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| <b>Report To:</b>             | <b>PRINCIPAL SELECT COMMITTEE</b>                 |
| <b>Date:</b>                  | <b>6 JUNE 2024</b>                                |
| <b>Heading:</b>               | <b>CORPORATE PLAN DELIVERY – YEAR-END 2023/24</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 Principal Select Committee progress updates regarding delivery of the new Corporate Plan 2023-2027 and the April 2023 to March 2024 performance position against the associated Corporate Performance Scorecard.

## **Recommendation(s)**

- 1. For Principal Select Committee to consider and proactively review the levels of delivery achieved against the Corporate Plan Priorities.**
- 2. For Principal Select Committee to consider and proactively review the levels of performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard as of March 2024.**

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

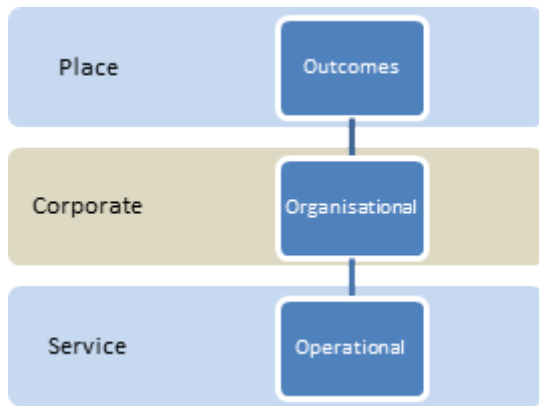
The Council's ambitions for the next four years are clearly identified in a set of revised and updated Corporate Priorities which are presented in the new Corporate Plan. These have been developed by Cabinet.

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 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 has been 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.

## **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. Our Council Plan sets out what we want to achieve in the next four years. Our ambition is to be 'Great' across all our services and to look forwards. Our 6 priorities have been developed based on knowledge and understanding of the needs of Ashfield residents and businesses.

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.

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

The Corporate Performance Scorecard has been developed alongside the delivery plan to help us monitor the progress of achieving our ambitions. Our scorecard is split into 2 sections, Delivery and Living In Ashfield. The Living in Ashfield indicators provide contextual data of Ashfield as a place. The Delivery indicators are used to track our performance against the Councils key priorities.

This report details progress against delivery of the new Corporate Plan, to date, and the April 2023 to March 2024 year-end performance position against the associated Corporate Performance Scorecard 'Delivery' key performance measures.

A summary Corporate Performance Scorecard Report is appended which includes benchmarking data where this is available. The Council is keen to understand performance against relevant peer groups, particularly aligned to Oflog published datasets, to drive our ambition to deliver great services. The detailed Corporate Delivery KPI Scorecard is also appended to this report.

### **Overall Position**

Overall, the corporate scorecard position of corporate 'delivery' measures for April 2023 to March 2024 indicates the following positive position: -

- 75% of measures achieving or exceeding target, or within 10% variance of target.
- 94% of measures indicating an improved position compared to the same period in the previous year, or within 5% of previous year's performance levels.

*(data awaited for 1 KPI)*

Specific deliverables in 2023/24 are: -

## Health and Happiness:

### Best Start

- Increasing access to leisure services and activities for children, and young people
  - Star foundation funding is continuing to come into the local authority and now has a robust way of allocation, monitoring and making best use of funds by providing opportunities for some of our most vulnerable children and young people.
  - The U17s programme continues to be delivered by Everyone Active during school holidays.
  - 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. Due to changes within public health and the way in which breastfeeding is promoted and supported within the community. This has proven difficult to expand and reach its full potential.
- Through the work of the Ashfield Children and Young People's Network, capacity funding was secured to enable a focus on understanding children, young people and their family's mental health concerns. Conversations took place with families, education providers, mental health service providers, and commissioners. This information was presented to a subgroup, who have agreed short- and long-term actions to address some of the issues and challenges presented.
- More than ever before primary schools across the district participated within the Christmas light switch on within all three town centres. The schools have also got involved with the Art Explora Mobile Museum that came to Kirkby, Sutton and Hucknall. Some primary schools have also applied for UKSPF green grant and been successful with their application.

### KEY SUCCESSES

- Leisure transformation – new learner pool at Hucknall, new sauna/steam room at Kirkby, and completion of Papplewick Sports Hub.
- £5.4m of social value has been delivered through the Leisure Operating Contract.
- Significant 18% increase in attendances at our leisure centres, which is a 50% increase over the last 2 years.
- 11 groups have been supported with a grant as part of the UKSPF Green Social Prescribing Fund and 130 families have received a growing pack to encourage them to grow fruit/vegetables at home.

### Living Well

- The Money Management Advice Service has been reviewed along with processes.
- A new resettlement officer was successfully recruited in January 2024. They have been developing further links with existing and new providers of support for households accommodated under the numerous resettlement schemes. This includes, but is not limited to, setting up and running drop in 'advice surgeries' and conversation classes., working with voluntary and faith groups and developing existing relationships with partner agencies. We have established available budget and are currently examining the accommodation needs of those who have been placed and need to be rehoused and the likely numbers.
- Deliver Outdoor Sports Transformation Programme: -
  - Kirkby and Sutton Lawn Sports Hubs - both projects are progressing well with the facilities due to completion in 2025.
  - 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. We are working with local football clubs with an interest in leasing single pitch sites.

- We have been working with Notts. FA and the Football Foundation to identify sites for new 3G pitch provision in Hucknall.
- A new sauna/steam room opened at Kirkby Leisure Centre in December 2023.
- Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funded works to Hucknall Leisure Centre have now commenced with the offsite manufacture of the units and ancillary items required to replace the existing fossil fuel heating with air source heat pumps. The bid to the Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund for solar panels for Lammas Leisure Centre was successful, works are being planned in for the autumn 2024.
- £5,396,142 social value has been delivered through the Leisure Operating Contract during 2023-24, an increase of half a million pounds delivered for the same period last year. Over 7,000 attendances have been recorded from April 2023 - February 2024 on the Active Communities programme. This includes GP Exercise Referrals, memberships for care experienced young people, seated exercise, MSK, Parkinsons, COPD and people experiencing domestic abuse.
- 1,587,573 attendances at the Leisure Centres between April 2023 and March 2024, an 18% increase compared to attendances in 2022/2023 (1,348,688) and nearly 50% increase since 2021/2022.
- The review of rural leisure provision has been completed which has identified gaps in provision. Discussions have begun with Everyone Active and Selston High School to consider how we can coordinate and increase provision. Selston has been included as a potential location for a Playzone.
- 3 x £1,000 grants have been awarded to encourage more walking within Ashfield, and 9 new Walk Leaders have been trained.

### Ageing Well

- The Commercial and Environmental Protection Team have designed a leaflet and distributed it to local retailers to raise awareness about accessibility requirements for customers using their premises.

### Health Inequalities

- Coordinating and influencing organisations and service providers in Leamington, Coxmoor, Broomhill/Butler's Hill.
  - Coxmoor - Significant progress has been made on the Coxmoor estate due to increase of partnerships capacity to directly work with residents and collaboration and trust continues to be developed.
  - Broomhill/Butler's Hill - two Community Interest Company (CIC) groups have received lottery grant money to enable stability for the next two years. Meetings have taken place and a framework around the 'building blocks of health' has now started to take shape with a 3 main hub approach for the local area.
  - Leamington – Work continues to develop within the community network. 'Tuesdays together' continues to happen in partnership with Ashfield Voluntary Action (AVA). A new group started at St Modwins court in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) communities' team for residents. Sport England are also starting a programme of work in partnership with the Council through the Place Expansion Fund. Community planters are also now in place for residents to maintain.
- Linking allotments to foodbanks to reduce food waste. - 11 groups have been supported with a £500 grant as part of the UKSPF Green Social Prescribing Fund. 130 families have received a growing pack to encourage them to grow fruit/vegetables at home. The Feeding Ashfield Network continue to meet quarterly.

## Homes and Housing:

### Housing Development

- A successful acquisitions programme has been delivered, with 12 ex-Council homes being bought and made available for residents in housing need.
- Successful bid has been made to DLUHC under their Local Authority Housing Fund Scheme which has enabled to buyback an additional 6 ex-Council homes.
- Warwick Close in-fill affordable housing development was completed at the end of January 2024.
- 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.

### KEY SUCCESSES

- The Affordable Housing Development Programme has delivered over 100 new homes and there are plans to develop on a further 5 sites.
- 20 self-contained flats have been made available for use as temporary accommodation, whilst over 650 families have been assisted and prevented from becoming homeless.
- Over 1,000 tenants have been supported with welfare and money management advice.
- Tenant satisfaction feedback is well above Housemark benchmark averages.
- Only 2.81% of our housing stock is assessed as non-decent, which is well below national averages

### Tackling Disrepair and Poor Housing Conditions

- The Council have utilised a wider range of powers to take enforcement action against non-compliant landlords. Proceeds from civil penalty fines has been reinvested in the Environmental Health service.
- A new Re-let Standard for vacant Council homes has been introduced to ensure new tenants have an awareness of property condition before they view and sign for their new home.

### Suitable and appropriate housing

- The Council have processed almost 500 referrals relating to local residents seeking carbon reduction and energy efficiency measures under the Government's ECO4 scheme.
- Following the introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, multiple sections of the Council continue to work to ensure that the necessary compliance is in place to meet the new statutory requirements in relation to the Council's social housing stock. Work was also carried to ensure ongoing compliance with several pieces of new fire safety legislation, introduced in 2022/23.
- 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. A tenant's guide has also been produced including social media campaigns. Training has also been provided to technical and non-technical employees on damp and mould. The Council have responded to Awaabs Law consultation and work is underway to implement the targets in the reporting of repairs processes.
- Most carbon monoxide alarms have now been installed, there is just 1 remaining in a difficult to access property.
- We are currently in the final stages of agreeing with partners the implementation of a countywide private sector stock condition survey.
- Improvements have been made to the thermal efficiency of targeted properties, aided through Government funding (Social Housing Decarbonisation). £583k has been 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 31 March 2024, only 2.81% of Local Authority housing stock is assessed as non-decent, which is well below national averages. Data continues to be cleansed and validated which is expected to reduce this figure further.

### Reduce and prevent homelessness.

- A review of temporary accommodation needs has been completed. An additional 20 self-contained flats have been made available for use as temporary accommodation, reducing the Council's need to use unsuitable and expensive bed and breakfast type accommodation and ensuring homeless households have the support they need.
- We continue to work in partnership with other Nottinghamshire Districts and statutory agencies to deliver a range of measures under the Rough Sleeper Initiative Programme aimed at eliminating street homelessness. In Autumn 2023, data showed rough sleeping in Nottinghamshire has not risen at the same rates as nationally.
- Review of the Homelessness Strategy has been completed and associated action plan implemented. This is now monitored through the Strategic Homeless Group.
- 59% more applicants have been prevented from becoming homeless (652 April 2023 to March 2024, compared to 409 April 2022 to March 2023). The target of 300 per annum has been significantly exceeded due to the hard work of the Housing Options and Tenancy Sustainment Teams. The number of households assisted by the Housing Options Team to either remain in their current accommodation or secure alternative accommodation has increased quarter on quarter. This was particularly evident in the number of successful 'preventions' as defined by the homelessness legislation. There is an ongoing focus and work to try to assist households when they are threatened with homelessness rather than at point of homelessness.
- The Landlord Forum has been successfully reinvigorated with positive engagement with landlords in the selective licensing area. Our intention is to engage further as extra funding is received under the healthy homes programme.

### Compliance with Social Housing Regulatory Act

- A significant amount of preparation has been made in advance of a potential inspection, including improvements to data and review of policies. This work is ongoing.
- The new Consumer Standards have been reviewed and a gap analysis is being produced to show what actions are required.
- The 2023/24 Tenant Satisfaction Measures have been collected and the results are being prepared for submission to the Regulator.
- The Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure have been reviewed in line with the revised Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. A self-assessment against the code and complaints performance report are being presented to Cabinet before publication and submission to the Ombudsman, to demonstrate compliance with the statutory Code.
- Work has also been carried to ensure ongoing compliance with several pieces of new fire safety legislation.

### Customer Focus

- 12% more tenants have been assisted with welfare and money management advice between April 2023 to March 2024 (1071) compared to April 2022 to March 2023 (955), significantly exceeding target.
- The project to modernise housing system solutions is currently progressing well. This is enabling the teams to deliver a fully agile service to tenants.
- The Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey has been completed and the results 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, some examples: -
  - 88% of Ashfield District Council tenants surveyed in 2023 indicated overall satisfaction, significantly above Housemark sector average of 72% satisfaction.
  - tenant satisfaction with the safety of their home and the home being well maintained is significantly above Housemark averages at 89% and 81% respectively.
  - Tenant satisfaction of being treated with respect and being kept informed were also significantly higher than Housemark averages at 92% and 83% respectively.
- A review of tenant engagement methods and opportunities have been undertaken alongside Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).

## 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. The Council also recently delivered a further event on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 themed around the UKSPF project of Global and Overseas Trading. Speakers from The Department of Business and Trade, Mentor City delegates from Ohio and a Global trading specialist adviser were well received. Work is now commencing on an event for early Nov-24 around innovation and this will be linked to the Council's UKSPF Ashfield Accelerator Project.
- The UKSPF Ashfield Accelerator contract has been awarded to East Midland Chamber of Commerce and is in delivery. The programme was launched at the Councils' Green Business event. We have agreed a target support 198 businesses by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 (in line with the Council's UKSPF investment plan) to help them develop new skills and expertise to launch new products or secure investment. We have also agreed to support 82 businesses to produce a decarbonisation plan for their business and assist them towards net zero, and to support 50 businesses to develop global trading opportunities (importing and exporting).
- The Council entered a Tail Spend arrangement for the ordering of low value/high volume goods which allows local suppliers to onboard through the supplier's marketplace when conditions have been met. The tail spend solution will also be able to report on the procurement impact on the carbon footprint with the first year's data available in January 2025.
- A re-launch of the Council's Local Supplier directory is being aligned to the new procurement legislation which will come into force in October 2024, with internal promotions taking place.

### KEY SUCCESSES

- The Levelling Up Fund bid for Hucknall, for £9.2m, was approved by government in March.
- Footfall across all three town centres has increased by 9%.
- A significant number of events have been delivered attracting over 16,000 visitors.
- Regeneration projects continue to be successfully delivered - 14 Low Street and High Pavement House have been completed whilst construction is well underway at Kings Mill Reservoir and for the new Planetarium at Sherwood Observatory.

### Infrastructure and Connectivity

- The Local Plan has progressed in accordance with milestones. On 29th April 2024 the Council submitted its Local Plan and supporting documents to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for independent examination.
- 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 planning applications outturn average performance for April 2023 to March 2024 showed improvement compared to the previous year and was above national standards. Processing of minor applications within 8 weeks improved by 12% (83.56% 2023/24 compared to an average of 74.4% 2022/23), and processing of other applications also improved (88.69% 2023/24 compared to an average of 83.57% 2022/23). On average 79.31% of Major planning applications were processed within 13 weeks, which is above national standards of 75%.

### 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) - the 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 has been submitted.
- The Levelling Up Fund bid for Hucknall, for £9.2m, was approved by government in March and planning for delivery is currently underway.
- Work is well underway to develop the Kirkby Long-term Plan, 10-year vision and 3-year investment Plan. The Kirkby Town Board has been created which will oversee the plan's delivery over the next 10 years, initial public consultation has been completed.
- The Council continues to focus efforts on bringing empty and dilapidated sites back into takes time and often the interventions that are taken by the Council are only seen several years later. Successful intervention has now been completed on five properties which were long standing problem properties across the district; The Wine Cellar – Kirkby in Ashfield which has undergone refurbishment; 1a Edward Street – Kirkby in Ashfield which has undergone a complete building overhaul; 30-32 Spring Road – Sutton in Ashfield which has been completely refurbished and now seeking a new premises licence for use as a convenience store, The Old Blue Bell – Lamma Rd, Sutton in Ashfield, a Grade II Listed pub which closed in 2010 and has now been completely refurbished into a 15-bed rented accommodation; and Greenwood Falls Farm – Huthwaite which had been subject to multiple ASB problems and arson attempts. The Council continues to intervene and take appropriate action for commercial residential dilapidated empty properties across the district.

### Skills and Employment

- project involves working with selected primary and secondary schools to provide extra support in embedding quality and sustainable careers provision within their school curriculum.
- Futures continue to deliver 'Transform Your Future' (a UKSPF project) to support Ashfield residents who are economically inactive. The project aims to work with ex-offenders, residents who are 50+, single parents, those with a disability or health condition and young people not in education, employment, or training.
- Futures are also delivering The Essential Skills for Life Programme on behalf of Ashfield District Council, which will help unemployed residents develop key life skills such as confidence, budgeting, basic digital skills, and motivation to help them gain employment. Residents will be able to access in-person workshops, giving them the opportunity to mix and connect with other residents, whilst gaining support from dedicated Skills Tutors, and receiving one-to-one mentoring and guidance.
- Our digital support package delivered by Academy Transformation Trust Further Education (ATTFE) College, based in Sutton in Ashfield has already supported 32 people who have

attended training sessions and a further 15 referred on to employment and skills programmes. The project supports residents to develop the basic digital skills needed for day-to-day living, such as using a mobile phone, online banking and applying for jobs online.

- A contractor is about to be appointed to deliver the Council's UKSPF Ashfield Graduate Talent Match Project. The project aims to connect local businesses with Ashfield undergraduates that are studying at the East Midlands Universities (those due to graduate during Summer 2024 and Summer 2025). The appointed contractor will also support unemployed Ashfield graduates progress into employment within the district.
- Students from Vision West Nottinghamshire College are delivering a pilot project working with the traders in the Idlewells Indoor Market. The aim is to support the traders to use digital devices and marketing platforms effectively to expand their communication, help them to understand and reach out to their customer base, develop their skills, and allow them to take advantage of new and emerging technologies to enable their businesses to be sustainable and grow.
- 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. Work has now commenced on preparing for this year's Careers Fair.
- 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 is being supported by a 6-month pilot project delivered by Save the High Street.
- A significant number of events and improvements have taken place in our town centres throughout 2023/24, some examples being Hucknall Food Festival with significant increases in footfall, and Idlewells Indoor Market is now over 90% occupied.
- Footfall data is now collated through our new visitor insight tool which allows us to capture anonymous data on dwell time, demographics and catchment information for our town centres, parks, and events.
- Town centre visits (April 2023 to March 2024) across all three town centres has increased by 9% (17,042,320) when compared to 2022/23 (15,637,980). Kirkby town centre has seen an 11% increase in footfall (6,008,344 compared to 5,404,092), Sutton has seen a 6% increase in footfall (6,336,385 compared to 5,987,898), and Hucknall has seen an 11% increase in footfall (4,697,5912 compared to 4,245,991).

### Visitor Economy, Arts and Culture

- A draft Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the district has been produced in consultation with key stakeholders. The plan is due for adoption in July.
- A Place Partnership bid was submitted to the Arts Council earlier in 2024 with the outcome due by early June. The project would support arts activity across the District and bring over £1m of investment.
- Delivery of events programme 2023/24 – The events calendar was delivered in full, attracting over 16,000 attendances. An opportunity to host the Art Explora Mobile Museum tour was maximised, with over 3,000 attendances during the three-week period. The corporate events programme is being delivered by an external provider for the next three years, a Bonfire Night event has been added to the calendar as well as a three-day Ashfield Show.

## Cleaner and Greener:

### Cleanliness of the District

- The Council continues to drive forward recycling, local residents are currently achieving a magnificent recycling rate of 36% of all household waste generated, in line with CIPFA nearest neighbour averages.
- The team continue to extend knowledge of recycling and the environment across residents through initiatives such as the Big Ashfield Spring Clean which this year included new initiatives involving schools, volunteers and the public at large through tangible constructions such as pollinators and bug hotels. 4,053 free bulky collections were made as part of the 2024 Big Ashfield Spring Clean initiative.
- Between April 2023 and March 2024, the council emptied 3,757,979 refuse bins, collecting nearly 6,300 tonnes of garden waste, 2,500 tonnes of glass and over 7,100 tonnes of dry recycling.
- A number of interventions have been undertaken to address fly tipping, waste on land, littering, abandoned vehicles, graffiti and dog fouling across the District. The Council have issued Fixed Penalty Notices, statutory notices and undertaken environmental improvements over the past year to tackle environmental crime. This includes investigations, gating of alleyways, installation of additional streetlights, educational programmes, media campaigns and the delivery of the annual big spring clean. DEFRA last published data confirmed that the authority is ranked 80th out 309 local authorities for incident occurrences for fly tipping (second quartile).
- 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.
- Between April 2023 and March 2024, the council swept 691 km of highways and pavements and collected over 660 tonnes of litter and street waste including litter picking and emptying litter bins.

#### KEY SUCCESSES

- Over 4,000 free bulky waste collections were made as part of the Big Ashfield Spring Clean
- Keeping the district clean, the Council swept 691 km of highways and pavements and collected over 660 tonnes of litter and street waste.
- Over 1,000 trees were planted by the Council.
- Successful 7<sup>th</sup> Green Flag Award for Kingsmill Reservoir.
- The Council's Scope 1 and 2 footprint has reduced by a significant 21.3%

### Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

- The Council continues to work towards meeting the tasks contained within the Carbon Management Plan, including the development of a number of projects to further reduce the Council's scope 1 and 2 emissions. The Council continues to purchase zero carbon electricity certified under the Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO). The electricity is generated from wind, solar, hydro, landfill gas and biomass pellets.
- The Council continues 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. Anticipated completion later in 2024.
- A domestic Asset Strategy, incorporating carbon reductions, has been finalised and approved by the Tenants Gateway.
- 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.
- The Council continue to work in partnership with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Project Team in the development of a strategy.
- 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.
- The Council planted circa 1,050 trees during 2023/24.
- The Council's carbon data for 2021/22 has now been updated to be used as a baseline against which to track performance. The Council's Scope 1 and 2 footprint as at March 2023 shows a significant 21.3% reduction compared to March 2022.

### Parks and Green Spaces

- Selston Country Park – a new play area and works to refurbish and increase capacity of the café were completed in the spring.
- Green Space Assets Review - a review of cafes and visitor centres has been undertaken with recommendations due to be reported in early summer.
- The six Green Flag Awards for the main parks were retained this year with an additional Green Flag successfully awarded for the Kings Mill Reservoir site bringing the total to seven sites.
- Between April 2023 and March 2024, the council maintained 2,766,000 square metres of grass and planted over 5,000 bedding plants.

### **Safer and Stronger:**

#### A Safer District

- The Council responded to 5,316 reports of anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood nuisance and environmental crime reports between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024. Based on the reporting period for the previous year of 4,890 reports, this is a 9% annual increase. Of these demands, 12% were resolved through specialist triage advice at the initial point of contact.
- 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 resulting in 8 Alleyways being shut and gating installed to reduce environmental crime and nuisance in these areas. The council have also recently produced a public notice and

#### **KEY SUCCESSES**

- Increased CCTV cameras from 29 to 59 devices across the District in the last two years
- Successful in securing £212,000 as part of the Safer Streets Round 5
- Successful in securing over £74,000 to support domestic abuse survivors and improve their safety, already resulting in 50 survivors being supported.

draft order relating to the renewal and variation of the District Wide Public Space Protection Order to include; vehicle nuisance and street harassment prohibitions, whilst increasing restricted areas for dog exclusion in parks and children's play 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 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.
- As part of the Council's statutory responsibilities to respond to serious violence, a new local response plan has been published which outlines how the Community Safety Partnership will share information and undertake measures to prevent and reduce serious violence. This includes identifying types of serious violence, the causes of that violence and preparing and implementing a strategy for reducing it.

### Community Safety Strategy

- The renewed Community Safety Strategy has been agreed with partners and approved at Cabinet in January 2024.
- The Community Safety Partnership works together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour through the facilitation of neighbourhood tasking meetings, community action days, problem solving activities, enforcement and joint patrols in neighbourhoods, town centres 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.

### Our Communities Feeling Safe (projects)

- The Council has increased its public space CCTV cameras from 29 to 59 devices across the District in the last two years to help promote feelings of safety, detect, and deter crime and anti-social behaviour. The cameras are monitored from Nottinghamshire Police Headquarters 24 hours, 7 days per week and include 3 Safe Point Cameras in each town centre, which provides a means to request urgent assistance for anyone who feels in danger; before a crime occurs. 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 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. The 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.

- In November 2023, Ashfield District Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) have been successful in securing £216,094 in funding under Safer Streets round 5, 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. All interventions have now been delivered.
- 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. Following successful delivery of schemes for Kirkby and Sutton, the Council has also been working with businesses in Hucknall to develop a further Shop Watch and Safe Space Accreditation Scheme. The scheme provides retailers with radios, signage, lighting and cameras to improve safety across town centres and act as safe haven for local visitors to the town.
- £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.

#### Supporting Vulnerable People

- From April 2023 to March 2024, 168 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.
- The council has been successful in securing over £74,000 to deliver safer accommodation duties to support domestic abuse survivors and improve their safety. The scheme has resulted in 50 survivors being supported throughout 2023/2024. Ashfield District Council is proud to be White Ribbon accredited and is working towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation to further support survivors of domestic abuse. The Council has recently employed a second domestic abuse worker to support delivery of this work.
- 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. The Council has produced a 'Prevent Plan' which is currently being reviewed by partners.
- 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.
- The Council have undertaken various initiatives to address violence against women and girls over the past year. Recent activities include working in partnership with students at Vision

West Nottinghamshire College to design and produce digital posters to highlight Violence Against Women and Girls. Posters have been digitally displayed across the district and provides national statistics as well as information on how to report incidents. The Council has also been working in partnership with domestic abuse services to run annual white ribbon campaigns and deliver healthy relationships programmes in primary schools.

- 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, with a dedicated project worker employed by Juno finalising the coordination of our DAHA accreditation submission.

## **Innovate and Improve**

### Positive and Proactive Communications

- Our Aspiring Leadership Cohort have led a task and finish project reviewing the current embedding of logo/brand cross-Council and making recommendations for improvement which are now being incorporated into the Council's Improvement Programme.

### Customer Experience and Customer Focus

- Average call waiting times have reduced by a substantial 25% (average 4 seconds in 2023/24 compared to an average 1 minute 6 seconds in 2022/23). Abandonment rates have also reduced significantly, by 37% (3.32% abandoned calls in 2023/24 compared to 5.3% abandoned calls in 2022/23).
- 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 has now been finalised with additional context to be sought through face-to-face focus group meetings with our Citizens Panel scheduled for July 2024.
- A marketing campaign has now been finalised with the aim of attracting more residents to our re-invigorated Citizens Panel.
- Our Aspiring Leadership Cohort have finalised a review of customer service standards, researching best practice to provide recommendations.

### **KEY SUCCESSES**

- Digital transformation successes continue with significant reductions in more costly channels - an overall 7% reduction in phone calls, 12% reduction in face-to-face visits, 11% reduction in Paypoint/Post Office payment transactions and a significant 86% increase in the use of council developed online forms. Over 20,000 residents are now signed up to Ashfield 24/7
- Over £2.1m social value delivered through our procurement activity since April 2021
- Sickness levels have reduced significantly by 19%.

### Digital and Service Transformation

- The level of take-up for making payments easily, using digital channels, continues to increase with 90% of payments received during 2023/24 being made either by direct debit, online, automated telephone or recurring card payments. Paypoint and post office transactions which are more expensive for the customer continue to decrease with a further 11% reduction during 2023/24 (a significant 49% decrease over the last 5 years, resulting in over £118,000 cumulative transaction cost savings). Online payments have increased by

11% (64,828 payments made between April 2023 and March 2024 compared to 58,410 payments made between April 2022 and March 2023).

- Throughout 2023/24 the Council answered 79,504 calls, an overall 7% reduction on the previous year, of which there were significant reductions in calls to revenues (-17%), residential environmental health (-20%), and housing repairs (-13%). Face to face visits to the Council also reduced over the same period by 12%.
- The use of the council developed online forms, in our low code solution, have increased by a significant 86% compared to last year (9,379 forms 2023/24 compared to 5,043 forms 2022/23). Most of the increase in use has been for waste related requests such as bulky waste and garden waste collections, indicating successful ongoing development of the online form integration with the operational back-office system. There has also been a 14% increase in the use of revenues and benefits specific online forms.
- Several digital sessions have taken place at the Council Offices at Urban Road to assist residents in increasing their digital skills. 23% of Council Taxpayers and 83% of Business Rates payers are now signed up to the Revenues portal. The Ashfield 24/7 Customer Portal has been in place since February 2022 and now has over 20,183 residents signed up.
- The Digital Transformation Programme continues to deliver approximately £??m (*year-end data to follow for final report*) of financial benefits (cashable and cost avoidance) over the last 5 years. Work has progressed since July 2022 to migrate many key systems used by the Council to 'Cloud' based solutions to support improved access and resilience, alongside increased functionality. In house digital development is now also leading more modern approaches in community projects, including the intelligent automation of several operational processes.

#### Financial Sustainability

- The 2022/23 Audited Statement of Accounts is on the Council's website along with the unqualified audit opinion. The Accounts show healthy levels of reserves which are expected to be needed to smooth the transitioning to revised levels of funding once Local Government Funding Reform has been implemented.
- The 2024/25 Annual Budget Report includes details of savings and efficiencies included in setting the budget for 2024/25.
- A review of fees and charges has been completed and was presented to and approved by Cabinet in January 2024.
- The Service Review programme continues to identify cashable efficiencies and invest to save opportunities, which, once approved, will be factored into the 2024/25 revised budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The new Policy and Performance function are leading a revised, proactive, programmed approach to service reviews.
- Depot - we currently reviewing options for future service delivery requirements for the Neighbourhoods and Housing Repairs services, to feed into options for how the depot site is taken forward in the future. Consideration is also being given to how the site can be used to generate greater social impact beyond the public services delivered from there already including accommodating Vision West Notts College's vehicle maintenance and civil engineering departments.
- The Council Tax collection rate as of March 2024 is 96.3%, slightly higher than 95.79% collection rate in March 2023, comparable to our CIPFA nearest neighbour averages and higher than national averages. As this outturn is below target the recovery team have been working through reports and taking recovery action. The collection rate for Business Rates has remained static when compared to the previous year at 97.78% against a target of 98%.
- The collection of 97.8% of business rates is above national, East Midlands and CIPFA nearest neighbour averages.
- The procurement partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council has been in place for 9 months and during that period eleven projects were completed all within budget despite economic challenges in the market which was an achievement as they were mainly works



contracts where prices had increased. Joint procurement exercises have been undertaken in an effort to seek savings through aggregation.

### People and partnerships

- The Council's People Strategy review is now complete and has been renamed Organisational Development Strategy. This is underpinned by a delivery action plan.
- 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 has also recently been launched.
- A review of Ashfield's Strategic Partnerships is currently being undertaken and will feed 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 19% (8.88 days average per full time equivalent April 2023 to March 2024, compared to 10.93 days average per full time equivalent April 2022 to March 2023).

### Performance, Data and Change Management

- A 'Knowledge Hub' dashboard of data and data analysis has been successfully developed using powerbi, which is accessible across the organisation and is used to understand performance delivery, eg the Corporate Plan, and benchmark against other local authorities (we have replicated and improved upon the Oflog Data Explorer). The Knowledge Hub also incorporates dashboards for place level data and other key datasets such as Education and skills, Economic Growth, visitor footfall insights and the resident survey. The data is updated frequently through API integrations with key external data sources. We are ambitious in our ongoing development of our datasets within the hub and continue to embed this new approach to data sharing to inform strategy and policy and decision making, whilst also driving our improvement journey towards excellence.
- 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 has recently been introduced. The review of Corporate and Place scorecards has been finalised, aligned to the new Corporate Plan, incorporating output and outcome measures.
- Excluding the social value delivered from our leisure centre contract, cumulative social value delivered since the measurement via the Social Value Portal from April 2021 is now over £2.4m. Most of the procurement activities are delivering more than targets set. The two largest deliverables by outcome are: -
  - More people in local employment £1.4m
  - More opportunities for local MSMEs and VCSEs £754,381

### **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 a long process so delivery of Capital works will be 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. Works will be carried forward, predominantly under the new contract.
- Stock condition surveys of our housing assets are in progress. Access issues are requiring multiple visits, and there remain significant numbers of surveys to complete. Significant IT

developments are required, and actions are ongoing to improve data capture and system input. Once the data is collected, the Council will engage a consultant to undertake an independent validation of the data to develop an updated investment plan for major works and repairs. This independent validation and 30-year investment plan update is carried out approximately every five years.

- Average turn-around time for re-letting void Council homes has increased from 23.8 days (March 2023) to 28.1 days (March 2024). The causes of the delays continue to be assessed and improvement plans put in place, including weekly monitoring of key movements. More recent April 2024 out-turn indicates an improving position with re-let times reducing to 27.6 days.
- Rent collection rates have reduced slightly (97.02% April 2023 to March 2024, compared to 97.77% April 2022 to March 2023). Re-shaping of resources has focussed on increasing Income Officer capacity, with the introduction of area-based targets that give clear guidance. Rent arrears levels however continue to reduce as Income Officers and Money Management Advisors have continued to deliver improving performance in a challenging financial environment with an increasing numbers of tenants "migrating" from Housing Benefits to Universal Credit.
- The level of payments made via direct debits has reduced slightly by 0.7% (489,312 payments made in 2023/24 compared to 492,911 made in 2022/23). The Call monitoring service ceased in December 2023, having an reducing impact of between 800 and 1,000 direct debit transactions each month. This accounts for the reduction in direct debit payments from January to March 2024. All other services collecting payment by Direct Debit have seen an increase from the previous financial year.

## **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.

### **Legal:**

The Council's new Corporate Priorities and strategic plans have been developed in consideration of current and forthcoming legislative requirements.

### **Finance:** [PH 29/05/2024].

| <b>Budget Area</b>                          | <b>Implication</b>  |
|---|---|
| General Fund – Revenue Budget               | 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. |
| 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:**

| <b>Risk</b>   | <b>Mitigation</b>  |
|---|--|
| 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 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  
Corporate Plan Performance Report

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