

## Audit Committee – 24 November 2023

<b>Title of paper:</b>	IAB Instructions: Corporate Planning	
<b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>	James Rhodes, Director of Policy, Performance and Communications	<b>Wards affected:</b> All
<b>Report author(s) and contact details:</b>	James Schrodell, Policy and Performance Manager, 0115 876 1040	
<b>Other colleagues who have provided input:</b>	Elaine Fox, Policy Officer	
<b>Does this report contain any information that is exempt from publication?</b> No		
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		
1.	To note the progress detailed below in meeting the Improvement and Assurance Board's (IAB) Instructions around Corporate and Business Planning	

### 1. Reasons for recommendations

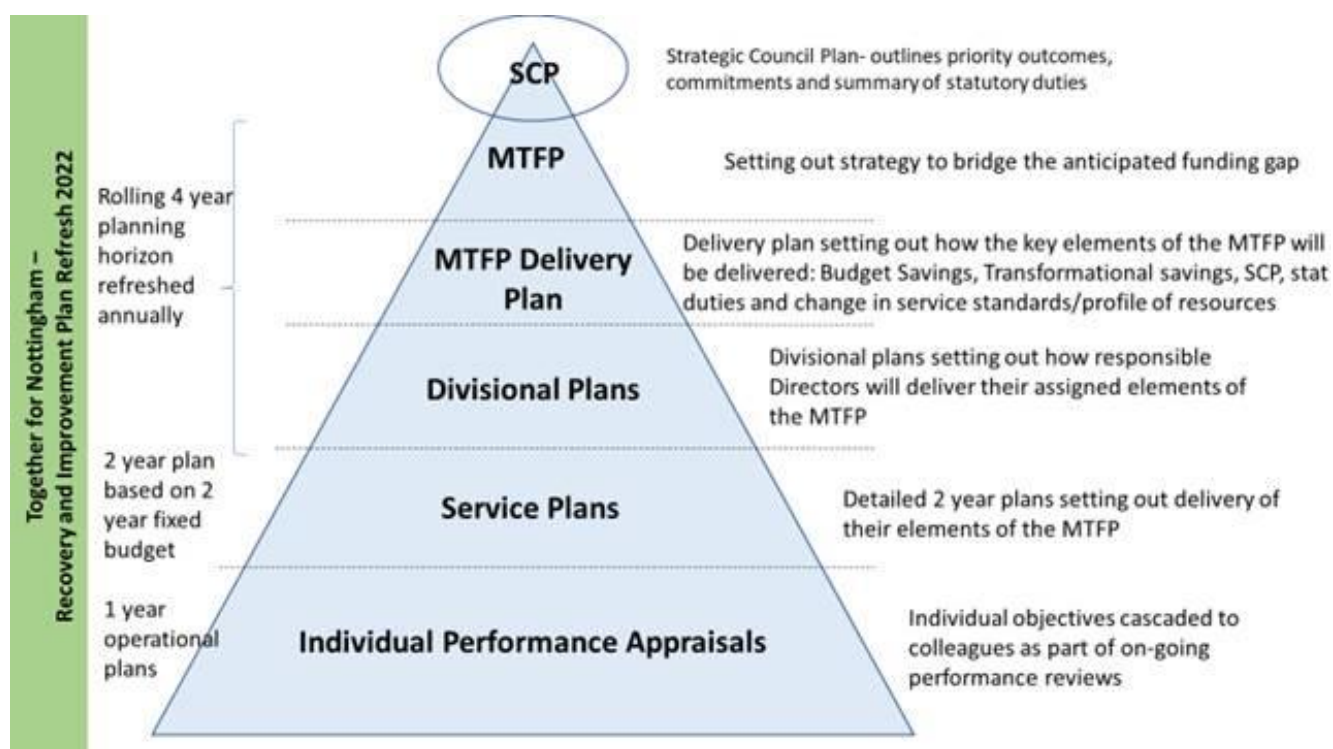
- 1.1 To assure Audit Committee of the Council's progress in meeting the IAB's corporate Business Planning related Instructions.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 Nottingham City Council published its Recovery and Improvement Plan in January 2021. This plan was refreshed and renamed the Together for Nottingham Plan in October 2022. One of the priorities within the Together for Nottingham Plan was the creation of a new Business Planning structure that would join up the Strategic Council Plan with Service Plans and link these to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 2.2 The IAB issued 39 Instructions to the Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023 following the confirmation by the Secretary of State of the Council's package of statutory intervention. Since then, the IAB has used the following Instructions to direct the Council about how Business Planning should be improved:
- A. Approve the fully integrated SCP, Workforce Plan, MTFP, Transformation and Recovery Plans.
  - B. Instill a truly corporate commitment in the fulfilment of the Council's Plans.
  - C. Provide a clear and direct link between the Corporate Plans and the Performance Management Regime.
  - D. Compile a clear plan and procedure for monitoring performance against plans.
- 2.3 The below discusses progress against each of these in turn. In some cases, significant progress was made under the Together for Nottingham Plan and the IAB's Statement of Requirements prior to the IAB's issuance of Instructions:

## A. Approve the fully integrated SCP, Workforce Plan, MTFP, Transformation and Recovery Plans.

- The Strategic Council Plan (SCP) 2023-27 was agreed alongside the MTFP at Full Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
- The SCP is and will remain fully integrated through the annually refreshed Divisional and Service Plans.
- Divisional Plans bring together for each accountable Director:
  - Operating context
  - Resources
  - Statutory and service standards
- All SCP commitments included under the 'what we will do' sections of the SCP
- Key elements that the MTFP is predicated on - i.e. budget savings and transformation
- More timebound actions from the Together for Nottingham Plan
- KPIs and other key BAU and project work being delivered
- Risk and performance.
- Service Plans then set out the actions that will deliver each Divisional Plan. Workforce planning in terms of identifying and mitigating anticipated workforce gaps is also outlined in Service Plans.
- It is at the Divisional Plan level that all the key activity of the Council is brought together, and deliverability is demonstrated within the financial envelope available to each Division.
- Deliverability of 2023/24's Divisional Plans was confirmed by Directors in April of 2023.
- The Business Planning structure described above provides a "Golden Thread" through the organisation:



- The SCP sets out the Council's vision, the context we are operating within, our ambitions for Nottingham and the key statutory duties which the Council delivers.

- A refresh of the SCP is currently being developed and this will again be delivered alongside the MTFP in February 2024. This refreshed SCP will look to incorporate the policies of the majority group that are deliverable within the context of the MTFP.
- To demonstrate that the SCP is deliverable – both to the IAB and in terms of Best Value and good governance – 2024/25's draft Divisional Plans will be used to inform this refresh.
- Using Divisional Plans to inform the drafting and refresh of the SCP in this way ensures both clear representation of our statutory work and also that the SCP is deliverable within the financial constraints of the MTFP. All activity outlined within the SCP is contained in a Divisional Plan which will be signed off against budget allocation.
- The MTFP Delivery Plan is formed from the Divisional Plans of the whole Council.

#### **B. Instill a truly corporate commitment in the fulfilment of the Council's Plans.**

- Corporate Planning is integrated and brings together planning at the Divisional level as described above.
- A named accountable officer is identified for all activity in all plans.
- Commitment and accountability is ensured through monthly performance management at the Divisional Performance Clinics. These focus on a rolling agenda to ensure all elements of the integrated business plan are performance managed and that responsible officers held to account (e.g. risk, transformation, KPIs and SCP commitments).
- The monthly divisional performance management process fits coterminously into the quarterly corporate performance management cycle whereby senior officers and Portfolio Holders are held to account for performance. This further ensures and instils corporate commitment to delivery of the integrated plan.
- Performance is reported to the Council's Scrutiny Committees and the robustness of performance management arrangements are reviewed by Audit Committee.

#### **C. Provide a clear and direct link between the Corporate Plans and the Performance Management Regime.**

- An integrated business planning and performance management approach is in place that ensures all key corporate plans are brought together and performance managed consistently (as outline above).
- Business planning is carried out annually using a rolling four-year planning horizon linked to the MTFP. In 2023/24 this annual cycle was aligned to the drafting of a new SCP, and that will be the case for the refresh of the SCP in 2024/25.
- Divisional Business Plans integrate all key plans to ensure all elements are managed in one place (e.g. transformation, SCP actions, Together for Nottingham plan actions, Critical Indicators/KPIs, risks, projects and key BAU/statutory duties etc).
- A named accountable officer is identified for all activity in the plans.
- Divisional Performance Clinics take place monthly, adopting a rolling agenda across a three-month period allowing Directors and Heads of Service to review their performance data and the relevant parts of the Directorate and Corporate Risk Registers, and any capital and transformation programmes to ensure Best Value.

#### **D. Compile a clear plan and procedure for monitoring performance against plans.**

- The Corporate Performance Management Framework consists of the deliverables from the SCP and the Critical Indicators (detailed in Divisional Plans) which set out the statutory and “business as usual” work of the Council.
- Reporting is captured through the Council’s online performance management system, Ideagen, linking into other sources of data where available. Reports include a RAG (red, amber, green) rating for each indicator, alongside contextual narrative. Discussions have been had to evaluate the effectiveness of Ideagen and what other performance software options are available.
- RAG-rated performance, data and narratives for Critical Indicators are discussed quarterly at Divisional Performance Clinics. These performance clinics have facilitated a more consistent and focused approach to performance management.
- The clinics have standardised the performance management process but provided some flexibility so that each clinic can be tailored to the needs of the service area whilst ensuring every division considers all areas of performance on a regular basis. This approach has harnessed good practice and has the capacity to improve areas that need more support.
- Following discussion at the clinics, reporting is taken to each Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) meeting, then to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), Portfolio Holders, the Executive and Corporate Scrutiny Committee.
- Particular focus is given to those indicators RAG rated ‘red’ or ‘amber’, with indicators consistently rated ‘green’ also reviewed.
- Reporting against the SCP deliverables is currently on hold pending the development of the 2024/25 Divisional Plans and the refreshed SCP due in February 2024 which will take account of the pending MTFP and the proposed changes required to deliver a balanced budget.
- From 2024, performance reporting against the SCP’s deliverables will occur annually via Divisional Performance Clinics, DLTs, CLT and the Executive.
- Current plans for improving this structure further include a review of Critical Indicators, an increased use of automation and dashboards in reporting, and a clearer hierarchy around which Critical Indicators should be consistently reported at which level of the Council.

#### **3. Background papers other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information**

N/A

#### **4. Published documents referred to in compiling this report**

4.1 [The Strategic Council Plan 2023-27](#)

4.2 The Council’s recovery and improvement plan: Together for Nottingham.