

REPORT TITLE: Our 2024/25 Council Plan

Council date	6 March 2024
Council Member	ClIr Cathy Scott
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	No
Purpose of Report	
This report seeks Council approval for the adoption of the 2024/25 Council Plan.	
Recommendations	
1. Consider and approve the adoption of the 2024/25 Council Plan (<u>Appendix 1</u>) as part of the Council's Policy Framework	
Reasons for Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council Plan is included in the Policy Framework for the Council, requiring approval at Full Council The Council Plan provides the overarching strategic direction and framework for the services and activities relating to the business of the Council, helping to prioritise in allocating and managing council resources The plan is an accurate reflection of our aims and priorities, and has been produced in collaboration with the Cabinet, the Executive Leadership Team, and other key council officers from across all directorates. Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the public budget engagement have also informed its development. 	
Resource Implications: The Council Plan sets the strategic framework for the allocation of resources across the whole council, which is set out and decided in the supporting annual budget.	
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u>	Rachel Spencer Henshall, Strategic Director for Corporate Strategy, Commissioning and Public Health 22.02.24
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Isabel Brittain Service Director - Finance 27.02.24
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft Service Director - Legal, Governance and Commissioning 26.02.24

Electoral wards affected: All.

Ward councillors consulted: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee have been consulted in the development of this plan.

Public or private: Public.

Has GDPR been considered? The Council Plan contains no personal information relating to individuals. Pictures are GDPR compliant.

1. Executive Summary

Our 2024/25 Council Plan summarises the Council's long-term commitments, mid-term priorities, and annual deliverables.

The plan restates our ongoing commitment to the long-term vision, shared outcomes, and key partnership strategies. A summary of the areas of focus and indicators for measuring progress against the shared outcomes is set out in the plan. The plan also restates our commitment to our organisational values (kindness, inclusion, and pride) and ways of working (people, partners, and place and our People Strategy).

In the context of the economic and financial challenges currently facing both the Council and the borough, the plan sets out four three-year priorities for the Council:

1. Address our financial position in a fair and balanced way.
2. Strive to transform council services to become more modern, efficient, and effective.
3. Continue to deliver a greener, healthier Kirklees and address the challenges of climate change.
4. Continue to invest and regenerate our towns and villages to support our diverse places and communities to flourish.

To help to make progress against these priorities in the coming financial year, a set of deliverables for the next 12 months are set out against each priority.

Reports on progress against the priorities will be provided to Cabinet.

The plan is based on the input of a wide range of stakeholders, including Cabinet, Executive Leadership Team, Overview and Management Scrutiny Committee, and residents through the recent budget engagement.

2. Information required to take a decision.

2.1 Background

The Council Plan sets the overarching strategic direction for the services and activities relating to the business of the council. It summarises the council's role alongside partners in delivering our vision and shared outcomes and sets out how the council is prioritising our activity in the current context with the resources available. It helps us to prioritise, plan, understand our performance, and communicate with staff, partners, and residents.

The Council Plan restates our commitment to our vision and shared outcomes, agreed with partners.

Together with partners, we use eight shared outcomes to describe:

- the impact we want our shared plans and actions to have
- what we need to focus on to deliver positive outcomes
- how well things are going against the outcomes (through a set of indicators)

These outcomes and indicators are not in any one organisation's control. They are heavily influenced by regional, national, and even international events. Nonetheless, all our collective services and programmes have an impact on them every day, so the council and our partners can use them to help us prioritise collectively and understand the local impact of our collective action. Through improvements in our shared outcomes, our intention is to realise our vision 'for Kirklees to be a district that combines a strong, sustainable economy with a great quality of life – leading to thriving communities, growing businesses, high prosperity and low inequality where people enjoy better health throughout their lives'.

Alongside the eight shared outcomes, the Council has an 'efficient and effective' outcome, which is a commitment that 'Kirklees Council works smart and delivers efficiently and effectively'. Our day-to-day focus for this outcome includes ensuring our staff, leadership, decision-making, processes, partnerships, and transformation activity operates in the best possible way.

The Council's activities include a wide range of day-to-day services and individual programmes. All these services and programmes contribute to our shared outcomes. The Council Plan doesn't attempt to list all these services and programmes but sets out the overarching strategic direction for our activity in the current context with the resources available.

The Council Plan is included in the Policy Framework for the Council as set out in Article 4 of the Council's Constitution. It is therefore decided at Full Council.

The Council Plan has always been developed and decided with consideration of the resources available, however it has been decided at different times of year for a variety of reasons. This year the March 2024 update will align the Council Plan timescales with the financial year and therefore more explicitly and effectively align the priorities with budget. The Council Plan sets out our strategic priorities for the forthcoming financial years (with annual deliverables to focus on in the coming year), and the budget will set out how resources have been aligned to deliver upon those priorities.

The Council Plan helps us understand progress made against our priorities. We currently produce mid-year and end-of-year reports for Cabinet that outline the progress made against our priorities.

2.2 Contents of the plan

Long-term commitments

The 2024/25 Council Plan retains various longer-term commitments that are consistent with previous Council Plans.

- **Vision** – Our vision for Kirklees is ‘to be a district that combines a strong, sustainable economy with a great quality of life - leading to thriving communities, growing businesses, high prosperity and low inequality where people enjoy better health throughout their lives.’
- **Outcomes** – All eight shared outcomes (shared with our partners) and our ‘efficient and effective’ Council outcome. Part 3 of the Council Plan includes a description of the shared outcomes as our ongoing day-to-day focus. It includes the descriptions of the outcomes agreed with our partners, and the agreed indicators (population indicators) that help us to understand the impact of local actions across our partnerships.
- **Key partnership strategies** - Our four key partnership strategies are developed and delivered with partners, across the district. In supporting our shared outcomes and vision for Kirklees, they complement each other and our Council Plan.
- **Ways of working**
 - **Approach** – how we work with people, with and alongside our partners, and in our places to achieve our ambitions.
 - **Values** – Kindness, Inclusion and Pride
 - **Behaviours** – Honest, Supportive, Communicative, Respectful, Flexible and Positive

Three-year priorities

To support our ongoing day-to-day services, the council will focus on four key priorities for the next three years:

1. Address our financial position in a fair and balanced way.
2. Strive to transform council services to become more modern, efficient, and effective.
3. Continue to deliver a greener, healthier Kirklees and address the challenges of climate change.
4. Continue to invest and regenerate our towns and villages to support our diverse places and communities to flourish.

Annual deliverables

For each of the four priorities, the Council Plan includes key activities and outputs we will deliver during the 24/25 financial year. This doesn't aim to summarise everything we do as a council; it sets out key areas of action we will take to deliver on the four priorities.

2.3 Reporting

We currently produce mid-year and end-of-year reports against our priorities to Cabinet. These reports include information about progress made against the priorities set out in the plan as well as information relating to our shared outcomes, to help the council and partners understand our collective impact and prioritise for the future.

As the Council Plan has now been fully aligned to timescales associated with the financial year and budget-setting, reporting against the plan will now also be aligned to the financial year. As such, a delivery report on the four priorities included in the previous July 2023 Council Plan will be presented to Cabinet for consideration in June/July 2024, and will provide information on progress made with delivery, covering the full 23/24 financial year.

Reporting against the new 2024/25 Council Plan will also be aligned to the financial year.

2.4 Communicating the plan

The Council Plan will primarily be read and used for planning by council staff and partners but will be available for all on the Council's website. As in previous years, it will be published as a micro-site on the council website, allowing for a more visual, fully accessible way of presenting the plan, its case studies and other related content as they are developed and added to over time. This will be supplemented by an accessible PDF version of the plan.

The Plan will be proactively communicated through several staff and partner channels. We will collect and disseminate key achievements against the outcomes and priorities using other communications methods (blog posts, articles, case studies etc.), developing these as part of ongoing internal and external communications activities which relate to the Council Plan.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

The Council Plan sets out our commitment to working with people and what that means: We work with people; we don't do things to them. Our focus is on engaging people, building relationships based on trust, and working together with people and communities to solve problems and make the most of opportunities.

Our focus on working with people and partners with a place-based approach remains central to the Council Plan, as it has been in previous iterations. Through a focus on our values and work related to our 'Shaped by People' outcome, we will continue to ensure we prioritise working with people rather than doing to or for (both internally and externally).

3.2 Working with Partners

The Council Plan sets out our commitment to working with partners and what that means: We work with and alongside our partners. With a shared sense of purpose, we bring our collective insight, expertise, and resources together to achieve greater impacts and make our local places even better

The Council Plan includes outcomes and key strategies which are shared with our partners. The Council Plan restates partnership working as an ongoing commitment.

3.3 Place Based Working

The Council Plan sets out our commitment to place-based working and what that means: We recognise the unique identities of our local places, their strengths and aspirations. We know that one size doesn't fit all. We want to enable active citizens to make a difference, recognising their valuable skills, strengths and local knowledge, as well as delivering support and services that are shaped by local people.

Our approach to place-based working is captured as part of our ongoing approach set out within the Council Plan. The Council Plan restates place-based working as an ongoing commitment that is fundamental across all our work.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

One of the four three-year priorities relates to a greener Kirklees with an ongoing commitment to address the challenges of climate change. The Council Plan includes actions relating to addressing the climate emergency and improving our environmental impact alongside the development of the new partnership-led Environment Strategy. Through recommitting to the shared outcomes, the Council Plan also recommitments the Council to the 'Clean and Green' shared outcome, enabling people in Kirklees to enjoy a high quality, clean, and green environment.

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

The Council Plan aims to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people, specifically through the aims outlined in the shared outcomes 'Best Start' and 'Aspire and Achieve' and through the deliverables set out in the Plan. For example, the plan includes a commitment to build on our children's services' continuous improvement plan with integrated models of care and preventative services. Alongside this, improving outcomes for children and young people is inherent in the council's overarching aim to make Kirklees a thriving place to live and work for all residents.

3.6 Financial Implications

The Council Plan sets the strategic framework for the allocation of resources across the whole council, which is set out and decided in the supporting annual budget.

One of the four priorities of the plan is to address our financial position in a fair and balanced way. The Council Plan acknowledges the financial pressures currently being faced by the organisation itself and outlines ways in which the Council will work towards delivering a fair and balanced budget. The Council Plan also acknowledges and makes specific reference to the financial challenges currently being experienced by the people living and working in Kirklees.

3.7 Legal Implications

The Council Plan is included in the Policy Framework for the Council, as set out in Part 2, Article 4 of the Council's Constitution, and as such, it is the decision of Full Council whether to adopt any Council Plan

3.8 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

Our Council Plan restates our commitment to our People Strategy, which sets out how we will achieve our shared outcomes with the support of healthy, motivated and flexible staff with the right skills, values and behaviours to work in partnership with people and places.

The Council Plan provides overarching strategic direction for a broad range of work to be undertaken throughout the council. The Council Plan has an associated Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), which can be found here: <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/delivering-services/integrated-impact-assessments/home/details/IIA-582156927/>

Any activity referred to within the plan will also be subject to individual IIAs when required.

4. Consultation

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) were consulted on the approach to developing the plan, and on an earlier draft of the Plan itself, at an informal meeting on 9 January 2024. OSMC supported the alignment of the plan alongside the budget. The main point of feedback was on the time span of the commitments in that previous draft of the plan, with the suggestion that more longer-term commitments were required to align with the budget planning horizon.

This feedback led to amending the draft to further clarify the timescales behind different elements of the plan. Our vision, outcomes, key partnership strategies and approach have been more clearly explained as being part of our longer-term strategic planning, the four priorities in the document provide a medium-term focus, and the deliverables are more clearly described as 12-month deliverables to provide immediate

areas of focus. Many of the deliverables have timescales longer in duration than the 12-month duration of the plan, however they are key areas for action over the next 12-months in order to deliver on our priorities.

OSMC also asked about the relative priority of health inequalities in the plan. Health inequalities are important for the Council, partners, and residents, and these are being addressed through a wide variety of activities, including those under the greener, healthier Kirklees priority, through our partnership-led Health & Wellbeing Strategy, and through our day-to-day focus on the shared outcomes.

OSMC also asked if future performance could indicate key challenges for the district and Council alongside the successes/progress against the priorities. This is being considered as part of the next progress report.

5. Engagement

A six-week online budget engagement was launched between 21 November 2023 and 2 January 2024 to gather the views of residents on priorities for spending in 2024/25. A total of 946 responses were received, and a summary of the results are appended to the Annual Budget papers, also presented to Council at this meeting.

The survey asked questions relating to:

- How the Council can help generate additional income
- What the council should be prioritising according to what is most important
- Ideas for areas/services where the Council can save money

In terms of how the council can help generate additional income and save money, a key theme focused on raising money from unused buildings and land, reducing office accommodation, and improving costs associated with the management of assets. We have developed a commitment in the plan to a review of the use of buildings across the entire council estate. This will inform changes to ensure the Council's assets are being used as efficiently and effectively as possible, and we will ensure that the review makes a positive contribution to the council's finances. This has been included within the 2024/25 Council Plan as a key deliverable, and there are savings proposals associated with the review within the budget.

Improving internal processes so that they are more efficient, reducing administrative costs, reviewing staffing levels, structures and salaries were also key themes. A deliverable has been developed relating to this feedback under the 'transforming services' priority, with a commitment to ensure all directorates have effective workforce plans, the most is made of technology, and that we continue to benchmark and look for best practice to inform our decision-making. These also continue to be ongoing areas of focus as set out in our 'efficient and effective' outcome.

Reducing spending in relation to investment, regeneration, and externally-funded non-essential projects were also suggested. A commitment has been developed under the 'financial position' priority to review the Capital Plan to support delivery of the overall budget, as well as ensuring delivery of longer-term ambitions for growth and regeneration. Our commitment to invest in our future remains.

Top priorities for residents were protecting vulnerable people of all ages, improving education in schools, preventative services (supporting people early to prevent problems getting worse), and regeneration and investment in towns and villages. This informed the strengthening of commitments in these areas through various deliverables.

As set out above, results of the engagement have been considered and used to inform the development of priorities and deliverables within the 2024/25 Council Plan and budget saving proposals in the supporting budget. The results are reflective of the priorities articulated in the Council Plan and the way in which we have planned resources to deliver on those priorities. Front-line services and services to protect vulnerable children, young people and adults continue to be delivered and developed. Savings have been focused on re-designing and transforming services, improving efficiencies relating to back-office functions, and retaining investment in growth and regeneration for our towns and villages. Results from the engagement will also be utilised in the ongoing management and delivery of budget savings throughout the 2024/25 financial year, so that the Council can ensure it is delivering best value for residents.

6. Options

6.1 Options considered.

1. Whether Council approve the adoption of the 2024/25 Council Plan (**Appendix 1**) as part of the Council's Policy Framework

6.2 Reasons for recommended option

The Council Plan is included in the Policy Framework for the Council, requiring approval at Full Council

The Council Plan provides the overarching strategic direction and framework for the services and activities relating to the business of the Council, helping to prioritise in allocating and managing council resources

The plan is an accurate reflection of our aims and priorities, and has been produced in collaboration with the Cabinet, the Executive Leadership Team, and other key council officers from across all directorates. Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the public budget engagement have also informed its development.

As such, officers recommend that Council approve the adoption of the 2024/25 Council Plan (**Appendix 1**) as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

Any required amendments arising out of the Council meeting will be done through delegated decision to the Service Director for Strategy and Innovation in consultation with the Leader of the Council as the relevant Portfolio Holder.

7. Next steps and timelines

- **April 2024 onwards** – Communication, delivery, and reporting on the commitments in the Council Plan
- If the Council Plan is adopted by Council, it will be published on the council website at www.kirklees.gov.uk/councilplan
- **June/July 2024** – Progress report provided to Cabinet on the 2023/24 Council Plan

8. Contact officer

Stephen Bonnell – Head of Policy, Partnerships and Corporate Planning

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

The previous Council Plan was approved by Council on the 12 July 2023.

[Agenda for Council on Wednesday 12th July 2023, 5.30 pm | Kirklees Council](#)

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out relating to the Council Plan. It can be found here:

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/delivering-services/integrated-impact-assessments/home/details/IIA-582156927/>

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Our Council Plan 2024/25

11. Service Director responsible

Andy Simcox: Service Director – Strategy and Innovation