

# Appendix A



**North Tyneside Council**

## **Council Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015**

---

A Strategy for Tough Times

# 1. Introduction

Our Plan is created to:

- deal with the tough economic situation that faces our Council;
- introduce new ways of dealing with the massive day to day pressures on our services created by the Council; and,
- develop new income streams that exploit and share our assets in an innovative way, not simply dispose of them, which is the current strategy.

The Council is committed to maintaining those excellent services we already deliver. We will implement new ways of maintaining that quality of service whilst preserving, as far as possible, the numbers of people employed across the Borough. In the interests of transparency, however, North Tyneside people need to understand the difficulties we now face. In this current year, the Council has overspent in excess of £1m which will be carried forward to next year's budget. Under the current administration, spending has continued and the debt burden of the Council has continued to grow.

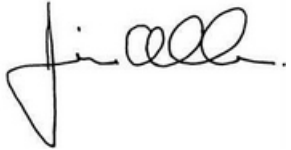
Decisions made by the current coalition Government means that there will be a transfer of just over £128m of housing debt to the Council and this will worsen the financial burden on our Council. It has put the Council Housing Revenue Account £20m over the limit of borrowing, and effectively means we cannot borrow any more until the Authority reduces its debt. This is a very difficult situation that needs different and innovative ways to overcome it. For example, our solution for housing will be to deliver an alternative method of providing much needed public rented accommodation.

The revised Council Plan for 2012-15 will provide stability for the Council while ensuring we live within our means. We shall implement new ways of going into partnership with the private sector and attract new job opportunities into North Tyneside. We shall provide opportunities for our young people through learning, training and apprenticeships, job opportunities for residents, and boost our town centres by maximising these assets, not disposing of them forever. We will also introduce new ways to encourage the Council's own staff to bring forward new ideas for modern ways to pay for and deliver services.

The revised Council Plan for 2012-15 will provide stability for the Council while ensuring we live within our means.

- We will implement new ways of going into partnership with the private sector that will attract new job opportunities.
- Boost job opportunities for residents and regenerate our town centres.
- We will also introduce new ways to encourage the Council's own staff to bring forward new ideas for modern ways to pay for and deliver services.

- We will provide opportunities for our young people through providing meaningful learning, training and apprenticeships is designed to make the most of our young people's talent.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Allan'.

Jim Allan - Leader of the Labour Group

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Croft'.

Chris Croft - Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

**Our vision is for North Tyneside to be a place where:**

- **Fairness – both residents and businesses are our priority**
- **Accountability – the Council will control the allocation of new rented housing.**
- **Job Creation – will be an on-going agenda item in council business especially around young people.**
- **Savings – we will find new and innovative ways of producing income streams.**
- **Responsibility – we will only spend what we can afford.**



**Our Guiding Principles:**

- Putting people first – taking personal responsibility and ownership of our dealings with residents whom we seek to represent.
- Being innovative and open to new ideas from a wide range of partners such as Job Centre Plus/Department of Work and Pensions.
- Reducing our debt burden whilst striving to maintain the quality of service.
- Providing and encouraging environmental sustainability.

# Our Priorities

## We have five priorities

- ❖ **Sustaining our front line Council services within the council, but only Spending what we can afford.**
- ❖ **Maintaining excellent education, training and employment opportunities, including apprenticeships and working in collaboration with partners.**
- ❖ **Providing Council Housing and affordable rented housing in partnership with the private sector and registered social landlords.**
- ❖ **Introducing new income streams to maximise the benefits of our assets, not just seeking to dispose of them forever**
- ❖ **Work in Partnership to realise the full potential of the North Bank of the Tyne Regeneration.**



**PRIORITY 1**  
**Sustaining our front line services within the council**  
- but only spending what we can afford

We will ensure that our current level of services are maintained and sustained. We will not expand unless we have the funds.

1. All work on the Community Based Trust will be stopped, and it is intended that the other outsourcing programme will be brought under democratic control (see Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme (CEIP))
2. The role of the Interim Chief Executive will be terminated and the existing three Strategic Directors will be tasked with reviewing the organisational structure of the senior management and determining that it reflects the future requirements of the Organisation, and the aspirations of the council policies, as well as identifying new efficiencies. This work will be completed within six months. It is proposed that the progress of the work will be managed by a specially formed Politically balanced Working Group and the report will be presented to the September 2012 Council Meeting.
3. We will look to negotiate with those staff employed on annual salaries in excess of £50,000 to consider a reduction in their salary level by 10%, with a floor that salary levels will not go below £50,000.
4. We will ask the Remuneration Panel to consider the impact of reinstating the Mayoral Allowance to its original 2002 amount of £50,000.
5. The Council Advertising will be restricted to those publications that cover the whole of the Borough.
6. The Council publications will all be merged into one publication that will include housing, education and the general council publications. The publications will be self-funded through selling advertising space.
7. As a consequence of the reduction in project work the Strategic Project Team will have their workload reviewed and savings will be made via redeployment.
8. Uncommitted Capital Spend will be suspended for one year and reviewed at the next budget process.
9. It is proposed the reserve capital schemes will be presented to Full Council for approval before moving from the reserve list.
10. It is proposed the appointment of consultants will be approved by Full Council, including the renewal of consultant call off contracts.
11. The Council will seek to agree a reduction of the working week by one hour.
12. A corporate objective will be set to reduce the current levels of sickness by a minimum of 10%.
13. Introduce a local procurement policy which will reduce the Council's carbon footprint and create and support local employment opportunities.
14. Seek out best value contracts via negotiation, and offering longer periods for discounted rates which should reduce overheads in annual renewals.

## **PRIORITY 2**

### **Maintaining excellent education, training and employment opportunities, including apprenticeships and working in collaboration with partners**

1. We will work openly and honestly with our Educational Partners to establish a strong vocational and academic presence as part of the North Bank of the Tyne Regeneration by introducing the Multiversity and this work will be prepared as soon as possible to have an early start.
2. School Meals and Meals on Wheels prices will be frozen.
3. We will make strong representations to the Government to bring forward aid to help with the condition of our school buildings.
4. The Learning Trust is continuing to do well and we will do all that we can to encourage schools, yet to join, to see the financial and academic advantages of being a member.
5. The removal of the EMA grant has had a big impact on some of our young people undertaking 16 to 18 education, we will actively seek sensible and affordable solutions to try and eliminate the financial impact that the loss of grant has had on local families of children seeking to continue their studies. We will enter discussions with the TWITA to seek out a scheme that will minimise the cost of travel for our 16 to 18 year olds attending further education and training. A report will be brought to the September Council Meeting.
6. We will seek to encourage our schools to invest in renewable energy to reduce their day to day energy costs.
7. A full review will be undertaken of all youth provision across the Borough; the review will take into account all the providers of the services, both council and the third sector, including full costs. A new Youth Provision Strategy will be created along with an implementation plan. The Young Mayor and their Cabinet Members take a leading role in this project and once complete present it to a Full Council Meeting for endorsement.
8. The Council will ringfence any capital receipt from the sale of the existing Wallsend Boys Club Site and give a capital grant to the Wallsend Boys Club of that amount to help them towards a new facility at Rheydt Avenue, Wallsend.

### **PRIORITY 3**

**Providing affordable rented housing in partnership with the private sector and registered social landlords** – we will actively prepare a council and affordable housing building programme, using our existing brownfield sites.

1. We will provide additional Council Housing.
2. We will use council owned brown field sites as our contribution to a partnership to provide affordable and rented homes.
3. We will mould the core strategy to encourage more building work on brown field sites, to protect our green areas and open spaces.
4. We will continue to deliver support for private sector home improvements to support those vulnerable people who need our help.



## **PRIORITY 4**

**Introducing new income streams to maximise the benefits of our assets, not dispose of them forever**

1. We will commence work on using our assets to generate income from marketing and advertising.
2. We will look for opportunities to expand our service delivery into the public and private sectors.
3. We will use our housing skills to introduce a service to manage privately owned rented accommodation.
4. Using renewable energy in our public buildings will allow us to minimise our energy costs. Working in partnership we can support the private sector, allowing them to take advantage of the low costs while using local companies to manufacture the components.

## **PRIORITY 5**

**Work in Partnership to realise the full potential of the North Bank of the Tyne Regeneration** – we will work in partnership with local companies to ensure the employment and inward investment opportunities that a working river creates will boost the local and regional economy, through job creation, training and skills via a Multiversity Education Partnership. The resulting increased numbers of people using the town centres and riverside areas will assist in boosting the daytime and night time economy.

1. The River Tyne is a real asset for North Tyneside. It has provided employment for the community in days gone by and working in partnership with the private sector it can do so again. It provides a gateway to Europe and beyond. We will seek innovative and diverse employment opportunities to create local jobs.
2. The work on the Multiversity will be actively pursued
3. Through partnerships with universities in Britain and Europe, the Multiversity will seek to offer training and education from apprenticeship to post doctorate levels. It will become a centre of excellence for research and development in renewable offshore energy provision and engineering.
4. Working alongside local, national and international companies to assess their needs and vision of the future, the Multiversity will develop a skilled and adaptable workforce which can sustain itself through innovation and flexibility.
5. The Multiversity will offer opportunities for local companies to up skill their own staff and take an active role in offering working experience for trainees at all levels and ages.
6. Companies will benefit from the research provision available in the Multiversity and associated Universities.
7. Schools and Colleges will collaborate with the Multiversity and local employers to develop their curriculum appropriately, share good practice, offer innovative learning experiences and celebrate excellence in their joint achievements.
8. The Council will begin the journey towards this vision by providing appropriate infrastructure and supporting investment in buildings. The council will actively seek endowments and collaborations between universities and companies in an innovative partnership. We will take this vision and our determination to Government and to our European representatives to seek their support.
9. The Council will work collectively to improve the viability of all of our Town and Local Shopping Centres, which will serve the additional users attracted by new and expanding companies and the Multiversity.

## **2. Delivering the Strategic Plan – Our Change, Efficiency and Improvement programme.**

- 1. We propose that the plans to create a Community Based Trust will be stopped immediately.**
- 2. A politically balanced Board of elected members will be created that will oversee the considerations of the business cases for adopting new ways of working. The timeline will be extended to allow for full and frank discussions with key players including the Trade Unions. Regular progress reports will be presented to Full Council and responsibility for making the key decisions will be subject to consultation with Full Council if not subject to Full Council approval.**
- 3. A politically balanced An all-party Working Group of elected members will be established to work with of the Senior Management Team in preparing an Organisational Structure to meet the future needs of the Council, and it being presented to the September Council Meeting.**

### **3. Delivering the Strategic Plan – Finance and Resources**

#### **Financial Strategy**

The Financial Strategy of the Council will ensure that we are prudent in our spending, with a particular emphasis on reducing the current debt of the Council. The Strategy will provide a structure that will meet the Day to Day pressures and challenges. It is important that the Council only spends what it can afford. The Strategy will allow for new income streams and new trading opportunities to be explored and reported to Council before implementation. The Strategy will challenge the conventional tradition of cuts and increasing fees and charges, by the consideration of generating income as well.

The Council Plan outlines the way the council should progress in these tough financial times and that the Council will be careful and considerate about growth and the analysis of costs before spending approval is granted. It will be a remit of the Financial Strategy to suspend uncommitted expenditure until the next budget in 2013, when the projects will be reviewed and considered again.

Financial planning is of critical importance during the period of the government's own spending review. This planning is supported by the continuing need to integrate revenue, capital, asset and treasury planning, driven further by the Prudential Code requirements in relation to longer-term capital investment. In formulating the financial plan, the impact of priorities, objectives and preferred options needs to be fully evaluated.

While decisions around budget setting are approved on an annual basis, the council must demonstrate longer-term planning around the use of its resources. Annual budget decisions should be taken in the context of a three-year financial plan that looks at all council services and takes into account the government's Local Government Finance Settlement agenda.

The Annual Review of Financial Regulations will be carried out and improvements and recommendations will be brought to full council for approval.

## Resources



Without our staff we would be unable to deliver our services, we need to acknowledge their value and provide support and training to use more modern business systems and techniques.

We will ensure that we install a customer focus culture and we will promote a more positive organisation that will broadcast and promote positive results providing examples of good practise and sharing those with others.

We will regularly review our working methods and processes to seek constant improvement.

We will promote confidence in our staff to be able to seek new methods and systems to deliver our first class services more cost effectively.

We will encourage our staff to seek new areas of work that will bring new income streams through trading or providing services to others.

## **4. Delivering the Plan – Working in Partnership**

In delivering this strategic plan, we will work with partners from all sectors at a strategic and operational level. In meeting the public sector reform agenda we are taking every opportunity to explore how services can be delivered through new partnership mechanisms. Partnership working in the current economic environment will be key to ensuring improved value for money and efficient use of resources by eliminating waste and cost incurred by duplication of effort.

We will undertake a review of the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership to determine - effectiveness, value for money, representation and areas of work.

North Tyneside's Learning Trust is now well established and continues to attract schools. The Learning Trust enables member schools to work with each other and with partners from the public and private sector.

On transport, the council plays a leading role in the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority, along with Nexus and the other local authorities in the Tyne and Wear area, we will investigate having a City Region Taxi and Private Hire Regulation Body, perhaps delivered through the ITA to have a true integrated transport system. A travel plan for 16 to 18 year olds will be prepared and presented to the September Council for consideration.

A review will be undertaken of all youth provision in the Borough and a new Local Delivery Plan will be created.

We will review the way we involve our residents and businesses to see if there are improvements and new ideas to involve greater numbers of our population. We will introduce Ward Forums to be delivered through our ward councillors and we will devolve the area forum budget equally to the ward forums.

The Cabinet will continue to have representatives from our key partners including the trade unions at cabinet meetings of the council.

We will work with Northumbria Health Care NHS Foundation Trust and the emerging GP Commissioning Consortia to enhance health and well-being across the Borough by providing additional financial resources for additional jointly funded activities.