor | Cabinet Member: Cllr Carl Johnson |
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Report from Service Area: Corporate Strategy and Customer Service
Responsible Officer: Jackie Laughton (Tel : 0191 643 7075)
Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

This report seeks Council's approval of an updated Our North Tyneside Council Plan, in light of the findings from engagement with residents and other key stakeholders. This engagement was undertaken in accordance with the approach agreed by Cabinet on 28 June 2021.

1.2 Recommendation:

It is recommended that Council approve the updated Our North Tyneside Council Plan as set out in Appendix 2.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 18 June 2021.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report sets out the proposed updated 2021-2025 Our North Tyneside Plan. The Council Plan is a 'local choice' plan under the Budget and Policy Framework as set out in the Council's Constitution.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

1.5.2 The previous Our North Tyneside Council Plan 2020-2024 was approved by full Council on 18 February 2021. Following the Mayoral election on 6 May 2021 the Council Plan needed to be updated to reflect the policy priorities of the incoming administration. As per the Council's Budget and Policy Framework, as set out in the Council Constitution, the Council Plan requires final approval by full Council.

1.5.3 At its meeting on 28 June 2021 Cabinet approved a plan for internal and external engagement on the initial proposals for an updated Council Plan. Engagement began on Friday 2 July 2021 and concluded on 15 August (including consideration by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee at its meeting on 7 July and by its sub-group on 27 July).

1.5.4 Interim findings from the engagement process were considered by Cabinet on 2 August, where it approved the updated Our North Tyneside Council Plan, subject to consideration of any supplementary information received as a result of the ongoing engagement process. Cabinet also authorised the Deputy Mayor to agree any final changes to the Our North Tyneside Plan, in the light of any further responses received to consultation after 2 August and the end of the engagement process. The updated Our North Tyneside Council Plan is shown in Appendix 1 for approval by Council.

1.5.5 Our North Tyneside Council Plan 2021-24 Engagement

1.5.6 In accordance with the engagement plan agreed by Cabinet in June, the following has been undertaken:

- publication of information about Cabinet's initial Council Plan proposals from the end of June and throughout July. This has been achieved online via the Council's website and at front line locations including the Community Conversation corners in the four Customer First Centres, where these have been available in line with Covid-19 restrictions. Feedback from residents and others is in the process of being gathered via a questionnaire either on-line or at these front-line locations (671 responses were received with, as shown in Appendix 2, the vast majority agreeing with the Council Plan proposals). The engagement process was supported by communications activity via the media, the Authority's website and social media (reaching 68,000 people) to raise awareness of opportunities to take part; and by face-to-face engagement through the Big Community Conversation which engaged 815 people;
- the views of Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee were sought on 7 July and again from its sub-group on 27 July; their feedback is outlined in Appendix 2.
- in addition to the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire, engagement sessions were offered to the following internal and external stakeholder groups:
 - staff
 - businesses
 - schools
 - children and young people
 - trade unions
 - North Tyneside Strategic Partnership

- older people
- carers
- Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic Communities Task Force
- low income households
- groups representing people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

1.5.7 A summary of the findings from the engagement process are shown in Appendix 2.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Council.

Option 1

To approve the recommendation as set out in paragraph 1.2 above

Option 2

To not approve the recommendation as set out in paragraph 1.2 above

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reason:

- The contents of the updated Council Plan have been informed by the findings of a comprehensive engagement approach delivered in line with Covid-19 restrictions
- Approval of the updated Council Plan will inform the Council's budget setting process.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Our North Tyneside Council Plan Engagement Findings

Appendix 2: Updated Our North Tyneside Council Plan 2021-2025

1.9 Contact officers:

Jackie Laughton, Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service, tel. (0191) 643 7075

Pam Colby, Senior Manager Policy Performance and Research, tel. (0191) 643 7252

Claire Emmerson, Senior Manager Financial Strategy and Planning, tel. (0191) 643 8109

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

(1) [Council Plan Refresh](#) report to Cabinet on 28 June 2021

(2) [Council Plan Refresh](#) report to Cabinet on 2 August 2021

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

2.1.1 The Authority's Medium-Term Financial Strategy will be reviewed and aligned to the revised Our North Tyneside Plan. Any financial impact of delivering the priorities outlined in the Plan will be considered as part of the Financial Planning and Budget Process and Budget-setting for 2022/23.

2.2 Legal

The Council has agreed that the Council Plan is part of the policy framework (as a "local choice" plan) and as such it must be agreed in accordance with the rules of procedure relating to the Budget and Policy Framework (Part 4.7 of the Authority's Constitution).

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Consultation has been carried out with the Elected Mayor, Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team. The proposals have been scrutinised as set out in the Authority's Constitution and Budget and Policy Framework Procedure rules.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

The engagement approach has been conducted in accordance with the process set out in paragraphs 1.5.5 to 1.5.7 of this report.

2.4 Human rights

2.4.1 There are no human rights implications from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

2.5.1 In undertaking the process for the refresh of the Council Plan the Authority's aim has at all times been to secure compliance with its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and in particular the Public Sector Equality Duty under that Act. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the engagement approach, with the aim of removing or minimising any disadvantage for people wishing to take part in the engagement activity. The Authority has made direct contact with groups representing people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 to encourage participation and provide engagement in a manner that will meet their needs.

2.6 Risk management

2.6.1 Relevant risks have been identified regarding this report, they are currently held on strategic and corporate risk registers and are being reviewed and managed as part of the Authority's normal risk management process.

2.7 Crime and disorder

2.7.1 The proposals for the refreshed Our North Tyneside Council Plan include a priority theme to build a secure North Tyneside, and in particular to focus on anti-social behaviour.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

2.8.1 The proposals for the refreshed Our North Tyneside Council Plan include a priority theme to build a green North Tyneside.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive X
- Head(s) of Service X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X
- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Assistant Chief Executive X

Appendix 1: Updated Our North Tyneside Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council Plan has a vision of building a better North Tyneside looking to the future. Throughout all that the Council does, there will be a clear focus on listening to and working with residents, businesses, the community and voluntary sector and all other stakeholders to ensure that things are delivered in partnership and in line with the different needs of the borough.

The Council Plan future vision is of a North Tyneside in the following five themes:

- thriving
- family-friendly
- caring
- secure
- green

Each of these five themes has a clear set of policy priorities and outcomes as set out below

A thriving North Tyneside

- We will regenerate the high streets of North Shields and Wallsend, and in addition to the Master Plan for North Shields, we will bring forward Master Plans for Wallsend and Whitley Bay town centre areas. We will also bring investment and improvements to the North West area of the borough and ensure that regeneration delivers ambition, opportunity and benefits for all of our residents;
- We will bring more good quality jobs to North Tyneside – by helping local businesses to sustain and grow, making it attractive for new businesses to set up or relocate in the borough;
- We will invest in adult education and to support apprenticeships to make sure people have the right skills for the job;
- We will keep our libraries and leisure centres open as part of a vibrant range of cultural and sporting activities to support the health and wellbeing of our residents;
- We will continue to be the destination of choice for visitors through the promotion of North Tyneside’s award-winning parks, beaches, festivals and seasonal activities;
- We will reduce the number of derelict properties across the borough; and
- We will review how the council purchases and contracts for goods and services to maximise value for money, social value and environmental sustainability.

A family-friendly North Tyneside

- We will support local schools, making sure all children have access to a high-quality education with opportunities to catch up where needed after the pandemic;
- We will provide outstanding children’s social care services, events and facilities so North Tyneside is a great place for family life; and

- We will ensure all children are ready for school and that schools have an inclusive approach so that all of our children and young people have the best start in life.

A caring North Tyneside

- We will provide great care to all who need it, with extra support available all the way through to the end of the pandemic;
- We will work with the care provision sector to improve the working conditions of care workers;
- People will be cared for, protected and supported if they become vulnerable, including if they become homeless;
- We will support local community groups, carers and young carers and the essential work they do; and
- We will work to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination and ensure the social rights of the people of North Tyneside are key to council decision making.

A secure North Tyneside

- Council wardens will work in partnership with Northumbria Police to prevent and tackle all forms of antisocial behaviour;
- We will invest an additional £2m per year on fixing our roads and pavements;
- We will maintain the Council Tax support scheme that cuts bills for thousands of low income households across North Tyneside;
- We will tackle health and socio-economic inequalities across the borough including through our Poverty Intervention Fund to tackle food poverty; and
- We will provide 5000 affordable homes.

A green North Tyneside

- We will keep increasing the amount of waste that can be recycled and introduce food waste collections and deposit return schemes;
- Council environmental hit squads will crack down on littering;
- We will secure funding to help low income households to install low-carbon heating;
- We will increase opportunities for safe walking and cycling, including providing a segregated cycleway at the coast; and
- We will publish an action plan of the steps we will take and the national investment we will seek to make North Tyneside carbon net-zero by 2030.

Appendix 2: Our North Tyneside Council Plan Engagement Findings

Engagement on the Our North Tyneside Council Plan priorities ran from 2 July- 15 August 2021. The engagement process included a range of approaches including internal and external stakeholder engagement sessions and an on-line questionnaire. It was promoted through: our partners (including AgeUK, VODA and Health Watch), in our libraries and North Tyneside Living housing schemes, the Authority's social media channels (with around 68,000 people reached and around 4,700 clicks on Facebook and over 12,000 engagements on Twitter) and out and about engagement across the borough which resulted in 815 conversations.

A summary of the feedback received is provided below.

Face to face engagement

Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

At its meeting on 7 July, the Committee discussed how to ensure that the Plan was presented in a user friendly way and also to how to approach cross cutting themes such as the climate emergency, and addressing inequalities (including health and life expectancy rates) across the whole of the Council. The Committee also discussed the approach to engagement and they agreed to set up a sub-group to consider the Plan proposals in the context of the feedback received.

The sub-group meet on 27 July and noted the feedback received from residents and other stakeholders. They welcomed the proposed themes in the Plan and suggested the following for consideration

- referencing public transport, pedestrians and car users where appropriate as well as cycling
- including a stronger reference to the importance of improving customer service across the Council

The **North Tyneside Strategic Partnership** has had initial discussions on the high-level themes of the Council Plan and the opportunity for further discussion and engagement has been offered. There was support for the priorities in the plan.

Trades Unions, whose comments focused on care workers, carers and addressing digital exclusion as part of the work on health and socio-economic inequalities.

North Tyneside Youth Council, who discussed all of the themes, highlighting the importance of the 'catching up' priority and giving young people the experience of employment before they leave school, the provision of youth clubs especially in deprived areas, equal access to council services and activities, support for young carers, improved communication around recycling and additional training for council wardens. They also suggested on-going engagement on cycle-way proposals.

The BAME Taskforce felt the plan was ambitious and welcomed the commitment to tackling inequalities.

North Tyneside Residents Panel highlighted the importance of small businesses in the plan. They also raised the need for better communications around activities which would help create a more vibrant borough. The poverty proofing initiatives and the measures to help the vulnerable, and more deprived were welcomed, as was the focus on reducing

inequality. They confirmed that tackling anti-social behaviour continues to be a priority. The group wanted to see more mixed housing developments, but questioned what affordable really meant. Green issues were considered a priority that should be considered at all times, with the possibility of solar panels on all new developments. They asked that electric cars be considered as part of the delivery of the plan. The group wanted an awareness, warning approach to littering with fines to those who did not comply. Finally, there was seen to be a need for more youth clubs and action on dog fouling.

North Tyneside Business Forum, who found the plan positive and reassuring, but would like to see more on support for business start-up and growth, including creating the right infrastructure for businesses to be able to flourish.

On-line

671 responses were received. Of these:

- 74% strongly agree/agree with the proposed Our North Tyneside Priorities (11% disagree)
- 82% strongly agree/agree with the proposed thriving North Tyneside priorities (8% disagree)
- 83% strongly agree/agree with those for a family friendly North Tyneside (6% disagree)
- 83% strongly agree/agree with the caring North Tyneside priorities (5% disagree)
- 79% strongly agree/agree with the secure North Tyneside priorities (11% disagree)
- 77% strongly agree/agree with the green North Tyneside priorities (13% disagree).

The following feedback was also received on each theme.

- Thriving - 330 comments received. People agreed that they are keen to see regeneration and improvements in all parts of the borough, high levels of occupancy on easy to access high streets and libraries being used to their full potential. They also highlighted their agreement with the focus on adult education, jobs, the removal of derelict buildings and the importance of our parks and leisure spaces.
- Family-friendly – 228 comments. People agreed that support for schools is a priority, highlighting investment in school buildings; the support and development of staff; curricula and extra curricula activities; sufficiency of pupil places in local schools; and resourcing of school meals, mental health support for pupils and catch up following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The importance of support and inclusion of children with special educational needs and disabilities was highlighted, as was provision of early years support, childcare, after school clubs, youth clubs and activities, and outdoor spaces to play – including playgrounds. Travel to school, in terms of independent and active travel, was also a focus, as was access to affordable uniforms.
- Caring – 190 comments. There was agreement with the emphasis on supporting care providers, carers and the homeless. People asked for details of how the policy priorities and outcomes will be achieved.
- Secure – 309 comments. People agreed with the development of affordable homes but want to ensure they are truly affordable and that the infrastructure is in place to support them. They would also like to see more social housing and new housing

being built on brownfield sites. They agreed with the need to address anti-social behaviour effectively and to continue to invest in our roads and pavements.

- Green – 338 comments. There was particular support for recycling, action to reduce littering and safe walking. There were mixed views on cycling, most were in favour of more cycle routes but thought choosing the right locations was important, others wanted to see more support for people who are walking or using their cars. The importance of biodiversity and green spaces was highlighted as a priority as was a desire to see an increase in electric charging points and encouragement for the use of public transport or active travel.

In addition, participants were keen to learn more about the detail behind the priorities and how they will be delivered and resourced. There was support for all of the priorities to be delivered in an environmentally sustainable and inclusive but equitable way. The use of simpler language in some parts of the plan was also requested.