



Report of Corporate Management Team

John Hewitt, Corporate Director of Resources

Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide a draft of the Council Plan for 2020-23 attached for consideration and comment before being submitted for approval by Council.

Executive summary

- 2 The Council Plan is the primary corporate planning document for the county council and details Durham County Council's contribution towards achieving the objectives set out in the Vision for County Durham 2035 together with its own change agenda. It aims to provide a readable and accessible summary for Members, partners and the public of our priorities for the county and the main programmes of work that we will undertake over the coming three years to help achieve these priorities.
- 3 The Council Plan aligns to both the council's Medium Term Financial Plan which sets out how our priorities will be resourced and the County Durham Plan which is a spatial representation of our ambitions contained within the Council Plan around housing, jobs and the environment until 2035, as well as the transport, schools and healthcare to support it.
- 4 The Council Plan is underpinned by a series of corporate strategies and service planning arrangements providing more detailed information on the actions which are being undertaken to deliver on our priorities and to avoid duplication, the detail within these plans has not been replicated within the Council Plan.
- 5 In terms of practicality, some of the programmes of work being undertaken by the council contribute to more than one objective. In these situations, the action is listed under one objective in terms of best

fit rather than replicate the same action multiple times throughout the Council Plan.

6 The report also presents for agreement our new equality objectives.

Recommendation(s)

7 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) agree the content of the draft Council Plan and recommend it for approval by Council, subject to any final minor amends by the Corporate Director of Resources;
- (b) Agree the attached revised Equality Policy.

Background

- 9 The Vision for County Durham was written together with partner organisations and the public and sets out what we would like the county to look like in 15 years' time. It was approved by Council and launched by the County Durham Partnership in October last year.
- 10 Both the Vision for County Durham and the Council Plan are structured around three ambitions which are:
 - (a) More and better jobs
 - (b) People live long and independent lives
 - (c) Communities are well connected and supportive of each other
- 11 An additional ambition of **an excellent council** has been developed for the Council Plan to capture the corporate initiatives that the council has identified and that it wants to undertake to transform its operations and enable achievement of the ambitions within the vision.
- 12 The document is structured around these four ambitions and it sets out under each ambition our achievements and issues to address together with key programmes of work the council plans to undertake. The Plan will be monitored through six monthly update reports of progress against our work programme and quarterly performance updates against key indicators to Cabinet and the relevant overview and scrutiny committees.
- 13 How the council responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, delivers its services in the future and helps to support businesses and communities recover will dominate our work over the lifetime of this document. The attached Council Plan therefore sets out our COVID-19 strategy.
- 14 We have also developed a three-phase COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan to help support businesses being released from lockdown, manage the transition to stabilisation and then to rebuild and grow our places, services and industries. We have developed a pipeline of projects which will serve as a roadmap to recovery and deliver investment plans to help rebuild our economy. We will also monitor changes in employment throughout the county and develop and deliver employability support programmes to help those who have lost their jobs back into employment.
- 15 We aim to attract more high-quality jobs to the county so will need to equip our young people with the necessary skills and reskill those in the labour market to access the jobs of the future. Education and training are therefore a critical component of our more and better jobs ambition.

- 16 A large proportion of the county, particularly to the west of the A68 is rural and has some of the sparsest population densities in the country. It is important to people that rural communities remain sustainable whilst maintaining those characteristics that make them distinctive. The particular challenges of rural communities are referenced throughout this Council Plan and rural proofing will be a major consideration in any policies that we develop.
- 17 As a public authority, Durham County Council is also required by law to set out equality objectives and review these on a triennial basis. Our new equality objectives are also set out within the Council Plan and the Plan also details how these are integrated into our ambitions. Our equality policy has also been revised in line with our new equality objectives and is attached in Appendix 3.
- 18 Webpages will be developed to provide an interactive version of the Council Plan for users who wish to access our plans online.

Conclusion

- 19 A draft Council Plan has been developed (see Appendix 2) based on the vision which has undergone an extensive public consultation exercise. This is presented for consideration.

Background papers

- County Durham Vision (County Council, 23 October 2019)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s115064/Draft%20Durham%20Vision%20v10.0.pdf>
- Vision equality impact assessment (County Council, 23 October 2019)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s115066/Appendix%203%20-%20Draft%20Vision%20-%20EIA.pdf>

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Constitution of the Council sets out arrangements for monitoring performance.

Finance

None

Consultation

The Council Plan is written around the County Vision which was developed following an extensive three phase consultation where over 30,000 responses were considered and which helped shape the final vision. Consultation on the proposed equality objectives was also undertaken with representative groups.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The revised Equality Policy sets our proposed new equality objectives to identify and tackle discrimination, inequalities and promote good relations.

Climate Change

Climate change features as part of the proposed Council Plan.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

Crime and disorder features as part of the proposed Council Plan.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

Risk features as part of the council's performance reporting arrangements.

Procurement

None.