

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>29 JANUARY 2024</b>
<b>Heading:</b>	<b>CORPORATE PLAN DELIVERY</b>
<b>Executive Lead Member:</b>	<b>LEADER</b>
<b>Ward/s:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Subject to Call-In:</b>	<b>YES</b>

## **Purpose of Report**

This report presents to Cabinet the initial progress updates regarding delivery of the new Corporate Plan 2023-2027 and the April 2023 to September 2023 performance position against the associated Corporate Performance Scorecard.

## **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 September 2023.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

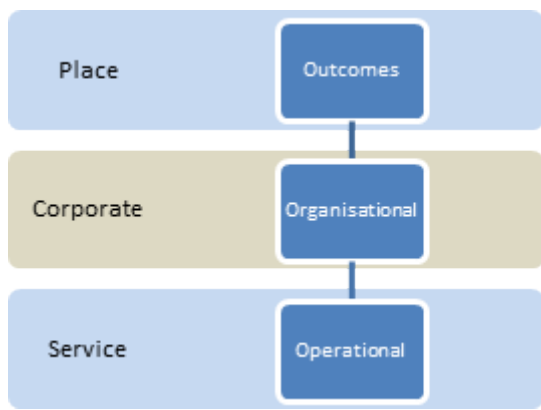
The Council's ambitions for the next four years are clearly identified in a set of revised and updated Corporate Priorities which are presented in the new Corporate Plan. These have been developed by Cabinet.

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. The Corporate Plan aligns to the Council's overarching Strategic Direction.

Our priorities for the future, as identified in the new Corporate Plan, have been translated and cascaded into specific projects and initiatives, the successful delivery of which is being monitored through our Performance and Strategic Planning Framework, into Service Plans to facilitate focussed delivery.

The Council remains ambitious, and as such, the new Corporate Plan captures and reflects our ongoing ambitions for the next four years.

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



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. A follow-up Corporate Peer Challenge is scheduled for 4-7 June 2024.

Through the Council's new Policy and Performance Function, a specific focus will be placed on continually improving the Council's approach to performance and improvement in line with the updated best value guidance and introduction of Oflog.

The Council's performance framework incorporates inputs, outputs, and outcomes, directly aligned to the Corporate Plan. This is currently being reviewed and enhanced, following the approval of the new Corporate Plan 2023- 2027, and in line with Best Value expectations and Oflog benchmarking dataset measurement. The revised Corporate Scorecard incorporates both place level measures and corporate delivery measures. The final review will be completed and reported against for year-end assessment of successful delivery of the Corporate Priorities.

## **Alternative Options Considered**

To consider and adopt different key priorities and themes within the review of the Corporate Plan and Strategic Direction. The proposed priorities, themes and actions best capture and reflect the future strategic direction of the Council.

## **Detailed Information**

The Council's new Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027 was approved by Cabinet and endorsed by Full Council in September 2023.

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.

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 new Corporate Plan, to date, and the April 2023 to September 2023 performance position against the associated Corporate Performance Scorecard (Quarter 3 April to December performance out-turn data is currently being collated).

### **Overall Position**

Overall, the corporate scorecard position of corporate 'delivery' measures for April to September 2023 indicates the following positive position: -

- 79% of measures achieving or exceeding target, or within 10% variance of target.
- 68% of measures indicating an improved position compared to the same period in the previous year, or within 5% of previous year's performance levels.

Specific deliverables in 2023: -

### **Health and Happiness:**

#### Best Start

- Increasing access to leisure services and activities for children, and young people
  - A review has taken place of the use of Star Foundation funding with improved processes now in place to refer individual young people for free memberships.
  - The U17s programme continues to be delivered by Everyone Active during school holidays.
  - HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) activities delivered at Kirkby Leisure Centre with all days fully booked.
  - A new learner pool was opened at Hucknall Leisure Centre on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2023.
- Increasing the number of breastfeeding community places - most Council owned buildings, our Leisure Centres and 13 businesses across the District are now breastfeeding community places.
- The Children and Young People's Network have met three times this financial year focussing on the building blocks for health, health and wellbeing and mapping of activities/services. The membership has now reached 150 people.

#### Living Well

- A new resettlement officer has recently been successfully recruited. They will be focussed on identifying current gaps in support, for which we already have a good understanding from ongoing work with our housing support provider Tuntum housing. We are currently examining the accommodation needs of those who have been placed and need to be rehoused.
- Deliver Outdoor Sports Transformation Programme: -

- Kirkby and Sutton Lawn Sports Hubs - both projects are progressing through the developed design stage. The Football Foundation application is due to be submitted in July 2024.
- Papplewick Sports Hub - Everyone Active took over management of the facility in November 2023. Two changing rooms have been converted to a community room/studio space. An opening event will take place in January. Management by Everyone Active as part of the leisure operating contract will facilitate greater use by the local community and deliver social value.
- A new sauna/steam room opened at Kirkby Leisure Centre on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funded works to Hucknall Leisure Centre are about to commence (replacement of existing fossil fuel heating with air source heat pumps). We are awaiting the outcome of bids to the Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund for solar panels for Lammas and Hucknall which was due by the end of December 2023.
- £2,994,643 (April to September 2023) of social value has been delivered through the Leisure Operating Contract, a 30% increase on the social value delivered for the same period last year. Including: -
  - 464 GP exercise referral attendances
  - 70 Parkinson's memberships
  - 41 care experienced memberships
  - Supporting Portland College learners completing the Duke of Edinburgh Award through access to facilities at Kirkby Leisure Centre.
  - Working in partnership with Outwood Academy giving access to swimming and enrichment activities
  - Commenced a pilot integrated stroke exercise scheme.
- 788,425 attendances at the Leisure Centres between April – September 2023, a 28% increase compared to attendances between April to September 2022 (614,065)

### Ageing Well

- The Commercial and Environmental Protection Team have designed a leaflet to distribute to local retailers to raise awareness about accessibility requirements for customers using their premises. The team will deliver the leaflet as part of their visits and the Town Centre Manager will also distribute to local retailers over the next four months.

### Health Inequalities

- Co-ordinating and influencing organisations and service providers in Leamington, Coxmoor, Broomhill/Butler's Hill
  - Broomhill/Butler's Hill - The number of partners working closely to address issues continues to grow. Health Inequalities and Investment Fund bid has now been submitted to develop 3 information sharing hubs within Hucknall. The DWP is also now involved within the partnership and are exploring a job centre style drop-in session as part of the hubs. Public Health funds have been secured for a part-time Community Development Worker.
  - Coxmoor - 3 different groups have been established with a focus on: anti-social behaviour, young people's mental health, and a more general partnership group focussed on complexities within the area. Your Health Notts funding has been secured for a young people and family focussed worker.
  - Leamington – partnership meetings have now been established, with Ashfield Voluntary Action (AVA) running weekly drop-in sessions at Willets Court and the Council leading on weekly coffee mornings at Modwin's Court, supported by a Local Area Co-ordinator now in place through Nottinghamshire County Council.
- Linking allotments to foodbanks to reduce food waste. - £5,000 has been secured through UKSPF to provide grants of up to £500 to groups wishing to start, maintain or develop

growing. Following evaluation of the submissions received, 8 groups will now be offered a grant.

## **Homes and Housing:**

### Housing Development

- Warwick Close in-fill affordable housing development - scheme is progressing well on site and due for completion by end January 2024.
- Land swap proposal has now been revised. Development on the 2 planned sites (Central Ave and Hardwick Lane) is still planned to go ahead with the first planning application due for January 2024.
- The 2023/24 acquisitions programme budget, focused on buying back ex-ADC properties, is committed in full to purchase 12 or so properties.
- Identification of sufficient suitable land on which to develop new affordable housing, upwards of 200 units, is in progress. Suitable sites have now been identified and are in the process of preparing for planning approvals.
- Energy efficiency of new homes is improving. Latest homes included SPV, electric car charging points, etc, with an ongoing priority to maximise carbon reduction measures in each new home.

### Tackling Disrepair and Poor Housing Conditions

- The process of issuing licences in the selective licensing designated areas is drawing to a close, thereby enabling opportunity for the Council to work on providing additional services and support to compliant landlords.

### Suitable and appropriate housing

- A Damp and Mould Policy has been written and endorsed at the Tenant Gateway. In addition, a new Damp and Mould Technical Officer will be inspecting and monitoring reports of damp and mould. We are still waiting on Government guidance and legislation on what the target times will be for inspecting and resolving reports of damp and mould. A tenant's guide has also been produced including social media campaigns.
- Most carbon monoxide alarms have now been installed, there are just 4 remaining in the difficult to access properties, which will be installed as part of the Property Health and Safety check process that will follow legal proceedings if access is not provided.
- £583k received associated with Devolution Retrofit funding from the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) to retrofit energy efficiency measures to social housing, which will largely comprise solar photovoltaic panels (SPV).
- As of 30 September 2023, only 2.54% of Local Authority housing stock is assessed as non-decent, a reduction from 2.84% at end March 2023. A significant proportion of decent home failures are Housing Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRS) related, which may have been completed which the Responsive Repair team is reviewing.

### Reduce and prevent homelessness.

- Delivery of grant funded Rough Sleeper Initiatives (RSI), including a focus on early detection to prevent homelessness RSI programme, continues to be on track.
- Review of the Homelessness Strategy has been completed to be considered at January Cabinet.
- A review of temporary accommodation needs has been completed.
- 42% more applicants have been prevented from becoming homeless (265 April to September 2023 compared to 187 April to September 2022). The target of 150 has been significantly exceeded due to the hard work of the Housing Options and Tenancy Sustainment Teams, with a noticeable increase in the number of households assisted by the

latter to remain in their homes (100% of tenants continue to remain in their tenancy 6 months or more following completion of their support package). Similarly, the number of households assisted by the Housing Options Team to either remain in their current accommodation or secure alternative accommodation remains significant and strong. The overall number of households successfully assisted is a great achievement given the well documented 'cost of living crisis' and 'housing crisis', the difficulties that households are experiencing, the complexity of the cases and limited options. Work is ongoing to deliver viable options for households including close working relationships with partner agencies such as the CAB.

### Customer Focus

- 19% more tenants have been assisted with welfare and money management advice between April to September 2023 (749) compared to April to September 2022 (630), significantly exceeding target.
- The project to modernise housing system solutions is currently progressing well with one module being launched every month. This will enable the team to deliver a fully agile service to tenants.
- The Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey has been completed and the results initially analysed. Benchmarking against peers through Housemark, shows a broadly positive position.
- Housemark annual performance benchmarking feedback shows service provision/value for money is good in social housing provision.

### **Economic Growth and Place:**

#### Businesses and Investment

- Deliver specialist business and skills events - an Automation for You event was delivered in May 2023 and a Green Business event in November 2023. Work is commencing on an event for next April - themed around the UKSPF project of Global and Overseas Trading.
- The UKSPF Ashfield Accelerator contract has been awarded to East Midland Chamber of Commerce and work has commenced. The programme was launched at the Councils' Green Business event. The aim is to:
  - provide support to 311 businesses, to help them develop new skills and expertise to launch new products or secure investment.
  - provide support to 125 businesses, to produce a decarbonisation plan for their business and raised awareness of net zero.

#### Infrastructure and Connectivity

- The Local Plan has progressed in accordance with milestones and the Local Plan is now out to a Regulation 19 consultation.
- Approximately £18M in S106 has been received in the last 3 years which is being invested in infrastructure across the District, including approximately 5,200 jobs relating to industrial site developments.
- Processing of minor planning applications in a timely manner (July to September 2023) has significantly increased, with 84.85% of minor applications processed within 8 weeks, compared to 65.85% (July to September 2022). Processing of other applications continues to meet statutory target of 75% processed within 8 weeks, with an out-turn of 87.06%. Processing of Major planning applications within 13 weeks was 66.67%, however this is based on only 3 applications, one of which was out of time. Using one quarter figures where numbers are low is not representative of performance. Aligned with government practice, using a rolling 2-year period (October 2021 to September 2023) of 39 major applications determined, 33 were determined within time = 85%, well above statutory target.

## Regeneration

- Work continues on the delivery of the Towns Fund, Future High Streets, Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund programmes. 14 Low Street and High Pavement House renovation work has been completed whilst construction work to enhance the area's visitor economy is well underway at Kings Mill Reservoir and for the new Planetarium at Sherwood Observatory.
- Delivery of the ADMC (Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre) - Site on Lowmoor Road is being acquired and included in the draft Local Plan allocations. Work is continuing to develop the building design and operating model. Engagement with potential suppliers and business beneficiaries is underway. A planning application is due to be submitted in March 2024.
- Dilapidated and empty properties - over 150 site visits were made to properties in 2023 with the sole aim of making these properties safe and inaccessible to the public. We have successfully progressed the following long-standing properties; Wine Cellar [issues for 13 years], Greenwood Farm [4 years], The Old Blue Bell Public House, Sutton [5 years] and 1a Edward Street – Kirkby.

## Skills and Employment

- Several UKSPF project contracts have recently been awarded – delivering a support package for economically inactive and delivering digital support for local communities.
- Other UKSPF projects are being prepared for or are in the midst of contract tendering.
- A successful Careers Fair was held in October 2023, with 730 attendees, 68 exhibitors from across 10 sectors, 113 follow up appointments made, and 595 vacancies promoted through the event.
- Taxi licensing – successfully implemented English Language Qualification / Assessment Certificate for all new Taxi Drivers.

## Town Centres and High Streets

- The Hucknall High Street grant scheme has been developed and first applications have been received.
- We are currently working with West Notts College on the concept and design of Made in Ashfield. Three meetings have been held with the students with follow up in the New Year.
- Deliver specialist markets - Plant Fair; Food Festival; Coronation celebration; Ashfield Day and Christmas festivities successfully delivered/supported through 2023.
- Data collection analysis of our town centres has been completed, working with University of Lincoln and Rose Regeneration. Further data is being collated through our new visitor insight tool which will allow us to capture anonymous data on dwell time, demographics and catchment information for our town centres, parks, and events to help measure how towns are performing in comparison to their neighbours.
- Town centre visits (April to October 2023) across all three town centres has increased by 3.4% (10,152,144) when compared to April to October 2022 (9,817,922). Footfall in Kirkby town centre has increased by 5%, over the same periods, from 3,339,666 to 3,506,437. Footfall in Hucknall town centre has increased by 7%, over the same periods, from 2,664,379 to 2,851,882. Footfall in Sutton town centre has seen a slight decrease, over the same period, from 3,813,877 to 3,793,825. The slight drop off appears to particularly affect the Friday and Sunday trading days which may in part be due to the closure of the Wilko's Store.

## Visitor Economy, Arts and Culture

- The work to develop a Destination Management Plan for the District is progressing. Stakeholder workshops are being held in January with work due for completion by March.
- An expression of interest has been submitted to the Art Council's Place Partnership fund.

- Delivery of events programme 2023/24 – all of the events have now been delivered. Attendance at Ashfield Day was significantly down on the previous year due to the inclement weather conditions. The tender for an events provider has been prepared and is due to be issued in January.

## **Cleaner and Greener:**

### Cleanliness of the District

- The impact of the new Environmental Act is significant, and Ashfield District Council has been a strong voice in then County wide strategic waste group to ensure a positive and understandable waste collection regime for our residents. The key implication of the Act as it stands is the introduction of weekly food waste collection and the variations on which recyclables can be mixed together when collected. Both glass and garden waste collections remain.
- The team will also work to extend knowledge of recycling and the environment across residents through initiatives such as the Big Ashfield Spring Clean which will include new initiatives involving schools, volunteers and the public at large through tangible constructions such as pollinators and bug hotels.
- Percentage of household waste recycled and composted has increased significantly from 41.2% (April to September 2022) to 45% (April to September 2023).
- Between April and September 2023, a total of 610 incidents of fly tipping were reported and investigated, when compared to the same reporting period for last year, this is a 7% increase in demand. The Council are undertaking joint waste enforcement operations with the police to ensure the effective management of commercial and industrial fly tips. DEFRA fly tipping statistics released on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023, relating to updated 2021/22 statistics, confirmed Ashfield is ranked in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile comparatively and close to being top quartile, with our position out of 309 local authorities being 80<sup>th</sup>.
- In response to wider concerns of environmental crime, including waste on land, littering and dog fouling, dedicated action days have taken place across the District since April involving targeted high visibility patrols to act as a deterrent for offenders, as well as community engagement to raise awareness and educate the public on the Council's approach to tackling environmental Crime.
- A variety of positive interventions have been undertaken in response to reported incidents, including school awareness and enforcement. Resulting in notices, engagement and community litter picks being delivered.
- In additional, there has been 3 court outcomes for fly tipping related offences resulting in conviction.
- 303 duty of care inspections undertaken by Community Safety and Environmental Protection Teams to businesses in the District.

### Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

- Continue to bid for Govt. funding associated with thermal efficiency/carbon reduction initiatives to meet Govt. emissions targets, including delivery where appropriate: -
  - Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) wave 2.1 funding project in development.
    - £583k received associated with Devolution Retrofit funding from the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) to retrofit energy efficiency measures to social housing, which will largely comprise solar photovoltaic panels (SPV).
- Delivery of Decarbonisation works as contained in the Decarbonisation Plan: including Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) projects about to commence which covers



replacement fossil fuel heating with air source heat pumps to the Council's Centralised Offices and Hucknall Leisure Centre. Funding to be spent in 23/24, with anticipated completion in Spring 2024.

- Decarbonisation plan for non-domestic assets is now drafted, and projects are being delivered as recommended within the plan, including PSDS and Towns Fund Projects
- An order has been placed for 1500 trees to be planted before end March 2024.
- The planning team has been securing opportunities to improve biodiversity throughout the year. Conditions and negotiations have either been placed on planning applications or contributions negotiated for an increase in biodiversity through S106 agreements. Biodiversity Net Gain becomes legislation in January 2024.
- Delivery of carbon emission reduction schemes for the private sector – HUG2 and ECO4 specifically: HUG2 and ECO4 schemes remain on track and working well. Now looking to identify the benefits achieved through the schemes, including the measures installed and carbon savings.
- Our monthly air quality sampling had been expanded during 2023 which continued to identify trends in nitrogen dioxide at key locations around the District and we are actively engaged with the Nottinghamshire Environmental Protection Group in working to deliver the Air Quality Strategy for Nottinghamshire.

### Parks and Green Spaces

- Selston Country Park - the new play area was completed in mid-January. Works to refurbish and increase capacity of the café also started in mid-January. A launch of the new facilities is being planned for early March.
- Nuncargate Recreation Ground BMX design improvements have been prepared for procurement in January.
- Complete Asset Review for parks and green spaces - Phase 2 - Cafes and Visitor Centres review has commenced. The leisure consultant report has been received and is being reviewed.
- Everyone Active took over management of Papplewick pavilion and playing fields in November 2023. Building works to convert two of the changing rooms to a studio space have been completed. An opening event will be held in January 2024.
- Green Flag Awards: awards have been secured for seven parks across the District with ongoing evaluation and improvements being implemented and monitored.
- The Neighbourhoods section continues to build information relating to its renewed cemeteries strategy. Investment has recently been made in Sutton cemetery and additional capacity has been identified in Sutton and Kirkby. Options for Hucknall will be considered in the new financial year.

### **Safer and Stronger:**

#### A Safer District

- The work of the Council and Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has supported a safer and stronger Ashfield with a marked sustained reduction of reported anti-social behaviour across Ashfield of -35.16% over the past two years (January 2021-December 2023).
- The Council responded to 4308 reports of anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood nuisance and environmental crime reports between April and December 2023. The continued review and implementation of demand and vulnerability assessments at source has resulted in enhancing the triage process and resolving 13% of all demands at the initial point of contact over this period.
- Over this period, Council delivered a number of preventative, educational and enforcement interventions to address anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood nuisance, and environmental crime resulting in 421 cases resolved through early intervention and informal approaches.

- As a result, 111 Community Protection Warnings were issued in response to repeat incidents of nuisance and annoyance, 27 Community Protection Notices served, 73 anti-social behaviour warning letters have been issued for alleged tenancy breaches, 21 Notice of Seeking Possession issued to Council tenants for anti-social behaviour and/or criminality and 4 Council tenants have been evicted for anti-social behaviour.
- Additional high level enforcement action has been undertaken resulting in 3 ASB injunctions, 12 properties closed via Closure Orders and 5 successful prosecutions obtained through the courts for high level anti-social behaviour and criminality.
- In April ambitious plans of preventing demand and improving feelings of safety came to fruition, through the enactment of a local bylaw referred to as a Public Spaces Protection Order result in 8 Alleyways being shut and gating installed by April 2023 to reduce environmental crime and nuisance in these areas.
- The Council and Police partnership initiative (Operation Springboard) continues to be effectively delivered 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.
- The Council, Police, Fire Service, and health services continue to deliver engagement events across the super output areas of the District building and fostering positive relationships to understand community need and assist them to become self-sustaining, through self-help and resident participation. Successful events have taken place in Sutton, Hucknall and Kirkby-In-Ashfield including the successful delivery of district wide 'Anti-Social Behaviour Roadshows' as part of ASB Awareness week in July.
- Operation safekeep is a multi-agency initiative set up by ADC, Police and NFRS that provides reassurance, promotes fire safety and tackle anti-social behaviour throughout the Halloween and Bonfire period. Throughout the operation, 21 incidents were responded to, 46 premises, off licenses and supermarkets were visited and received advice letters, and 6 notices, 3 seizures and 2 breaches of the PSPO were undertaken. Throughout the operations the teams also assisted vulnerable residents with concerns relating to the floods that took place over this period.
- In November 2023, Ashfield District Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) have been successful in securing £216,000 in funding under Safer Streets round 4, to enhance community safety in the 'Carsic Estate' of Sutton. The new funding will be used in several proactive ways to improve feelings of safety for women and girls, tackle neighbourhood crime, and address anti-social behaviour.
- In January 2024, the Council was successful in securing an additional £169,494 to assist the community safety partnership identify ASB offenders for the 'Immediate Justice Scheme' that is being delivered across the county. This is part of the HM Government initiative in trailblazing community payback and restorative justice techniques for anti-social behaviour.
- Taxi Licensing – from April to September 2023, 887 enforcement actions have been undertaken and 29 Taxi Driver Licences revoked to ensure taxi's operating in the District meet fit & proper standards.
- Since April 2023, 322 programmed food inspections have been completed, with inspection of 130 new food businesses.

### Community Safety Strategy

- The renewed Community Safety Strategy has been agreed with partners and is scheduled for consideration at Cabinet in January 2024.

### Our Communities Feeling Safe (projects)

- In October 2023, £22,000 was secured under the PCC's fund to support the development of a 'shop watch' scheme safe spaces accreditation for local business and promote violence against women and girls' signage in Sutton-In-Ashfield.
- £86,000 from the Councils' Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and has successfully been delivered in Hucknall over the past 12 months, leading to 5 new re-deployable cameras being installed across ASB hotspots, 1 new Safe Point camera installation, QR coded signage developed and installed to report Environmental issues, and the roll out of the Shop Radio Scheme in the town centre.
- Over the last 12 months, youth engagement programmes have been delivered across Kirkby and Hucknall to divert young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour and create safe spaces for them in the heart of their communities. To date 592 young people have accessed the programme.
- The Council, alongside partners and PCC secured £750,000 for the Ashfield and Mansfield CSP to deliver Safer Streets Round 4 and initiate community safety interventions to tackle anti-social behaviour neighbourhood crime and improve feelings of safety.
- Safer Streets funding has enabled the Council to invest to increase its CCTV provision from 29 to 59 cameras across the District. To help enhance feelings of safety, these cameras are upgraded versions, giving the best coverage both day and night. The cameras are monitored 24 hours a day 365 days per year from Nottinghamshire Police Headquarters and help prevent and detect incidents of crime and disorder.
- The work has been commended by the Home Office and the Safe Point Camera's which were installed first in Ashfield has gained national attention.
- The Safer Streets 4 project has now been completed and Nottingham Trent University are finalising an academic report to evaluate project delivery. As part of the Safer Streets 4 benefits analysis, perception of feelings of safety for women and girls in the two Safer Streets intervention areas are also being finalised.

### Supporting Vulnerable People

- From April to December 2022, 68 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.
- Complex Case Panels take place monthly to discuss escalating safeguarding scenarios. Through the development of risk management action plans, targeted interventions are undertaken to assist those who are vulnerable or considered at significant risk. The Complex Panel reviews approximately 10 highly complex cases each month.
- Ashfield District Council Complex Case Team continue to deliver the Vulnerable Adult Support Scheme in partnership with the Police and Social Care to protect our most vulnerable individuals at risk of cuckooing, exploitation, drugs misuse and other criminal activity.
- In November 2023, £40,000 of funding was confirmed to support domestic abuse prevention and the sanctuary scheme initiative. A scheme that supports survivors of domestic abuse to remain in their homes, with a view of improving safety and improved security. To date 53 survivors of domestic abuse received support through the scheme, and a further 63 survivors of domestic abuse have been supported via the Complex Case Team.
- In December 2023, it was confirmed that the Ashfield CSP secured a further £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.
- Over the past 12 months, commissioned domestic service 'Equation' supported the Council to deliver healthy relationships programmes across selected Ashfield schools resulting in increased awareness, knowledge for learners and teachings.
- Ashfield District Council has been successful in extending their White Ribbon Accreditation until November 2025. The accreditation illustrates the Council's commitment to ending

violence against women and girls. Between 25th November - 10th December 2023, the Council Community Safety Team and its partners successfully delivered the White Ribbon Campaign and 16 days of activism were delivered, aimed at ending violence against women and girls, creating awareness and empowering survivors of domestic abuse to reach out and get support.

- In addition, the Council has confirmed that it is undertaking the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) to further enhance the way domestic abuse incidents are reported and responded to. This will involve a review of safeguarding and support provision across services within the authority. The Council has secured external funding to deliver this.

## **Innovate and Improve**

### Positive and Proactive Communications

- The review to improve the promotion and celebration of our regeneration projects is progressing well. Communications Campaign plans are being developed with Regeneration Project Leads, Executive Lead Member and the Executive Director-Place.
- Our Aspiring Leadership Cohort are leading on a task and finish project reviewing the current embedding of logo/brand cross-Council and will make recommendations for improvement.

### Customer Experience and Customer Focus

- Creation of a new Customer Services function – Phase 2 and Phase 3 reviews are now making good progress. Customer journey mapping and process analysis in progress to identify potential for transfer of transactional interactions within Revenues and Benefits, Strategic Housing, Community Safety, Planning, and Housing repairs.
- A resident survey was successfully re-introduced in 2023, with more than 1,000 respondents. Analysis and context are currently being finalised, aiming to present to Strategic Leadership later this month.
- Our Aspiring Leadership Cohort are progressing a review of customer service standards, researching best practice to provide recommendations by the end March 2024.
- The number of formal customer complaints received has reduced by 30% (107 complaints received April to September 2023, compared to 154 complaints received April to September 2022).

### Digital and Service Transformation

- Online payments have increased by 12% (48,685 payments made between April to December 2023 compared to 43,310 payments made between April to December 2022). There has also been a corresponding 9% reduction in paypoint and post office payments over the same comparative periods (49,973 payments compared to 55,063 payments). Direct debit payment transactions have remained stable over the same comparative periods.
- Automation projects on Whitespace are being progressed to make the reporting of issues such as missed bins, contamination, garden subscriptions and Bulky item bookings easier for both the residents on website and for colleagues handling telephone requests. 'Missed bins' is now live and waiting for Customer Services to start using via a soft launch with a view to go live on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January. Garden Waste is currently being tested with a view to going live at the end of January. Work is progressing to develop Bulky Waste processes and automation.
- Other low code successes – We've successfully delivered the Communications request management system using Liberty Create. The work included creating a form for employees to complete when requesting work from the communications team. Mandatory information is required for the form to be submitted into a back-office system for one of the team to triage and correctly assign to either a communications officer or the graphic designer.

- Telephony Upgrade – The proposed implementation of cloud hosted Netcall Liberty Converse (implementation between Jan 2024 – May 2024) would bring the following benefits:
  - Improved customer service via Self Service using a chatbot and webchat functionality.
  - Workforce Management provides a better provision of cover for Customer Services via published rotas and a better understanding of performance monitoring.
  - Improved Business Continuity:
    - As a ‘cloud’ hosted solution, there is no reliance on the Council’s network or infrastructure.
    - Advisors can potentially access the service from any device in any location.
    - The cloud based Netcall Liberty Converse system is hosted within their own secure data centres and not public cloud.

### Financial Sustainability

- External Audit of 2022/23 statement of accounts is currently in progress. It is expected the report & opinion will be presented to Audit Committee of 1st February 2024.
- A review of fees and charges has been completed and will be presented to Cabinet for approval in January 2024.
- Several Service Reviews are currently being finalised and once approved will be factored into the 2024/25 budget and MTFs. The new Policy and Performance function will lead a revised, proactive, programmed approach to service reviews.
- Depot - we are currently moving towards RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) stage 3, design stage, which will outline full costings for the options under consideration. (Expected end of February 2024).

### People and partnerships

- The Council’s People Strategy review is now complete and has been renamed Organisational Development Strategy. This will be underpinned by a delivery action plan, currently being finalised.
- We are on track to complete a workforce planning assessment against LGA Workforce Planning Maturity Matrix through a series of workshops with LGA support, producing improvement plans to reach level 4 maturity.
- 47 employees have been trained as Mental Health First Aiders, and 6 employees have also completed training to become Carer Champions. The access to mental health at work service is about to be launched.
- A review of Ashfield’s Strategic Partnerships is complete which is now feeding into a wider Nottinghamshire review of strategic partnerships involving Local Authorities, Health, Police and Crime Commissioner, Universities, and the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Average days of employee absence has reduced by 15% (3.74 days average per full time equivalent April to September 2023, compared to 4.41 days average per full time equivalent April to September 2022)

### Performance, Data and Change Management

- Build a robust informative knowledge hub - a new visitor insight tool is now being used to inform varying decisions. The use of powerBI is also being extensively explored and being used to present complex data analysis.
- A corporate approach to awards submissions has been introduced, an awards calendar created, and several submissions have recently been made for LGC and MJ awards.
- The Council’s performance management framework is currently being reviewed in alignment with Best Value and Oflog approaches. An improved approach to Performance Board’s is being piloted this month. The review of Corporate and Place scorecards has been finalised, aligned to the new Corporate Plan, incorporating output and outcome measures.

- A new self-assessment template has now been developed, aligned to the new Best Value framework and LGA Improvement framework. A self-assessment is underway in advance of the scheduled LGA Corporate Peer Challenge scheduled for June 2024. Oflog data sets are also being analysed and benchmarked using powerBI outside of Oflog's data explorer.

### **Areas for Improvement and Development**

- The Council's Major Works delivery partner for Housing Capital Investment works entered administration in July 2023, leaving projects unfinished and new projects unable to be started. The process of re-procurement is approximately 9 months and so Capital projects are being severely delayed. Interim arrangements are being put in place to complete the projects which were in progress but were left incomplete by the previous delivery partner.
- Levelling Up Funding (LUF) Round 3 funding was allocated by Government as part of the Autumn Statement, unfortunately the Hucknall bid was not included. We will develop an Investment Plan for Hucknall building on the work undertaken for the LUF bid and identify alternative funding sources for delivery, to begin in 2024.
- Update the Council's carbon baseline for 2021/2022 to track performance against the new carbon baseline (2015/2016 to 2020/2021) is overdue as we are awaiting a report from NCC.
- Average turn-around time for re-letting void Council homes has increased from 23.3 days (September 2022) to 29.9 days (September 2023). The causes of the delays continue to be assessed and improvement plans put in place, including weekly monitoring of key movements. More recent November 2023 out-turn indicates an improving position with re-let times reducing to 28.1 days.
- The number of new ASB cases has increased by 44% from 447 (April to September 2022) to 644 (April to September 2023). The Council has seen an increase in customer contact relating to ASB, with a larger proportion of demands requiring specialist support due to complexity based on vulnerability and safeguarding concerns.
- Call waiting times and abandonment rates have increased, April to September 2023, when compared to April to September 2022. An agreed upgrade to the Council's contact centre telephony solution (used by a large number of service areas) will provide additional functionality, including technology to route calls to the right area more swiftly and additional functionality such as web chat and surveying tools to monitor customer satisfaction. The upgrade project is due to commence shortly.
- The Council Tax collection rate as of 30 September 2023 is 55.16% against a target of 55.78% which is 0.62% below target. This out-turn is, however, slightly higher than 54.39% collection rate for the same period 2022. Recovery action is ongoing for any unpaid Council Tax with a constant review of current and previous year outstanding accounts and the different recovery options available. The collection rate for Business Rates as of 30 September 2023 is 55.12% against a target of 49.80% this is 5.32% above target, however, is slightly lower than 59.63% collection rate for the same period 2022. Collection is monitored. Reminders and Summons are scheduled to be issued monthly for any unpaid amounts.

### **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 2023 to 2027 and intended deliverables which were monitored and managed through the Corporate Performance Framework.

It covers performance for the period April to September 2023 and 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 11/01/2024]

**Finance:** [PH 10/01/2024].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	<p>The new Corporate Plan has been developed in alignment with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the financial sustainability of the organisation. The ‘Innovate and Improve’ Priority incorporates key programmes and projects which are focussed on identifying and delivering efficiencies and more effective working practices to support financial sustainability, whilst concurrently delivering improved customer service.</p> <p>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.</p>
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

**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:**[KB 15/01/2024]

The ‘Innovate and Improve’ Priority incorporates key programmes and projects which will be focussed on delivering the Organisational Development 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 incorporates 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**

Corporate Plan 2023-2027

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