

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:	5095
Author:	James Schrodel
Department:	Chief Executive's
Contact:	James Rhodes (Job Title: Policy, Performance and Insight Manger, Email: james.rhodes@nottinghamcity.gov.uk, Phone: 0115 8765726)
Subject:	To recommend a refreshed Strategic Council Plan 2024-27 to Council
Total Value:	0 (Type: Nil)
Decision Being Taken:	To recommend to Full Council that the draft refreshed Strategic Council Plan 2024 - 2027 (attached) is approved.
Reasons for the Decision(s)	<p>The Strategic Council Plan (SCP) for 2023-27 needs to be revised following the Local Elections in May 2023 and within the constraints of the 2024/25 Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). It also needs to be updated to take account of changes to 'business as usual'/statutory delivery given the Council's reduced resources and measures in place following issuing of the Section 114 Notice. Fundamentally, the Council is changing to become a smaller, different organisation. Significant savings are required, and these savings will alter what the Council can deliver. To ensure deliverability within the existing resource envelope, the SCP refresh has been aligned with the development processes for the MTFP and the Divisional Plans. To align with the MTFP, this decision will to approve the refreshed plan will be taken by Full Council on 4 March 2024.</p>
Briefing notes documents:	SCP refresh 2024 vF.docx
Other Options Considered:	None. Improvement and Assurance Board (IAB) Instructions require the Council to ensure that its policy framework is integrated with the MTFP.

Background Papers: **None**

Published Works: **Strategic Council Plan 2023 - 2027**

Affected Wards: **Citywide**

Colleague / Councillor Interests: **N/A**

Consultations: **Date: 01/02/2024**

Other City Council Bodies:Leadership

Leadership agreed that the draft SCP did not need to go to Executive Board prior to being recommended to Full Council.

Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications: **N/A**

Equality: **EIA not required. Reasons: An EIA is not required because the individual activities contained within the Strategic Council Plan are subject to an EIA where applicable.**

Decision Type: **Portfolio Holder**

Subject to Call In: **Yes**

Call In Expiry date: **01/03/2024**

Advice Sought: **Legal, Finance**

Legal Advice:

1. The Council has a variety of statutory duties that it must fulfil by law. It cannot lawfully decide not to carry out those duties. Even where the Council is under a statutory duty to provide a service, there is often a discretion available to the Council about the level of service provision and the way in which the service is delivered. For other activities, the Council provides services in pursuance of a statutory power rather than a duty, and though not bound to carry out those activities, decisions about them must be taken in accordance with the decision-making requirements of administrative law.

2. The Council have a duty to act lawfully. The Council must set and maintain a balanced budget and must take steps to deal with any projected overspends and identify savings or other measures to bring budget pressures under control. Any strategic plan commitments must be delivered within the financial envelope.

3. This decision forms part of the policy framework and as such a formal decision must be taken by an executive decision maker to recommend the policy to full Council for approval.

Beth Brown, Head of Legal, 1 February 2024

Advice provided by Beth Brown (Head of Legal and Governance) on 08/02/2024.

Finance Advice:

The approved budget strategy for the 2024/25 - 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) requires the following objectives to be met first before any new investment growth is considered for delivering Strategic Council Plan priorities:

- 1) Set and deliver a balanced budget.
- 2) Establish financial resilience to ensure council's long term financial health and viability is sound.
- 3) Maximise the 'One Council' as a vehicle to delivering transformation for the organisation.
- 4) Address emerging pressures that are unavoidable.

The Council continues to face truly exceptional circumstances as best demonstrated by the resultant budget gap presented to the Executive Board in February 2024 of c£41m for 2024/25 that is predicated on Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) approving the Councils request for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) to set a balanced budget next year. The predominate drivers of these exceptional pressures are a combination of both significant demographic, complexity of provision and inflationary pressures across wide range of areas. As such, the proposals developed by officers, using the Duties and Powers framework have been insufficient in meeting the quantum of corresponding growth required to provide adequate financial provision for council's service obligations.

The significance of the budget gap over the MTFP period 2024/25 - 2027/28 of c£172m combined with the need to rely on substantial amounts of EFS should not be underestimated and although the EFS would allow the Council to set a balanced budget in 2024/25 it sets itself a significantly higher hurdle to achieve in 2025/26. Therefore, it is essential that the Strategic Council Plan is aligned to the available resources within the MTFP with key focus on deliverables for 2024/25 fully funded from within approved budget, whilst the Council works in establishing a sustainable financial strategy to set and deliver a balance budget over the MTFP period.

Shabana Kausar - Director of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
Advice provided by Shabana Kausar (Director of Finance) on 22/02/2024.

Signatures

David Mellen (Leader/ PH Strategic Regeneration & Communications)
SIGNED and Dated: 23/02/2024
Mel Barrett (Chief Executive)
SIGNED and Dated: 23/02/2024