

North Somerset Council

Report to the Council

Date of Meeting: 20 February 2024

Subject of Report: North Somerset Corporate Plan

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Cllr Mike Bell, Leader of the Council

Key Decision: No

Reason:

N/A

Recommendations

The Council is asked to approve the Corporate Plan for the period 2024 to 2028 as recommended by the Executive.

1. Summary of Report

A refreshed Corporate Plan has been developed for 2024-28 which reaffirms the council's vision to be open, fair and green, and includes four ambitions to contribute towards achieving this vision (Appendix 1).

Alongside these ambitions a number of commitments and actions have been identified as part of the action plan (Appendix 2), with specific outcome measures to monitor ongoing progress.

The refreshed Corporate Plan and action plan, which has been informed by residents and stakeholders via a programme of engagement, is being presented to Council for approval following Executive approval as of 7 February.

2. Policy

The Corporate Plan is the council's over-arching strategic business plan. It sets out the Council's vision, ambitions, and commitments for how we will work, developed through engagement with residents and stakeholders. The accompanying action plan outlines how we will achieve those commitments and ambitions and ultimately contribute to the vision to be open, fair and green.

We track our success against the Corporate Plan through an Integrated Performance and Risk Management Framework which is updated quarterly and allows residents and stakeholders to hold us to account on how we are progressing against the plan. We review our risk registers against the plan so we can understand any challenges to delivery.

3. Details

Following local elections in May 2023, a refresh of the Corporate Plan was initiated. The current [Corporate Plan](#) sets out a vision to be open, fair and green with the aims to be open and enabling, empowered and caring, and thriving and sustainable with a number of priorities alongside these aims.

A refreshed Corporate Plan for 2028-2028 has now been developed through engagement with our staff, with residents and with stakeholders and reaffirms the vision to be open, fair and green. The Plan, which can be seen at **Appendix 1**, includes the following four co-produced ambitions to contribute towards achieving this vision:

- Our children and young people are cared for, safe, supported, and are given equality of opportunity to thrive.
- Our communities are caring, healthy and safe, where people help each other to live well.
- Our towns and villages are thriving and sustainable places to live, work and visit.
- Our council delivers consistently good services and value for money to support our communities.

Alongside these ambitions, commitments and actions have been identified as part of the action plan (**Appendix 2**), with specific outcome measures so that we can monitor progress.

As part of the Corporate Plan development an engagement programme with residents and stakeholders, including Town and Parish Councils has been held, the details of which are included in section 4 with an outcome report included in **Appendix 3**.

North Somerset Council has recently taken part in a Corporate Peer Challenge led by the Local Government Association. We will be reviewing the feedback and any recommendations from this report. This may include further updates to the Corporate Plan, which will be reported through the normal governance cycle.

Council is now asked to approve this Corporate Plan for delivery with updates on progress to be provided annually at end year.

4. Consultation

The government, through its legislative framework, clearly expects that local authorities will be able to demonstrate that they have in place mechanisms to ensure that 'representatives of local people' are being appropriately informed, consulted or involved in services, policies or decisions that affect or interest them.

With that in mind, as part of the Corporate Plan and budget development process we undertook an extensive engagement and consultation programme with residents and stakeholders, including Town and Parish Councils and equalities groups. This programme aimed to gather views to inform the development of the Corporate Plan ambitions and budget development including priorities and suggestions for saving and transformation options and was held in two phases, the engagement element for development and then the consultation element once drafts were produced.

Engagement

The engagement programme ran from end-August through to October and included the following:

- An engagement survey on our consultation hub, live for six weeks, with a bespoke version for Town and Parish Councils. Paper copies of this survey were available in our

libraries and children's centres, and we added a short, focused social media survey aimed at encouraging more responses from young people aged 16-30. Our Citizen's Panel were sent a link to the survey with an invitation to take part.

- A number of public engagement sessions across the towns along with a series of face-to-face sessions via the mobile libraries for rural residents to attend.
- Meetings with various stakeholder groups either virtually or face-to-face including equalities groups, voluntary and community groups, and representatives from business.
- The whole engagement programme was supported by a social media campaign and a number of posters across the area with QR codes.

Consultation

Following the development of a draft of the Corporate Plan and budget, an invitation to comment was hosted on our consultation hub through December to early January with links through the Corporate Plan, the action plan, and the council's draft budget along with details of the core assumptions, planned budget changes for both additional costs and the proposed savings. This supports the objective of the Executive to be as transparent as possible and contribute to the open element of the council's vision. A series of follow-up public engagement events were also held supported by a social media campaign and a number of posters across the area with QR codes.

For the full summary of the outputs from the engagement and consultation programme please see **Appendix 3**.

5. Financial Implications

The Corporate Plan 2024-28 has been developed alongside the Medium term Financial Plan to ensure that the actions included are fully costs and deliverable. There are no additional financial implications from this plan that have not already been included in the Medium term Financial Plan.

Costs

N/A

Funding

N/A

6. Legal Powers and Implications

The development and delivery of a Corporate Plan is a requirement for the good governance of the council. The Corporate Plan is the council's overarching strategic document. It is the only plan which covers the full range of the council's responsibilities and is an important tool to help focus our effort and resources on the right things. By prioritising a clear set of commitments, the Corporate Plan also helps residents to hold the council to account for its performance and challenge it to improve.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

The Council's vision is to be open, fair and green. The wording for what we mean by green has been taken from the feedback received by staff, residents and stakeholders:

- *You told us green means we take our responsibility to respond to the climate emergency seriously. It means we do all we can to understand the impact our actions have on the environment and mitigate them where possible.*

For each ambition within the plan there are a number of commitments and within the ambition for North Somerset as a place there is the following commitment: Deliver the Climate Emergency Strategy and action plan and progress towards net zero by 2030.

This Corporate Plan has also aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, a plan of action for people, for the planet and for how we prosper together in peace and in partnership. For each action we have identified which goal we are contributing to including climate action.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



8. Risk Management

In developing the Corporate Plan, a number of risks were identified, most of which have now de-escalated. However, risks remain regarding the implementation of the plan as below which rank HIGH at inherent scoring but have reduced to LOW/MED at residual scoring once mitigating actions have been applied:

Risk	Inherent risk score	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score	Comments
Risk that the Corporate Plan is not costed and therefore not deliverable.	HIGH	Unlikely	Low	LOW/MED	The Corporate Plan has been developed alongside the MTFP to ensure commitments and actions are costed and deliverable.
Risk that targets are not set against the action plan to ensure that progress can be monitored and evaluated.	HIGH	Unlikely	Low	LOW/MED	Performance clinics have been held with all directorates to ensure target setting is in place.
Risks that the Corporate Plan does not continue to reflect the priorities of the council and of residents and stakeholders.	HIGH	Unlikely	Low	LOW/MED	We will review the Corporate Plan annually to ensure that it continue to reflect the priorities of the organisation and of residents and stakeholders.

9. Equality Implications

The Council's vision is to be open, fair and green. The wording for what we mean by open and fair has been taken from the feedback received by staff, residents and stakeholders:

- *You told us open means being honest and transparent. It means listening to you and your views on the decisions we make. It means being accountable for how we spend your money and ensuring we provide the very best value we can.*
- *You told us fair means being accessible and inclusive in how we work. It means listening to the views of all groups and acting on local issues. It means ensuring equity in access to services.*

We are committed to ensuring we meet our equalities objectives and we have identified which actions are particularly relevant to equality groups within the Corporate Plan action plan including where we will set more stretching targets relating to specific groups as part of our work around inequalities. As part of our quarterly monitoring, we will review how these actions demonstrate positive outcomes for the relevant equalities groups.

In addition to this, we are undertaking a systematic review of our success in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion using the Equality Framework for Local Government. It forms a central part of this Corporate Plan, being a key driver for how we will assess our progress against our equality commitments and statutory duties. The framework has four improvement modules, with a number of service categories within each module:



Over the period of this plan, we will assess ourselves against each module to work towards achieving excellence.

10. Options Considered

The development and delivery of a Corporate Plan is a requirement for the good governance of the council.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1: Corporate Plan – see separate document.

Appendix 2: Corporate Plan action plan – see separate document.

Appendix 3: Feedback from the consultation and engagement activity supporting the Corporate Plan and budget – see separate document.

Background Papers:

- [Organisational priorities | North Somerset Council \(n-somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/organisational-priorities)
- [North Somerset Corporate Plan and budget development - North Somerset Council Consultations \(inconsult.uk\)](https://www.inconsult.uk/north-somerset-council/north-somerset-corporate-plan-and-budget-development)
- [North Somerset Corporate Plan and budget 2024-2028 consultation - North Somerset Council Consultations \(inconsult.uk\)](https://www.inconsult.uk/north-somerset-council/north-somerset-corporate-plan-and-budget-2024-2028-consultation)