

# North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 18 January 2012

## ITEM 3a

**Title: 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting Process: Cabinet's Draft Council Strategic Plan and Budget Proposals**

<b>Portfolios:</b> Elected Mayor Finance Housing	<b>Cabinet Members:</b> Mrs Linda Arkley Councillor Judith Wallace Councillor Paul Mason
<b>Report from:</b> Senior Leadership Team	
<b>Report Author:</b> Fiona Rooney, Strategic Director of Finance and Resources (Chief Finance Officer) Julia Veall, Interim Strategic Director	<b>Tel: 643 5724</b> <b>Tel: 643 2005</b>
<b>Wards affected:</b> All	

### PART 1

#### 1.1 Purpose:

- 1.1.1 At its meeting on 12 September 2011, Cabinet approved the process and timetable to be adopted for the preparation of the Council Strategic Plan, 2012/13 revenue budgets in respect of the General Fund, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and the 2012-2022 Capital Plan, as part of the overall Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process for 2012-2015. Cabinet also approved the Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy at that meeting.
- 1.1.2 On 28 November 2011, Cabinet considered its draft Council Strategic Plan and initial budget proposals so that these proposals could go forward as part of Council Strategic Plan and budget engagement with the Council's partners and communities. Cabinet now needs to receive this report and consider its estimates of amounts for the 2012/13 general fund budget, the 2012-2022 capital plan and the treasury management statement and annual investment strategy for 2012/13, in the context of its proposed 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan. Consideration also needs to be given to the level of council tax to be set for 2012/13 (Annex 1, Part I refers).
- 1.1.3 In terms of the Housing Revenue Account, the purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider and agree the proposed 2012/13 Housing Revenue Account budget and

associated business plan and to present proposals to increase housing rents, housing service charges and garage rents for 2012/13 (Annex 1, Part II refers).

## **1.2 Recommendation(s):**

1.2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

### **Part I**

#### **The 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting Process**

- (a) Note the progress made in relation to this year's Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process (Annex 1, Section 1.0);
- (b) Note that Cabinet's estimates of amounts will be referred to full Council for its meeting on 2 February 2012, in accordance with the Council's Constitution and Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (Annex 1, Section 1.0);

#### **Widening Horizons - The 2012-2015 Draft Council Strategic Plan**

- (c) Agree the 2012-2015 Draft Council Strategic Plan (Annex 1, Section 2.0, Appendix A);
- (d) Note the key messages that have emerged from Council Strategic Plan and budget engagement and how the results of this and other engagement activities have influenced the draft Council Strategic Plan and budget proposals for 2012/13 and future years (Annex 1, Section 2.0, Appendix B);

#### **Local Government Finance**

- (e) Note the key aspects of the recent consultation on the Local Government Resource Review: Proposals for Business Rates Retention and the 2012/13 provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 8 December 2011, and how this has been incorporated into the financial strategy and financial plan of the Council (Annex 1, Section 3.0);

#### **The Financial Strategy 2012-2015**

- (f) Agree the key principles being adopted in preparing the Financial Strategy for the Council, subject to an annual review (Annex 1, Section 4.0);
- (g) Agree the formal Reserves and Balances Policy for the Council, reviewed at least annually (Annex 1, Section 4.0, Appendix C);
- (h) Note the medium-term financial challenges and financial risks facing the Council and agree to address these issues as part of the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme for the Council, to deliver continued financial stability and prudent management of our financial resources (Annex 1, Section 4.0);

- (i) Agree the approach being taken in relation to the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme for the next three years, starting in 2012/13 (Annex 1, Section 4.0);

### **Cabinet's Estimates of Amounts for the 2012-2015 General Fund Revenue Budget and Dedicated Schools Budget**

- (j) Consider and agree the estimates of amounts for the 2012/13 general fund revenue budget, level of council tax to be proposed and dedicated schools grant to be recommended to Council for approval, including the assessment in relation to the current year's budget monitoring information (2011/12) and indications of financial plans for 2013/14 and 2014/15 (Annex 1, Section 5.0);
- (k) Request the chief finance officer to prepare the appropriate budget resolution document for the Council's consideration at its meeting on 21 February 2012, based upon the outcomes of recommendation 1.2.1 (j) above (Annex 1, Section 5.0);

### **2012-2022 Capital Plan**

- (l) Consider and agree the estimates of amounts in relation to the 2012-2022 capital plan, including prudential indicators for 2012/13 in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Prudential Framework and a proposed Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy in line with capital finance regulations (Annex 1, Section 6.0);
- (m) Consider and agree the proposed Reserve List of Schemes that will be considered should additional funding become available, being Council funding or otherwise (Annex 1, Section 6.0 and Appendix J(ii));
- (n) Agree the updated Local Prudential Code for 2012-2015 in terms of borrowing requirements for the Council's capital plan (Annex 1, Section 6.0 and Appendix K);
- (o) Note that all approved schemes within the 2012-2022 capital plan will be kept under corporate review by the Major Projects Group, to ensure that necessary information has been supplied prior to any expenditure taking place (Annex 1, Section 6.0);

### **Treasury Management Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2012/13**

- (p) Approve the Treasury Management Statement incorporating the Annual Investment Strategy for 2012/13 (Annex 1, Section 7.0 and Appendix L(iii));
- (q) Note the revised Counterparty List amended under delegation to the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources (Annex 1, Section 7.0 and Appendix L(i));

## **Part II**

### **2012-2015 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Budget**

- (r) Consider and agree the estimates of amounts in relation to the 2012/13 housing revenue account budget, and associated business plan, including an assessment in relation to the current year's budget monitoring information (2011/12), note the ongoing issues in relation to Housing Self Financing, the proposed April 2012 rent increase (calculated in line with the Government's revised rent restructure formula) and the proposals in relation to housing service charges and garage rents for 2012/13, following notification received by the Council of the draft Housing Revenue Account Self Financing Determination (Annex 1, Section 10.0 and Appendix N(i));
- (s) Agree the Housing (HRA) Capital Plan 2012-2022 (Annex 1, Section 10.0 and Appendix N(ii));
- (t) Agree to refer recommendations 1.2.1 (r) to (s) inclusive to Council for approval (Annex 1, Section 10.0 and Appendices N(i) and N(ii));

## **Delegations**

- (u) Grant delegated authority to the Elected Mayor to make any final amendments to the Housing Revenue Account and associated business plan following receipt of the Final Housing Revenue Account Self Financing Determination, expected 28 January 2012, prior to referral to Council on the 2 February 2012;
- (v) Grant delegated authority to the Elected Mayor to make any final amendments to the Cabinet's proposals in relation to that information which is still outstanding in order that due consideration can be given to the final level of Council Tax the Cabinet wishes to put forward to full Council for approval for 2012/13 (Annex 1, Section 1.0);
- (w) Grant delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Elected Mayor, Cabinet Member for Finance and the Senior Leadership Team to manage the overall Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme and note that decisions made under this delegated authority will be reported to Cabinet as part of the regular budget monitoring information provided (Annex 1, Section 4.0 and 5.0);
- (x) Grant delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Elected Mayor, Cabinet Member for Finance and the Head of Legal, Governance and Commercial Services to deal with all matters arising in relation to the treatment of pensions and any associated matters relating to the potential transfers of Council employees to the Business Package, the Technical Package and the Community Based Trust projects of the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme (Annex 1, Section 5.0);

- (y) Grant delegated authority to the Elected Mayor, in consultation with the Major Projects Group, to keep under review the 'reserve list' of schemes within the 2012-2022 capital plan (Annex 1, Section 6.0 and Appendix J(ii));
- (z) Grant delegated authority to the Elected Mayor, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, the Chief Executive, the Interim Strategic Director and the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources to respond to any recommendations following Overview and Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the Budget and Council Plan Study Group's report into the 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process and Cabinet's draft Council Strategic Plan and initial budget proposals by 28 January 2012 (Annex1, Section 8); and,
- (aa) Grant delegated authority to the Elected Mayor, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, the Chief Executive, the Interim Strategic Director and the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources to consider any further comments received from residents after the drafting of this Cabinet report but before 1 February 2012, as the Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement process will continue until 31 January 2012, and present these as an addendum to the report to Council on 2 February 2012 (Annex 1, Section 1 and Appendix B).

### **1.3 Forward plan:**

This report was included in the Forward Plan for the period from 1 January 2012 to 30 April 2012.

### **1.4 Council plan and policy framework:**

- 1.4.1 The Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules are set out in Part 4.7 of the Council's Constitution. The Council Strategic Plan is guided by paragraph 4.7.4 covering the process for the preparation, consideration and final approval of plans and strategies and the Budget is guided by paragraph 4.7.3 covering the process for the preparation, consideration and final approval of the Council's budget. The constitutional requirements for preparing, considering and approving the Council Strategic Plan and Budget drive the timetable for the Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process.
- 1.4.2 The development of the Council Strategic Plan and Budget has followed the same timetable as in previous years although, where possible, strategic planning and engagement has taken place earlier than in previous years, to allow more time for proposals to be considered and appropriate consultation to be undertaken. The priorities in the Council Strategic Plan provide the strategic framework within which budget resources are allocated. The timetable is set out in section 1, Table 1 of Annex 1 therefore assumed the same timeline for preparing, considering and approving the Council Strategic Plan with the Budget.

- 1.4.3 The Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process is a fundamental part of the overall governance and assurance framework of the Council. This in turn provides assurance that is considered as part of preparing the Annual Governance Statement each year.
- 1.4.4 Feedback through the Annual Governance Statement and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's report into the 2011-2015 service and spending review process has been used to inform this year's process.

## **1.5 Information - Executive Summary**

- 1.5.1 Annex 1 to this report sets down in detail the Cabinet's 2012-2015 Draft Council Strategic Plan and Budget proposals for the General Fund Revenue Budget, Dedicated Schools Grant, Housing Revenue Account and associated business plan, the Treasury Management Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2012/13 and the 2012-2022 Capital Plan.
- 1.5.2 The contents of Annex 1 cover:
- The 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting Process;
  - Widening Horizons – The Draft Council Strategic Plan 2012-2015;
  - Local Government Finance;
  - The Financial Strategy 2012-2015;
  - Cabinet's Estimates of Amounts for the 2012/13 General Fund Revenue Budget and 2012-2015 Financial Plan, including the Dedicated Schools Grant;
  - Cabinet's Estimates of Amounts for the 2012-2022 Capital Plan and Prudential Indicators;
  - Treasury Management Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2012/13;
  - Response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommendations;
  - Provisional Statement to Council by the Chief Finance Officer; and,
  - Cabinet's Estimates of Amounts for the 2012-2015 Housing Revenue Account and associated Business Plan.
  - Housing Revenue Account - Statement to Council by the Chief Finance Officer
- 1.5.3 An Executive Summary at the beginning of Annex 1 highlights the key messages from those proposals.

### **2012/13 Budget Changes since 28 November 2011 Cabinet Report**

1.5.4 Table 1 below sets out the Budget changes since 28 November 2011 Cabinet Report, together with explanations for each change.

**Table 1: 2012/13 Budget Changes since 28 November 2011 Cabinet Report**

<b>Change</b>	<b>2012/13 Changes Increase (+) / Reduction (-) £m</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
2012/13 Budget as at 28 November 2011	167.591	
<b>Changes since 28 November 2011</b>		
2011/12 Council Tax Freeze Grant into Formula Grant	+2.131	Announcement made as part of the 2012/13 Provisional Government Finance Settlement. Increases 2012/13 Budget with an equivalent increase in Resources
Inflation	-0.700	Revision to Inflation Assumptions reflecting updated forecasts issued by the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) on 29 November 2011
Containment of inflation within Service Budgets	+0.700	Revision to Inflation Assumptions reflecting updated forecasts issued by the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) on 29 November 2011
Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) Levy	-0.006	Further projected reduction in ITA Levy
Wallsend Joint Service Centre	-0.200	Re-profiling to reflect current timeline
Contact Centre Investment	+0.200	As part of the preparation for the Housing and Benefit inspections in 2009 additional resource was provided and the overall budget for the Contact Centre reviewed against demand. The budget plans for 2011/12 and 2012/13 put that budget right against demand and set more challenging targets
New Homes Bonus Additional Spending Power	+0.335	Spend to reflect additional grant announced on 1

		December 2011
Further increase in New Homes Bonus Grant	-0.335	Additional grant announced on 1 December 2011
Troubled Families Support	+0.080	Spend to reflect additional grant announced on 16 December 2011
Troubled Families Grant	-0.080	Additional grant announced on 16 December 2011
Extended Rights to Free Travel	+0.013	Spend to reflect additional grant announced on 8 December 2011
Further Increase in Extended Rights to Free Travel Grant	-0.013	Additional grant announced on 8 December 2011
Replenish use of Strategic Reserve following use in 2011/12 to fund forecast pressures	+0.325	Adjustment to reflect 16 January 2012 Budget Monitoring Cabinet Report
Capital Plan Revenue costs of Borrowing – Equal Pay	-0.311	Reflecting Equal Pay Capitalisation received by the Council (January 2012)
Increase in Contingencies	+0.230	Increase in contingencies in respect of the grant awarded to support the roll out of free education places for disadvantaged 0-2 year olds. This is included as a specific contingency as detailed plans for the use of this funding are still to be developed. This brings the total level of contingency in 2012/13 to £3.015m
Further Increase in Early Intervention Grant	-0.230	Additional grant announced on 8 December 2011
Further Increase in Learning Disability and Health Reform Grant	-0.005	Additional grant announced on 8 December 2011
Theme B CEI Savings – Monkseaton Library	+0.017	Retention of Library Provision
Theme C CEI Savings – Floral Display Review	+0.100	Ensuring the allocation of resources takes into account the appearance and attractiveness of the whole Borough
Theme C CEI Savings – Bowling Greens	+0.012	Deferral of part of the saving to allow new arrangements to be implemented
<b>2012/13 Budget as at 18 January 2012</b>	<b>169.854</b>	

## Equality and Diversity Considerations



- 1.5.5 There have been a number of recent legal challenges to the setting of council budgets. In order to comply with current guidance all of the Council's Strategic Plan and Budget proposals (unless there is no policy decision involved) will include an Equality Impact Assessment. The timescales for Equality Impact Assessments to be completed has been aligned with the Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process.
- 1.5.6 Initial assessments were completed in order to inform Cabinet's decisions on the initial Council Strategic Plan and Budget proposals for 2012/13 which were considered at the 28 November 2011 Cabinet meeting.
- 1.5.7 More detailed assessments have now been carried out following the engagement on the initial proposals and have been used to inform decisions on the Council Strategic Plan and Budget proposals for 2012/13 for consideration at this meeting.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

- a) Cabinet can agree the proposals set down in this report.
- b) Cabinet can agree a selection of the proposals and suggest that further / different options are considered by the Senior Leadership Team before submission to full Council on 2 February 2012.
- c) Cabinet can disagree with the proposals.

## **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option (a) is the recommended option as the budget proposals have been worked through with all Cabinet Members and have taken due consideration of the Council Strategic Plan and budget engagement suggestions. The reasons for recommendations are mainly legal in nature, as stated in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of this report.

## **1.8 Appendices:**

Annex 1: 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting Process – Cabinet's Draft Council Strategic Plan and Budget Proposals

Appendix A: Widening Horizons - The Draft Council Strategic Plan 2012-2015

Appendix B: Budget Engagement Summary 2012/13

Appendix C: North Tyneside Council's Reserves & Balances Policy

Appendices D(i) - D(ii)	2012/13 General Fund Revenue Account Budget Summary by Directorate/Service Area and by Subjective
Appendices E(i) - I(ii)	2012-2015 Draft Budget Statements by Directorate/Service Area, including schedules of Reasons for Variations from 2011/12 for the General Fund Revenue Account
Appendix J(i) – J(ii)	2012-2022 Capital Plan and Reserve List of Schemes
Appendix K	North Tyneside Council's Local Prudential Code 2012-2022
Appendix L(i) - L(vi)	Treasury Management Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2012/13
Appendix M	Glossary of Terms
Appendix N(i)	Housing Revenue Account Financial Forecast 2012-2015 and associated Business Plan
Appendix N(ii)	Housing Capital Plan 2012-2022

## **1.9 Contact officers:**

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### **1.10 Background information:**

The following background papers and research reports have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the offices of the author:

- (a) 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting Process, incorporating the associated Engagement Strategy, Cabinet 12 September 2011 (P).
- (b) 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting Process: Cabinet's Draft Council Strategic Plan and Initial Budget Proposals, Cabinet 28 November 2011 (P).
- (c) Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) LAAP Bulletin Number 77: Local Authority Reserves and Balances, November 2008 (P).
- (d) 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process working papers (C).
- (e) 2011/12 Financial Management Report to 30 November 2011, Cabinet, 16 January 2012 (P).
- (f) 2012-13 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, 8 December 2011 (P).
- (g) Local Government Resource Review - Proposals for Business Rates Retention: Consultation - 18 July 2011 (P).
- (h) Local Government Resource Review - Proposals for Business Rates Retention: Consultation – Government Response – 19 December 2011 (P).
- (i) Localism Act 2011 (P).
- (j) Council Strategic Plan and Budget Consultation Responses (P).
- (k) Housing Revenue Account (Draft Self Financing Determination, CLG, 21 November 2011 (P).
- (l) Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan (P).

(m) Housing Service Business Plan (P)

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

- 2.1.1 The financial implications arising from this report are appraised as part of the decisions made about what will be included in the Council's Financial Plan, incorporating the 2012/13 budget setting process. Decisions on the budget in relation to the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and associated business plan, schools' funding and Capital Plan need to be made within the overall context of the resources available to the Council and within the legal framework for setting budgets. The Council will need to examine closely the links with its key funding partners and their proposed financial plans, including an assessment of the impact of any grant fall-out over the proposed three-year resource planning period.
- 2.1.2 Cabinet and Council need to have due regard to the Chief Finance Officer's advice in relation to the levels of reserves and balances proposed as part of the three-year financial plan for 2012-2015, as issued in guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) in November 2008.

### **2.2 Legal**

- 2.2.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Section 32: Calculation of Budget Requirement) requires the Council to set a balanced budget in the context of the resources available, including central government grants, business rates and council tax income. The Localism Act 2011 also sets out specific requirements for the calculation of council tax requirement by authorities in England and calculation of the basic amount of tax by authorities in England, inserted as Sections 31A and Sections 31B respectively in the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- 2.2.2 The Local Government Act 2003 imposes duties on local authorities in relation to budget setting. The Act requires that, when an authority is deciding its annual budget and council tax level, members and officers must take into account a report from the Chief Finance Officer on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of the authority's financial reserves. The Government has a back-up power to impose a minimum level of reserves on an authority that it considers to be making inadequate provisions.
- 2.2.3 The 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget process has been prepared to comply with the time-scales required within the Budget & Policy Framework Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.
- 2.2.4 Section 76(2) of the Housing Act 1989 requires each authority to produce a Housing Revenue Account budget in the January and February that immediately precede the financial year to which it will relate. In relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) draft revenue budget and associated plan, there is a legal requirement to give all tenants 28 days notice of any rent changes. The new rent for 2012/13 will

come into force on 2 April 2012, hence working backwards this means that the letters of notification have to be with tenants by 29 February 2012 at the latest. Prior to this, the changes necessary to the Northgate system to implement the new rents have to be tested and implemented, with backup dates in case of failure. In addition the printing and postage of the rent notification letters is carried out on our behalf by an external company, and we have to build in enough time to enable them to arrange the necessary resources to carry out their tasks. This takes us to seeking approval of the HRA rent early in February to enable sufficient time for all of the above processes to be carried out in enough time prior to the go live date.

## **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

### **Internal consultation**

- 2.3.1 Each Cabinet Member has been involved in the development of the proposals put forward in this report, with regular discussions held between the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, the Elected Mayor, the Cabinet Member for Finance and all other Cabinet Members. The Senior Leadership Team and their Directorate Leadership Teams have been fully engaged in the process and in the proposals set down in this report.
- 2.3.2 A specific Trades Union briefing on the Council Strategic Plan and Budget was held on 15 December 2011 and attended by Senior Officers. In addition, consultation has taken place with staff both generally and on specific proposals.

### **Community engagement**

- 2.3.3 The 2012/13 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy was agreed at Cabinet on 12 September 2011. This committed the Council to engaging with a wide range of individuals and groups, in addition to elected Members, to capture a diverse range of views. Groups that have been consulted include:
- Elected Members;
  - The Older People's Engagement Network, known as OPEN in partnership with Age Concern UK;
  - The Older People's Forum;
  - The North Tyneside Strategic Partnership (NTSP);
  - The Young Mayor and Cabinet, including the Young Council;
  - Schools Forum;
  - Chairs of School Governors;
  - Headteachers Convenors;
  - Employee Joint Consultative Forum (EJCF);

- Voluntary and Community Sector;
- Area Forums;
- Business Community representatives including as part of the statutory consultation process, through the North Tyneside Business Forum which includes representatives from the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and local Chambers of Trade;
- Widely consulted Council tenants through:
  - Gold Ticket and Mini Gold Ticket Events
  - Involved tenants meetings
  - Tenants Investment Panel
  - Overview Panel
- Users of Sure Start centres;
- Staff Panel;
- Residents Panel;
- Faith groups; and,
- Disability groups.

2.3.4 In addition to the Council Strategic Plan and budget engagement strategy, projects within the Council Strategic Plan have been driven by issues identified as part of our programme of engagement and consultation, including our Residents' Survey. Where proposals have a specific impact the Council have spoken to the people affected by those proposed changes. A detailed account of the community engagement on the council plan and budget is contained in Appendix B"

## **2.4 Human rights**

2.4.1 All actions and spending plans contained within the Council Strategic Plan and Budget are fully compliant with national and international Human Rights Law. For example, Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights guarantees freedom of expression, including the freedom to 'hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas'. Article 8 of the Convention guarantees the right to respect for private and family life.

## **2.5 Equalities and diversity**

2.5.1 In undertaking the process of the Council Strategic Plan and Budget the Council's aim has been at all times to secure compliance with its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and in particular the public sector equality duty under that Act.

To achieve this we have taken a phased approach:

- An equalities impact assessment has been carried out on the Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy process. The aim is to remove or minimize any disadvantage for people wishing to take part in the engagement programme. We have made direct contact with groups within the identified protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 to encourage participation and provide engagement in a manner that will meet their needs
- Initial Equality Impact Assessments were completed by the end of October 2011 in order to inform Cabinet's decision of the initial Council Strategic Plan and Budget proposals for 2012/13 for consideration at the Cabinet meeting on 28 November 2011. Full Equality Impact Assessments are now in place for proposals going forward for consideration by Cabinet at this meeting.
- The outcome of any decisions made following the community engagement on the Council Strategic Plan and Budget Process and any new items included in the financial plan will be subject to further equality impact assessment, this includes individual projects within the Council Strategic Plan.

## **2.6 Risk management**

Individual projects within the Council Strategic Plan are subject to full risk reviews. For larger projects, individual project risk registers are established as part of the Council's agreed approach to project management. Risks will be entered into the appropriate directorate, corporate/strategic or project risk register(s) and will be subject to ongoing management to reduce the likelihood and impact of each risk.

## **2.7 Crime and disorder**

Projects within the Council Strategic Plan will promote the reduction of crime and disorder within the borough. Under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, local authorities have a statutory duty to work with partners on the reduction of crime and disorder. One of our seven Council Strategic Plan priorities is "creating safe and secure communities".

## **2.8 Environment and sustainability**

One of our seven Council Strategic Plan priorities is protecting and enhancing the environment. Within this priority the aim is to make savings on the council's energy costs, potentially delivering technical services in a different model, reducing fleet and transport costs.

## **PART 3 - SIGN OFF**

- Strategic Director(s)

X
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- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Director with responsibility for Community Engagement

**Report Author:** Fiona Rooney / Vicki Dixon