

Report To:	CABINET
Date:	26TH JUNE 2023
Heading:	CORPORATE PLAN: YEAR-END POSITION 2022/23 AND COMPLETE 4 YEAR OUTTURN
Executive Lead Member:	LEADER
Ward/s:	ALL
Key Decision:	YES
Subject to Call-In:	YES

Purpose of Report

This report presents to Cabinet the progress updates regarding delivery of the final year of the current Corporate Plan 2019-2023 and the April 2022 to March 2023 performance position against the associated Corporate Performance Scorecard.

The report also presents key successes delivered over the four-year period of the Corporate Plan.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. For Cabinet to consider and proactively review the levels of delivery achieved against the Corporate Plan Priorities.**
- 2. For Cabinet to consider and proactively review the levels of performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard as of March 2023.**
- 3. For Cabinet to note that a new Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 is being developed and will be presented to September Cabinet for approval.**

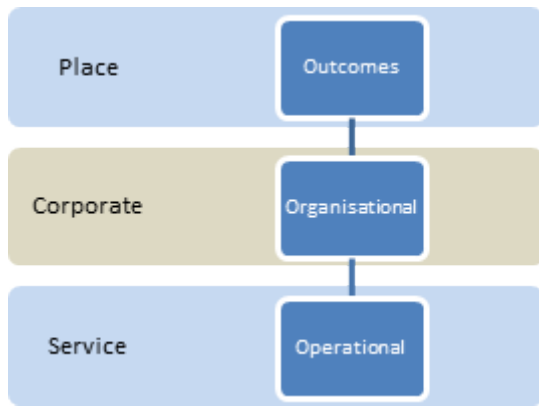
Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The Council's ambitions for the period 2019 – 2023 are clearly identified in a set of revised and updated Corporate Priorities which are presented in our Corporate Plan. These were developed by Cabinet in 2019 and have since been reviewed and updated, with consideration of the impact of the pandemic and our intended recovery activity.

Our priorities for the future and the key projects and initiatives we intended to deliver, were then translated and cascaded, through our Performance and Strategic Planning Framework, into specific Service Plans to facilitate focussed delivery.

The Corporate Plan sits above a wider strategic context which includes the Corporate Project Management Framework, Corporate Performance Indicators and a range of strategic documents relating to the Council and its services, including the Strategic Direction.

Our performance framework incorporates balanced performance scorecards on three separate levels as indicated below.



Our Corporate Scorecard measures organisational performance, and as such, typical perspectives of a balanced scorecard have been adopted including Community and Customer, Funding the Future, Organisational Effectiveness and Our People. The Corporate Scorecard was aligned to our Corporate Priorities and key initiatives identified in the Corporate Plan 2019-2023.

The Council regularly engages with the Local Government Association (LGA) sector led improvement offer, for independent evaluation of the organisation, most recently (January 2023) a peer review of housing was completed. Key recommendations from the LGA support work have been integrated into the refresh of the Corporate Plan and Strategic Direction.

We are a Values based organisation whose purpose is to create a future where everyone has the chance of a better quality of life, as such we have also successfully developed our approach to measuring and understanding Social Value, and this has been incorporated into our Performance Management, Project Management and Procurement frameworks. This report also includes significant outputs as identified from our Social Value measurement.

The Corporate Plan 2019-2023 is now ready for a refresh. Together, the whole organisation has successfully delivered against our ambitious Corporate Priorities over the last four years despite external impacts such as the pandemic and cost of living crisis.

The Council remains ambitious, and as such, over the summer, Cabinet and Leadership team are considering the Council's future priorities so we can build a new Corporate Plan that best captures and reflects our ongoing ambitions for the next four years.

Alternative Options Considered

To present a 'light touch' refresh of the existing Corporate Plan. A robust review of the Council's future priorities will ensure the new Corporate Plan best captures and reflects the strategic direction of the Council for the next four years.

Detailed Information

The Council's Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023 was approved by Cabinet and endorsed by Full Council in September 2019. Subsequent iterations of the Corporate Plan have refreshed our priorities and the key projects and initiatives we intended to deliver.

The Corporate Plan sits above a wider strategic context which includes the Corporate Project Management Framework, Corporate Performance Framework and a range of strategic documents relating to the organisation and its services, including the Strategic Direction.

A balanced scorecard methodology enhances the organisation's performance framework and ability to understand how successfully the Corporate Priorities are being delivered, the approach providing a more rounded view on performance with a greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and quality.

The Corporate Plan was reviewed for its fourth and final year in light of the third year's progress and performance outturn, and also external factors impacting upon the Council such as recovery from the pandemic and responding to new legislation. The plan was refreshed in May 2022 to ensure alignment to the Council's future ambitions and Corporate Priorities for the four-year period of the plan (2019-2023).

Corporate Plan progress is monitored through both the effectiveness of successful delivery of key projects and initiatives and performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard.

This report details progress against delivery of the Corporate Plan, for the period April 2022 to March 2023, as measured through our Corporate Scorecard and Corporate Performance Framework.

This report also captures key successes delivered against each Corporate Priority over the period of the plan 2019-2023.

Overall Position

Overall, the corporate scorecard position for April 2022 to March 2023 indicates the following positive position: -

- 79% of measures achieving or exceeding target, or within 10% variance of target.
- 63% of measures indicating an improved position compared to the same period in the previous year, or within 5% of previous year's performance levels.

Comparison Over the 4 years of the Corporate Plan

An assessment has been made across the Corporate Scorecard of out-turn performance at year-end 2018/19 compared to recent year-end out-turn for 2022/23 to understand performance trends over the life of the existing Corporate Plan.

In summary, 63% of measures indicating an improved position compared to 2018/19 out-turn or are within 5% of those performance levels. This is an extremely positive position given a significant period of the Corporate Plan was impacted by the pandemic.

It should be noted that Ashfield was the only local authority in Nottinghamshire that delivered all tier 1 and 2 critical services without interruption throughout the pandemic. The whole organisation worked effectively together as One Council, re-deploying staff into important roles outside of their normal duties to ensure continuance of critical services, whilst also delivering humanitarian services across the District.

We are extremely pleased with Corporate Plan key successes delivered both in 2022/23 and over the last 4 years:

Health and Happiness

KEY SUCCESSES 2019-2023

- Delivery of the £22.5m phase 1 Leisure Transformation Programme including the completion and formal opening of the new state-of-the-art Kirkby Leisure Centre and construction of the second pool at Hucknall Leisure Centre
- New 10-year Leisure Management contract
- Leisure centre attendances increased to the highest levels we have seen for the last 9 years.
- Launch of Feel-Good Families Programme in 2019 which has benefitted families across the District, including shared information on social media about local activities, advice, cookery tips and more, with over 1,400 followers.
- Significant community support throughout the pandemic, including co-ordination of over £120,000 of Covid Winter Grants (food vouchers) to vulnerable residents.
- Ongoing support to our communities through the Cost-of-Living Crisis
- Armed Forces Covenant Employers Gold Award
- Successful events programme including the introduction of 'Ashfield Day' in 2022 with around 12,000 people attending.

Specific deliverables in 2022/23: -

Health and Happiness

- Arts, Culture and Events –
 - Ashfield Day was a huge success with around 12,000 people attending across the day. Planning is underway for the 2023 event, which will take place on 5th August.
 - The Food and Drink festival which took place in Hucknall in August was a great success again with approximately 4,000 in attendance.
 - Titchfield Park Centenary was also well attended by around 3,000 people.
 - Despite the weather, the Christmas light switch on events were a great success and hugely supported by our communities. Each event featured a stage with live entertainment from local acts, schools and performers with the lights being switched on by the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Council.
 - There were 1,405 attendances through the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) during the Easter, Summer, and October school holidays.
 - £9,950 worth of sponsorship and Councillor contributions was generated to support the events programme.
- Health & Wellbeing –
 - Better Care Fund (BCF) expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) has remained on track throughout the year.
 - A review of the Ashfield Health and Wellbeing Partnership has taken place to strengthen the management group and merge several groups to achieve efficiencies.

- The Leamington Community Partnership has been relaunched, and the Broomhill/Butler's Hill and Coxmoor Community Partnerships are now meeting 6-weekly. Examples of projects include the setting up of a cycling scheme in Broomhill with Ridewise (£9,100), new sensory sessions for parents and young children, and better connections between food banks and clubs. The Council also delivered several community living rooms, family activity days and supported local organisations to access funding.
- Strategic Leisure—
 - Works are complete at the new Kirkby Leisure Centre except for a small number of snagging items and the works to the boundary wall on Station Street. The car park opened on 5th June with c.75% capacity whilst the boundary works are undertaken.
 - The new learner pool at Hucknall Leisure Centre will open in July with a celebration event planned for 15th July.
 - From April 2022 to March 2023 there were 1,348,688 attendances at our leisure centres (a 25% increase compared to April 2021 to March 2022), the highest levels of attendance we have seen in the last 9 years. The opening of the new Kirkby Leisure Centre saw attendances average 22,200 per month,
 - There are now 8,836 fitness members and 3,606 children and young people accessing swimming lessons.
 - A programme of free family activities is funded through the Star Foundation, to increase awareness of facilities such as soft play, fun climb, and TAG Active, whilst providing residents free access to support cost of living challenges.
 - We are now able to assess the value of the leisure facilities in meeting Social Value objectives such as GP reduced visits, hospital admissions, cancer, diabetes, education attainment and crime prevention. Between 1 April 2022- 31 March 2023 the Social Value across the sites and active communities programme totalled £4,868,870, compared with £3,572,215 during the previous financial year.
- Community Engagement –
 - The Council committed to funding four community sector organisations for 2023-24 to the value of £74,800.
 - The Volunteering Process and Policy is under review. A new system is being developed that will enable more volunteers to sign up with a streamlined online process. 124 volunteering enquiries were received during the year.
 - The Community Engagement team have supported 118 requests for support.
- Targeted Health Activities
 - Exercise Referral has continued to grow over the year, the scheme now supports on average, 70 people per month.
 - 60 Ukrainian refugees are accessing free gym, swim and class memberships.
 - Seated exercise classes have started in Willetts Court, Leamington, with an average of 8 – 12 attendances per week.
 - Workplace Health - 35 ADC employees completed the Mental Health First Aid course and are on hand to support staff. Two staff wellbeing days were organised promoting staff benefits, physio, backpain clinics, financial support and more.
- Regulation - between April 2022 and March 2023, environmental health has undertaken 705 inspections and responded to over 1200 service requests.
- Cost of Living – A 15-point Cost of Living Action Plan was developed with the following key successes: -
 - Information and engagement - development of a specific 'Cost of Living Hub' section on the Council's website including a directory developed jointly between the Council and Ashfield Voluntary Action. The Hub has had nearly 13,000 views since being launched.

- A special edition of Ashfield Matters magazine was produced in January 2023, as a non-digital tool to provide timely, up to date information on how residents can access support.
- Warm hubs were set up at the leisure centres and promoted widely.
- External funding of £10,000 was secured to extend the Food Coordinator role until September. All Council allotment holders have been contacted to link them to local food clubs/banks to share excess produce and reduce food waste.

Homes and Housing

KEY SUCCESSES 2019-2023

- Delivery of a significant affordable council housing development programme delivering a total of 120 units since 2019
- Leading work to secure £1m Rough Sleeper Initiative funding for improvement opportunities and support for rough sleepers and those threatened with rough sleeping across the County.
- Successfully bid for £4m funding to improve thermal efficiency ratings of domestic properties, both Council owned and private sector.
- Continuing to support around 1,000 tenants per year with money management advice and tenancy support which has meant, despite the pandemic and cost of living impacts, rent collection rates have remained at 2018/19 levels, with rent arrears reducing by 10% over the last 12 months.
- Installation of carbon monoxide detectors in 99.5% of our properties in just 11 weeks

Specific deliverables in 2022/23: -

- Active affordable housing development programme is now in place in respect of properties to rent with a total of 11 sites delivering over 100 units, with more in the pipeline-
 - Froghopper Lane – 22 contemporary energy efficient homes were handed over to the Council by the Developer and are now fully occupied.
 - Sizeable new developments are under construction at Charlotte Gardens (Maun Valley), due 2023, and at Warwick Close, due 2024.
 - 53 acquisitions have been completed so far (mixture of s106 and market) with bids for a further 40 properties submitted to developers. Market acquisitions still underway, although rising property prices are making it increasingly difficult.
 - Review of land and assets is now complete and a pipeline affordable housing development programme is in place. There is an ongoing review of garage sites in readiness for potential disposal.
- Reducing and preventing homelessness –
 - Actions within Homelessness Strategy Action Plan are being implemented. Work to review the impact of the Strategy is ongoing. Positive and proactive work has seen the number of homelessness preventions throughout 2022 to 2023 increase significantly by 16% compared to April 2021 to March 2022. This is set against a backdrop of a very challenging housing market, with circa 40% of homelessness assessments due to the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy.
 - The pre-tenancy process now provided by the Money Management Advice Team has been reviewed to strengthen affordability checks and encourage a 'rent first' culture. 955 tenants, between April 2022 and March 2023, have been assisted with welfare and money management advice, and all tenancy support cases have been able to

successfully remain in their tenancy following targeted support. Support is promoted through the Tenant Magazine and in correspondence, conversations, and home visits. Housing's Money Advice and Tenancy Sustainment teams secured £108,798 in backdated benefits, additional benefits, and charitable donations during this financial year (April 2022 to March 2023).

- Homes with intensive support, specifically for rough sleepers, have been made available under the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), having a significant positive impact on levels of street homelessness.
- Reinvigorated Sanctuary Scheme preventing homelessness by ensuring survivors of domestic violence can remain safe in their home.
- Active participation in the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and for other asylum and refugee resettlement schemes.
- Housing performance - Void re-let performance continues to improve significantly post pandemic, reducing by 20% from 29.8 days (April 2021 to March 2022) to 23.8 days (April 2022 to March 2023). The issue continues to be difficult to let bedsits in sheltered courts for which attempts are being made to promote, and without which void re-let times would be 20.73 days. The Council's void re-let performance was recognised as exemplary by the LGA Housing Peer Review team.
- Following the introduction of the Social Housing White Paper, multiple sections of the Council are working to ensure that the necessary compliance is in place to meet the new standards and regulations coming into force for the Council's social housing stock. For example, we have also carried out work to ensure the Council is compliant with all regulatory changes brought about by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Suitable Housing -
 - Improvements to the thermal efficiency of older private properties achieved through various 'Green Homes' schemes. Focus on fabric first, solid wall, loft and cavity wall insulation.
 - ECO4 scheme is now operational, the Council is working with installers and local private residents on a range of insulation-based measures.
 - On 29 July 2022 (along with all other social housing landlords) the Council was given the insurmountable task of installing a fully functioning Carbon Monoxide detector in all properties with a gas or solid fuel appliance by 1 October 2022. For the Council this involved 6,153 properties having a detector in place and working in the space of just 11 weeks. By the end of March 2023 all except 32 had been installed.
 - We have recently established a Damp and Mould Task Group to monitor and resolve any damp and mould issues, submitted our response to the Regulator and have also started writing a Damp and Mould Policy. Damp and mould are under the spotlight nationally and as a result the Council has witnessed a significant increase in contact from customers requesting inspections and reporting damp and mould.
- Tackling disrepair and poor housing - Implementation of our new Selective Licensing Scheme for private rented properties in parts of Sutton Central and Stanton Hill. Over 550 licence applications were received by end of March 2023.
- Achieving 'Council of the Year' for the East Midlands region in the 'Energy Efficiency Regional Awards' recognising successful insulation of 104 bungalows across the District over the past 12 months.

Economic Growth and Place

KEY SUCCESSES 2019-2023

- Securing over £70million Towns Fund and Future High Streets Funding, with over half of the projects into delivery and progressing well.
- Securing a further £6.3m Levelling Up Funding and UK Shared Prosperity Funding
- Over £2.2m of social and economic value has now been delivered since measurement via the Social Value Portal commenced, with 122% of commitments made at contract stage being delivered, 60 equivalent local jobs and £654,000 equivalent of local spend. A further £4.9m Social Value has also been delivered through leisure transformation projects.
- The 2022 assessment of the District in relation to Prosperity, which includes detailed data on levels of institutional, economic, and social wellbeing, indicates a significant leap of 45 places, compared nationally out of 374 local authorities, comparative to our 2016 assessed position.

Specific deliverables in 2022/23: -

- Physical regeneration -
 - The four Future High Streets Fund projects are progressing well, with planning approvals in place. The renovation of 14 Low Street has been completed and leased to a new tenant. 9-11 Low Street is progressing towards a construction phase during the summer. The High Pavement House repurposing contract has been awarded and will be completed by the end of the year. A committee has been established to run the new Maker Space when it opens later in the year.
 - 17 Towns Fund project business cases have been completed and approved through the local assurance process. 16 of the projects are now in delivery: Civil Engineering Centre, Construction Centre, Walking and Cycling, Enterprising Ashfield, High Street Property Fund, Kirkby Sports Hub, Visitor Digital, Portland Square, Kings Mill Reservoir, Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium, Library Innovation Centres, Cornerstone Theatre, North Kirkby Gateway, West Kirkby Gateway, Green Ashfield and Sutton Lawn Sports Hub. The ADMC business case has been resubmitted to DLUHC.
 - £3.1m of match funding was secured from the Government's Levelling Up Fund for the Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium, the project is due to start on site later this year.
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Work is ongoing to deliver the programme which includes tendering of the local business and skills themed projects with other District/ Borough Councils to achieve better value for money. Delivery of the communities and place theme projects has commenced with the Walking and Cycling for All project and Hucknall and Coxmoor Safer Streets projects being progressed.
 - The Levelling Up Fund bid for Hucknall will be revised and submitted to the third round of the fund if eligibility requirements can be met. We will also identify and where appropriate, bid for other potential funding sources.
 - There have been several successes this year and good progress made dealing with dilapidated buildings. There are still some sites coming forward that require significant interventions, the list is regularly updated, and work continues.
- Business Support –
 - All business support information has now been transferred on to 32 new Council web pages which includes our District offer and business news. The pages are regularly

updated. Use of media platforms has increased the number of new members. Business Information is distributed regularly and widely, averaging 14 new posts a week.

- Quarterly update meetings are held with a range of industry sector stakeholders and partners to discuss delivery of business support and inward investment goals across the District.
- Two Business Leaders Networking events – one on Transport & Logistics and a second on Global Trading & Technology have been delivered along with a third well received event in March 2023 showcasing the business benefits of apprenticeships. Two events are planned for 2022/23, Automation for You – highlighting the new ADMC – was held in May, 2023 and a further event will be held in November 2023 focussed on Green Business and Decarbonisation. These events also are part of the UKSPF Supporting Local Business delivery.
- International links with Mentor City International Trade Initiative in Ohio, US are being explored. A proposal is being finalised with the potential to run as a pilot programme for 6-months to encourage local inward investment opportunities, open new markets and strengthen supply chain bases for Ashfield businesses.
- The Economic Recovery Plan continues to deliver and includes Industrial Sector Support working with businesses and partners. The Business support team continues to connect with out of area businesses to promote investing in Ashfield and to promote 'innovation and sustainable growth' opportunities (Green Business Growth) across the District via a series of targeted email campaigns. This has included information in Business support directory and low carbon articles in the Discover Ashfield newsletter and Ashfield Matters magazine. Work will now commence on the commissioning of a new Economic Development Strategy to highlight next interventions.
- The Council's Education and Skills Improvement Plan (2022-2031) is being progressed with regular primary / secondary schools and adult skills partnership meetings. The adult skills partnership has representatives from the construction, manufacturing, healthcare, engineering, transport, and logistics sectors. Positive connections are being made with partners and local businesses to foster beneficial connections with local schools. The Council held a Careers Fair on 4th November at the new Kirkby Leisure Centre, involving key public and private sector partners, local businesses, training providers and the secondary school partnership. The event was a success bringing together over 720 individuals seeking job and training opportunities with 91 partners/businesses. A Careers Fair is planned for October 2023. The work on the Education and Skills Improvement Plan also supports the delivery of the UKSPF People and Skill strand.
- Town Centres –
 - Idlewells Market is at 94% occupancy with just a few stalls currently vacant and Moor Market is hosting community activities. We are working with partners on the potential longer-term uses within Moor Market.
 - Town centre vacancy rates are 9%, 11%; and 10% for Hucknall, Kirkby, Sutton respectively, below the East Midlands rate of 12% (nationally -11%).
- Infrastructure and transport – Proposals around Junction 27 of the M1 Motorway are progressing, with discussions with Highways England and Nottinghamshire County Council around improving the capacity of the strategic road network. Liaison continues with Nottinghamshire County Council to discuss bus access across the County as part of their Bus Service Improvement Plan with our particular focus looking at east-west links as well as Nottingham, and fare ticketing options for younger people / access to work. The Council is a member of the Nottinghamshire Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Reference Group which works with the County Council to support the delivery of significant improvement in bus

services in Nottinghamshire. Discussions with partners have also continued around raising the profile of potentially reopening of the Maid Marian Line.

- The Local Plan – work has continued towards the next stage of consultation (Regulation 19) for the emerging Local Plan. Consideration is being given to new Government guidance around housing numbers flexibility and a revised National Planning Policy Framework. Work has continued completing the Local Plan evidence base with an emphasis on design quality, sustainable place shaping and transport / multi modal infrastructure. A number of supporting planning guidance documents - ADC Planning Guidance Climate Change October 2022 and ADC Developer Guide to biodiversity and Nature Conservation November 2022 have been produced to support this approach and to align with the Council's corporate approach and latest government guidance.
- Social Value – Excluding the Social Value from our leisure contracts, over £2.2m of social and economic value has now been delivered since measurement via the Social Value Portal commenced, with 122% of commitments made at contract stage being delivered, 60 equivalent local jobs and £654,000 equivalent of local spend.
- Discover Ashfield - We are continuing to promote and increase knowledge of Discover Ashfield.

Cleaner and Greener

KEY SUCCESSES 2019-2023

- Protecting the environment through the planting of 3,659 trees since 2019
- The delivery of the annual Big Ashfield Spring Clean now in its 6th year, with over 50,000 bulky items collected for free since it was launched
- The introduction of a free bulky collections for every single household
- Supporting schools with free litter picking packs, wormeries and planters
- Ongoing delivery of key services throughout the pandemic, including 4,500,000 bins emptied with no service interruption, along with additional collections to support residents
- Significant investment in our public open spaces and retention of six Green Flag Awards
- Successful funding to support decarbonisation projects to Council buildings of nearly £2m plus funding bids for Green Homes Grants and Social Housing Decarbonisation which are delivering £4m for works to improve the thermal efficiency of private sector and Council homes, and reduce energy demands thereby assisting in reducing the District's carbon footprint and helping to reduce fuel poverty.
- The second highest recycling rate in Nottinghamshire
- Introduction of a fleet of electric road sweepers, supporting the Council 's decarbonisation of its fleet

Specific deliverables in 2022/23: -

- Parks and open spaces –
 - The six Green Flag Awards for the main parks were retained this year and an application has been made for a seventh Green Flag Award for the Kings Mill Reservoir site. The outcome will be known later in 2023.
 - Implementation of the Green Spaces Programme has progressed, and a review has been undertaken of the Green Space and Public Realm investment plan for the next

five years. During 2022/23 £100k capital investment has been made into our parks and open spaces.

- Environmental sustainability –
 - Sudbury Drive, Sutton play area - design and procurement has been completed and the new equipment will be installed once the site adoption is complete. Selston Country Park phase one design is complete and is progressing through the procurement phase.
 - Footpath, access and walking and cycling improvements have been completed at Annesley on two open space sites.
 - During 2022/23 the Council planted circa 1,500 trees, significantly greater than its 1,000 annual commitments and up to £60k grant funding has been secured for further tree planting schemes over the next three years.
 - The Council's Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan were approved at Council in the summer 2022. Actions from the Council's Carbon Management Plan are now in delivery.
 - The Council has engaged specialist support to develop a Decarbonisation Plan for its non-domestic assets, looking at identifying measures to significantly reduce its carbon emissions. This work is nearing completion.
 - The Council has also successfully bid for funding under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund Phase 3, covering the decarbonisation of heating to the Council's Centralised Offices, and Hucknall Leisure Centre. The funding will total approximately £2m.
 - Other funding bids for Green Homes Grants and Social Housing Decarbonisation have also been successful and are delivering £4m for works to improve the thermal efficiency of private sector and Council homes, and reduce energy demands thereby assisting in reducing the District's carbon footprint and helping to reduce fuel poverty.
 - The Council continues to purchase zero carbon electricity and is certified under the Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) which provides transparency to customers that the electricity is supplied by renewable sources. Electricity is generated from wind, solar, hydro, landfill gas and biomass pellets.
- Street Cleanliness - Big Ashfield Spring Clean 2023 was a success with free bulky collections continuing to be provided across the District. The Council also ran 'flying skips' over the three weeks of the Spring Clean Event, collecting over 70 tonnes of waste from residents. Following on from donating litter pickers during 2022, 16 primary schools received upcycled planters handmade by Council staff using recycled wood and filled with donated compost.
- Waste and recycling - Ashfield continues to have the second highest recycling rate in Nottinghamshire. Recycling levels remain consistent (year-end figures are awaited and expected to be higher than 21/22), with general waste continuing to reduce. The Council continues to work with the County Council and other District Council's in Nottinghamshire on making it easier for residents to recycle their waste at home.
- Environmental Crime - A number of action and awareness days have been undertaken to address fly tipping, waste on land, littering and dog fouling across the District. The Council investigated 1,612 cases of environmental crime related reports during 2022/23, resulting in educational sessions and 318 notices being issued.

Safer and Stronger

KEY SUCCESSES 2019-2023

- In partnership, securing over 1.3m of Safer Streets funding to address longstanding community concerns relating to women's and girls' safety, violence, and the perception of crime in public spaces.
- Increasing public space CCTV cameras to 51 devices across the District, to help promote feelings of safety, detect, and deter crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Ashfield has seen a marked and sustained improvement in public trust and confidence in the Community Safety Partnership since 2020 largely driven by improvements in visibility (Operation Springboard) and local activity (Safer Streets Projects) to tackle issues that matter most to people in the area. Perception of feeling safe is overwhelmingly high.

Specific deliverables in 2022/23: -

- Anti-social behaviour –
 - Throughout 2022/2023, the Community Safety Team received 4,807 Neighbourhood related reports pertaining to anti-social behaviour, environmental crime, and neighbourhood nuisance. Based on the reporting period for the previous year of 2021/2022, 5,754 reports were made to the service, this is a 16% reduction in reported demand over the course of the year.
 - Initiatives have been undertaken to address fly tipping, waste on land, littering and dog fouling across the District, resulting in 318 notices being issued. Additional work has included Anti-Social Behaviour beat surgeries, targeted partnership operations and engagement events to support prevention, educational and enforcement delivery.
 - Eight notorious alleyways across the District, which have become hotspots for drug dealing, fly-tipping and nuisance motorbikes, are now closed as a result of a new Public Spaces Protection Order which went live on 1st March 2023.
- Partnership working, complex cases and safeguarding –
 - Following delivery of the Home Office Safer Streets round 3 project, which secured £550,000 to undertake key interventions across Sutton-In-Ashfield throughout year 2021/2022 to promote feelings of safety across the town, a survey of 217 local residents has been conducted which has identified: -
 - 94% of females say they feel safe when out during the day in their local area.
 - 74% said that engaging with local residents and businesses about female safety makes them feel safer.
 - 82% said that creating safer spaces through CCTV installation and safe havens makes them feel safer.
 - 80% said that improvements to street lighting and the environment has made them feel safer
 - The Council and Police partnership initiative (Operation Springboard) continues to be undertaken to provide high visibility reassurance in neighbourhoods, town centres and public spaces through targeted patrols. This assists in obtaining local intelligence and taking positive action, resulting in the partnership successfully managing and tackling trends and emerging issues across the District.
 - From April 2022 to March 2023, 201 referrals were made to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) and other support agencies to safeguard vulnerable adults and children and protect them from further harm or abuse.
 - The Council and Police launched a dedicated partnership vulnerable Adult Support Scheme with a primary aim of reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, and vulnerability

through person centred interventions. A cohort of up to 15 adults are managed at any one time. Individuals in the cohort often have complex support needs and are being diverted away from criminality/exploitation through wraparound support. This programme is being rolled out across Nottinghamshire with Ashfield being recognised as an 'exemplar' for supporting vulnerable people.

- The Complex Case Team has expanded and has recruited two additional Domestic Abuse Officers on a secondment basis from a domestic abuse charity named NIDAS (Nottinghamshire Independent Domestic Abuse Services) to support survivors of domestic abuse and manage violence against women related issues. All funding for this has been secured externally.
- Throughout October an early intervention Halloween and Bonfire initiative: Operation Safekeep was co-ordinated by Community Protection Officers and partner agencies to create awareness on fire safety and reducing on street anti-social behaviour. The operation was highly successful with over 50 shops and off-licences visited and over 40 incidents being responded to.
- The Council, alongside partners and the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), was successful in securing £750,000 in August this year as part of the Safer Streets Round 4 Funding programme. The funding is being used to address longstanding community concerns relating to feelings of safety, neighbourhood crimes and the perception of crime and anti-social behaviour in public places. The Council also received total funding of £169,333 from the Shared Prosperity Fund, Home Office Prevent Fund and Police Crime Commissioner to address community safety issues across the District.
- The Community Safety Partnership works together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour through the facilitation of neighbourhood meetings, community action days and joint patrols in neighbourhoods, town centre's and public spaces across the District. The framework enables the Council to have a co-ordinated approach to tackle trends and emerging issues across Ashfield.
- New policies have been devised and approved for key community safety and safeguarding themes, including modern slavery, hate crime and domestic abuse.
- CCTV –
 - The Council has increased its public space CCTV cameras to 51 devices across the District, to help promote feelings of safety, detect, and deter crime and anti-social behaviour. The new equipment installed comprises of dedicated safe point cameras in all our town centres which has intruder alert activation and communicates directly with the Police control room. The cameras are monitored from Nottinghamshire Police Headquarters 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.
 - In August of this year, over £63,000 was secured under the PCC's locality fund to support the development of Gating measures, CCTV, and a Safe Space Accreditation Scheme in Hucknall which has now been completed.
- Domestic Abuse – Ashfield District Council has been successful in extending its White Ribbon Accreditation until November 2025. The accreditation illustrates the Council's commitment to ending violence against women and girls. Over £90,000 has been secured to address domestic abuse in 2022/2023, which comprises of £33,761 for domestic abuse statutory duty funding for safe accommodation and £60,000 for support provision for survivors of domestic abuse and help deliver the Sanctuary and Serenity Scheme to prevent homelessness and provide safe accommodation.
- In October last year, it was confirmed that Sutton-in-Ashfield was one of only two places across the whole of Nottinghamshire to be successful for £20,000 Home Office funding to help prevent radicalisation. The work will build critical thinking and personal resilience with young people in the area as well as targeted intervention work with residents who are susceptible to being radicalised towards violent extremism.

Innovate and Improve

KEY SUCCESSES 2019-2023

- Significant support for residents and businesses throughout the pandemic through the administration of £30m of business grants, and £2m in test and trace grants.
- Ongoing support for those impacted by the cost-of-living crisis, administering over £8m of Energy Rebates.
- Delivering against our new digital transformation objectives and blueprint
 - 21% increase since 2019 of use of all digital payment channels with a significant 43% reduction (over 52,000 transactions) through Paypoint and Post Office which cumulatively saved over £50,000 in transaction fees to the Council.
 - Launching our own customer portal 'Ashfield 24/7' just over 12 months ago which now has 11,000 residents signed up.
 - Significant use of online forms – over 85,000 online forms completed since 2019/20
 - New website significantly improving the ability for visitors to find information without resorting to contacting the Council by telephone.
 - Approaching £3m cumulative cashable and cost avoidance benefits.
 - Over £1m cumulative efficiencies achieved through rationalisation of office space made possible by agile approaches and digital functionality.

Specific deliverables in 2022/23: -

- Financial sustainability –
 - Business rates collection rates by end of March 2023 - have improved from 96.55% (April 2021 to March 2022) to 97.8% (April 2022 to March 2023) collection rate. Retail businesses continue to benefit from extended retail relief in 2023/24 which is a continuation of the COVID-19 support introduced in previous years.
 - The Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme was successfully administered quickly at short notice, the £150 payments were made from April to November to a total of 54,754 households, the total amount issued was £8,183,915.
 - The core scheme for bands A to D was paid to 52,865 households by 48,954 BACs payments, 2,426 Post Office vouchers, 1,475 credits to council tax accounts, and 10 cheques. Where the Council had details from direct debits to make the BACs payment these could be easily done, a system was put in place to collect details from those customers where we did not hold the bank details.
 - The External Auditors have completed their work on the Council's 2021/22 Accounts and have again given an Unqualified opinion. The Value for Money arrangements were also confirmed on 8th June with no issues to report.
 - Commercial property occupancy remains positive at 92% as at the end of March 2023, with most vacant units in the process of being re-let and strong demand for industrial units.
 - A successful transition of procurement partners has resulted in not only securing ongoing specialist support, but also significantly minimising expected increases in cost.
- Customer experience and channel shift –
 - The level of take-up for making payments easily, using digital channels, continues to increase, with 88% of payments received between April 2022 and March 2023, being made either by direct debit, online 'e-store', automated telephone or recurring card

payment. Direct debit transactions have increased by 4% (April 2022 to March 2023, compared to April 2021 to March 2022), whilst Paypoint and Post Office transactions also continue to decrease with a further significant 13% reduction in the number of payment transactions over the same period.

- It is positive that we are continuing to see some increasing use of digital processes post pandemic, in particular our online portals. 20% of council tax and 80% of business rate accounts are now signed up to using the Revenues Customer Portal, with an additional 2,500 council taxpayers signing up in 2022/23. Over 22% of tenants are also signed up to the Tenants Portal, a 27% increase over the last 12 months.
- The new Customer Portal, Ashfield 24/7, which was launched in February 2022, now has over 11,000 residents signed up, which has nearly tripled since December 2022, and 8,582 requests raised to date, since April 2022, through the portal.
- Customers completed over 17,000 of our 'in-house' built online forms throughout 2022/23 and over 5,000 specialist online forms. The ongoing use of these online forms/ features is an indication of the impact of our digital developments on shifting customer demand to less costly channels.
- Customer experience of the Council's website continues to improve with a 6% ongoing increase in page views and 8% increase in average time spent on a page. Visitors resorting to visiting 'Contact us' page has reduced by a significant 28% in 2022/23 compared to 21/22 (2021/22 – 27,733, 2022/23 – 19,890) indicating that visitors to our website are finding information much easier.
- External accessibility assessment of the Council's website in January 2023 indicates an overall 93% accessibility score which is a significant improvement over the last 12-24 months, and comparatively excellent performance compared to neighbouring Councils.
- To support our residents, at the end February 2023, an 'online benefits calculator' was made available on the Council's website, especially important during the Cost-of-Living Crisis.
- Innovation –
 - The Digital transformation programme has now delivered approaching £3m of financial benefits (cashable and cost avoidance) over the last five years.
 - In-house digital development is now also leading more modern approaches in community projects, for example, a Safer Streets project has incorporated in-house development of a significantly less costly, digital proof of concept using QR codes on lamp posts so residents can easily report street lighting issues directly to the County Council. Working with waste and environment services we are now bolstering this concept for making it easy for our residents to 'Report an issue' or 'Find Information easily online' using dynamic, smart QR code methodology for litter bins and resident waste bins. We are aiming to have these implemented by the summer 2023. QR codes for resident bins are also now being printed into the physical lids of the bins so new bin roll outs will incorporate this more modern approach.
 - Significant strides have been made in the ongoing modernisation of the Council's solutions architecture, with a particular focus on moving business solutions to the 'cloud' to improve accessibility, usability, and business continuity. For example, a project is now being delivered to replace our legacy Finance System with a wider local government specific One Council enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform, having the potential to reduce the number of systems which support the Council's back-office, simplify the user experience, remove many different silos of data, and minimise required complex integrations between systems. Implementation is expected to be complete by March 2024.

Also, to support the modernisation of our Revenues and Benefits and Planning functions, detailed discovery work has been completed to inform our technical requirements for procuring a modern solution.

Robust negotiations with technology suppliers have also enabled the Council to reduce or minimise solution spend, with one re-contract realising nearly £100,000 in negotiated discounts.

- Housing transformation has been making significant progress, with a Customer Contact Module going live in October 2022, followed by the development and go-live of key tenancy management processes within this module. Cleansing and improvement of the housing property asset and component data is almost complete, with a digital stock condition survey platform going live in January 2023.
- People
 - Average days sickness per full time equivalent for 2022-23 (10.93 days) has reduced by 4% when compared to 2021-22 (11.44 days), despite all sickness related to covid-19 being included since April 2022.
 - Employee satisfaction – 84% of employees surveyed in 2022 agree that the Council is a good employer to work for.
 - The percentage of the overall workforce which is made up of young people (under 25 years old) has risen slightly from 4.8% in 2021-22, to 5.1% in 2022-23.
- Partnering – At the end of March 2023 there was a successful transition to our new Procurement Partner (Nottinghamshire County Council) ensuring continued access to specialist support and minimising anticipated cost increases.

Areas for Improvement

- Despite the processing of major planning applications exceeding target, planning performance in relation to processing of minor and other applications has slipped due to shortage of resource, increased application numbers, and backlogs. The team has done remarkably well to minimise the impacts on performance considering resource issues which have included vacant posts. Officers have reported that the handheld devices have made a real difference to them. The section is keen to press for further digitalisation particularly in the policy area and work has now commenced, led by the Digital Team, to identify technical business requirements,
- Council Tax collection rates are just 1% lower than 2021/22 year-end out-turn. Normal recovery action for the 2022/23 financial year had to be placed on hold until October 2022 due to processing of the Energy Rebate Grants for central government, customers had to be given the option of using the grant to reduce their Council Tax Liability, establishing the preference was a lengthy process for those customers where automatic payment couldn't be made. The team also conducted a Single Persons Discount Review toward the end of the financial year, this resulted in several accounts losing their entitlement to the discount and this has increased the collectable charge, this being towards the end of the year when charge payers have less time left to pay the amount back.
- Telephone call levels have increased by nearly 5%, with over 10,000 more calls in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22. The largest increases in telephone contact have been waste and environment (+17% or additional 6,100 calls) and housing repairs (+16% or an additional 6,500 calls). Increased demand has led to increased waiting times and abandoned calls on some lines with average call waiting time and call abandonment levels increasing when compared to the average rates for 2021-22. Average call waiting times have increased by 58% to 1 minute 8 seconds. Average call abandonment rates have increased to 5.3%. In-depth business analysis is currently being undertaken in waste and environment to identify

areas for improvement, particularly around digital automation and improved customer experience of using online channels.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The report relates to the delivery of the Corporate Plan Priorities. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities for the period 2019 to 2023 and intended deliverables which were monitored and managed through the Corporate Performance Framework.

It covers performance for the period April 2022 to March 2023 and also provides a summary of key deliverables over the four-year period of the Corporate Plan.

Legal:

The Council's new Corporate Priorities and strategic plans have been developed in consideration of current and forthcoming legislative requirements. [RLD 08/06/2023]

Finance: No direct financial implications arising from this report. [PH 07/06/2023].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	Financial performance is included within a detailed Corporate Scorecard reported to CLT and Scrutiny. Financial PI's form a key element of the balanced scorecard approach, reviewed to reflect future priorities in alignment with the Corporate Plan 2019-2023.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	
	Financial performance during the 4-year term of the Corporate Plan has been considered on a regular basis via financial monitoring reports to both Cabinet and Council.

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Absence of a Corporate Plan would result in a lack of prioritisation and focus on delivering what matters	Agreed Corporate Plan every four years which is delivered via the organisation's project management framework and reviewed annually.
Poor performance would potentially result in inability to deliver the Corporate Priorities as specified in the Corporate Plan	Regular monitoring of performance and robust performance management through the authority's performance management framework.

Human Resources:

The 'Innovate and Improve' Priority proposes key programmes and projects which will be focussed on delivering the People Strategy and developing employees.

High levels of performance can have a positive impact upon employee engagement and retention which in turn can enhance performance further.

Environmental/Sustainability

The 'Cleaner and Greener' Priority proposes key programmes and projects which will be focussed on delivering environmental improvement.

Equalities:

There are no direct implications on equality and diversity as a consequence of the proposals and recommendations outlined in this report.

Other Implications:

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

Not applicable

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