

**North Tyneside Council  
Report to Cabinet  
Date: 12 September 2011**

**ITEM 6(b)**

**Title: 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting Process incorporating the associated Engagement Strategy**

<b>Portfolio(s):</b>	<b>Elected Mayor</b>	<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	<b>Mrs Linda Arkley</b>
	<b>Finance</b>		<b>Cllr Judith Wallace</b>
	<b>Community Engagement</b>		<b>Cllr Pam McIntyre</b>

**Report from Directorate: Senior Leadership Team**

**Report Authors: Fiona Rooney, Strategic Director of Finance and Resources**      **Tel: 643 5724**

**Julia Veall, Interim Strategic Director**      **Tel: 643 2005**

**Wards affected: All**

**PART 1**

**1.1 Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is three-fold:

- (a) To seek approval from Cabinet for the proposed 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process, which incorporates the key decision milestones and dates as set down in Section 1.5.24 of this report;
- (b) To inform Cabinet of the establishment of the 2012/13 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Operational Guidance in order to strengthen the Service and Spending Review process; and,
- (c) To approve the 2012/13 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy as part of the 2012-2015 Service and Spending Review process.

## 1.2 Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) Approve the proposed outline 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process, which incorporates the key decision milestones and dates as set down in section 1.5.24 of this report;
- (b) Note the establishment of the 2012/13 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Operational Guidance as part of the Service and Spending Review process; and,
- (c) Approve the 2012/13 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy as part of the 2012-2015 Service and Spending Review process.

## 1.3 Forward plan:

This report was included in the Forward Plan for the period from 1 September 2011 to 31 December 2011.

## 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 Service and Spending Review process.
- 1.4.2 The development of the Council Strategic Plan and Budget will follow the same timetable as in previous years. The priorities in the Council Strategic Plan provide the strategic framework within which budget resources are allocated. The timetable is set out in paragraph 1.5.24 of this report.
- 1.4.3 The Service and Spending Review 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 to Council each year.

## 1.5 Information

### Section 1 – Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting Process for 2012-2015

- 1.5.1 For the 2011/12 financial year the Council introduced its new Service and Spending Review Process. This has been fundamental to the delivery of effective and efficient services for the residents of North Tyneside. The reason for the introduction of the new process was the level of savings that councils would be required to make over the next four years from 2011/12. The details of the savings required by Local Government were set out in the Government Spending Review of October 2010 and then in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2011/12 on 31 January 2011, with further adjustments to the 2012/13 Local Government Finance Settlement being announced on 7 February 2011.
- 1.5.2 The Government Spending Review announced on 20 October 2010 set out details of the Departmental Expenditure Limits (DELs) allocated across government departments for the four year period from 2011/12 to 2014/15. In order to eliminate the public sector structural budget deficit by 2015, the Spending Review set out £81bn of national expenditure reductions by 2014/15. This equated to an average 19% reduction to departmental budgets over the four years from 2011/12. For Local Government, funding for annual expenditure was set to reduce by 20% in cash terms or 28% in real terms. Most of this reduction was by way of Formula Grant, the annual revenue grant which, in North Tyneside's case, supports approximately half of the Council's net revenue expenditure.
- 1.5.3 The detailed implications of the first two years of the Spending Review for North Tyneside Council were confirmed in the final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2011/12 (31 January 2011) and the indicative final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2012/13 (7 February 2011). These settlements showed a Formula Grant reduction of over £20 million alone for North Tyneside Council for this two year period. The 2011/12 Settlement also set out the rolling up of various specific grants into Formula Grant, additional National Health Service (NHS) funding for social care, and a Council Tax Freeze Grant to encourage local authorities to set a zero percent rise in council tax for 2011/12 which North Tyneside Council did.
- 1.5.4 Looking further ahead to 2013/14, there is likely to be a two year Local Government Finance Settlement to match the final two years of the Spending Review period. This Settlement will also outline the first year's figures taking into account the Government's Local Government Resource Review in relation to the local retention of business rates.
- 1.5.5 The indicative final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2012/13 has set out a Formula Grant Reduction of £7.6 million (8.4%) for North Tyneside Council. This reflects the fact that North Tyneside Council has been determined as a Band 2 authority for the current 2 year Settlement, with Band 1 reflecting those councils most reliant on Formula Grant and Band 4 applying to those authorities least reliant on Formula Grant. As a continuation of the 2011/12 Formula Grant Settlement, which resulted in approximately £2bn of a total of £3.4bn specific grants being rolled into Formula Grant, this continues into 2012/13. These grants for North Tyneside Council total £8.611m in 2012/13 (£8.713m in 2011/12).

- 1.5.6 This year, there is a move to a three-year planning timeframe from our previous four year process. This is due to a number of factors – most significantly, the Spending Review 2010 detailed in the paragraphs above was a four year Review with an initial, two-year indicative settlement and forecasts for the following two years. Hence, information is only available to cover the period to the end of the 2014/15 financial year.
- 1.5.7 It is imperative that the Council has a Financial Strategy that can support service delivery and be flexible enough to enable opportunities to be explored, enable challenges to be fully costed, and ensure that the implications of those challenges are fully understood by decision-makers. We need a financial resource base that demonstrates our resources are driven by our Council Strategic Plan. Our Service and Spending Review process helps the Council respond appropriately to responsibilities and duties placed upon local government through legislative requirements and the Government's drive for a deliverable programme of efficiency savings.
- 1.5.8 Whilst 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.

### **Strategic Planning**

#### The 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan

- 1.5.9 The purpose of the Council's Strategic Plan is to set out the Council's medium to long term policy direction, vision and delivery priorities. This drives the allocation of resources and associated budget. The Strategic Plan is at the heart of all of the business of the Council – all other strategies or service and operational plans flow from it.
- 1.5.10 The Plan demonstrates how the Council will address and meet the needs of the Borough as well as responding to legislative and national policy change and living within its means in terms of the financial (and other) resources available. It also shows how the Council is doing its part to work towards the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership's (NTSP) Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 1.5.11 The delivery priorities and associated actions will be shaped through the CEI Programme to ensure that there is a single clear picture of the key deliverables across the Council over the period covered by the Strategic Plan and Budget. Work will be undertaken to ensure that ongoing actions from the current Council Strategic Plan 2011-2015 are reflected as necessary. The key priorities are:
- Supporting people to be healthy and independent and protecting the vulnerable
  - Making change happen, improving customer service and facing up to our financial challenges

- Delivering sustainable growth
- Delivering excellent education, skills and employment opportunities
- Creating safe and secure communities
- Protecting and enhancing the environment
- Helping people to make a positive contribution

1.5.12 Progress against the achievement of the Strategic Plan will be monitored through the Council's Performance Management Framework, primarily by means of quarterly reports of progress and outcomes to Cabinet. Cabinet reports are also examined by the Overview and Scrutiny committee.

1.5.13 To enable effective performance monitoring of the Council Strategic Plan, the Plan will set out clearly what is to be achieved. This will provide transparency and accountability, as well as ensuring that performance can be actively managed and steps taken to address any areas not on track.

### **Financial Planning**

1.5.14 The Council's Change Efficiency and Improvement (CEI) Programme is now in its operational phase. This was established as part of the 2011-2015 planning process to identify how the Council would take forward its business to meet its financial challenges and to deliver the scale of financial savings required over a four year period from 2011/12 to the end of 2014/15. The CEI programme looks at how the Council will respond to this with increasing focus on:

- Councils as commissioners rather than providers of services;
- Building community capacity by engaging and enabling communities to take more local control over the shaping and delivery of services;
- Personalisation of services which places the customer at the heart of services;
- Developing a wider range of service models to stimulate choice and diversity; and,
- Stronger partnerships between public sector agencies to deliver a more seamless service to customers.

1.5.15 The CEI programme is now moving forward and proposals are being made to refocus resources to support the continued delivery of the programme in a separate report to Cabinet.

1.5.16 Deliverables from year one of the CEI programme have already been incorporated into the Council's 2011/12 budget and the deliverables from years two, three and four will form the basis of the 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget.

- 1.5.17 In order to capture all of the CEI savings in the Council's 2012/13 budget and three year financial plan - along with any inflationary price increases and pressures and growth that are identified as required by the Council - detailed business cases are being completed by the relevant Project Leads for each item. Each business case will contain full details of the item proposed to be included in the budget along with the financial impact in 2012/13 and future years.
- 1.5.18 The establishment of the proposals will be driven forward by the Council through the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme Theme Boards. All business cases will be presented to, and scrutinised by, the relevant Theme Board.
- 1.5.19 There will be substantial Member involvement through various meetings of Cabinet Members and Strategic Directors at which proposals will be presented and discussed to ensure they align with the policy direction of the Council and the key themes of the Council as set out in the Council Strategic Plan. Member involvement will also be through the presence of the relevant Cabinet Members at Theme Board meetings.

#### 2012/13 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Operational Guidance

- 1.5.20 Detailed Council Strategic Plan and Budget operational guidance to support the process is being developed. This sets out the guidance underpinning the Council Strategic Plan and Budget including principles for 2012-2015, an overview of our Financial Strategy and a detailed operational timetable.

#### **Equality and Diversity Considerations**

- 1.5.21 The recent Birmingham Council judgment has major implications for councils when considering future service provision and associated budgets. The primary focus is in relation to the consultation process undertaken in support of the decision making process and also how councils satisfy their equality duty - a duty which according to the judgment must be "exercised with rigour".
- 1.5.22 In order to comply with this current guidance, it is suggested that all Council Strategic Plan and Budget proposals must include an Equality Impact Assessment. This requires the timescales for Equality Impact Assessments to be completed to be aligned with the Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process. This will require initial assessments to be complete 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 which are considered by Cabinet on the 28 November 2011.
- 1.5.23 Full assessments should then be in place for proposals going forward by the end of December 2011 in order to be available to Cabinet when it further considers the Council Strategic Plan and Budget proposals on the 18 January 2012.

#### **2012/13 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting Process Timetable of Key Decision Milestones**

- 1.5.24 Key aspects of the 2012/13 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting timetable are summarised in Table 1 below. This highlights key decision milestones in the

process. This information has been supplemented by a detailed operational timetable for 2012/13.

**Table 1: 2012/13 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting Timetable of Key Milestones**

<b>Date / Meeting</b>	<b>Detail</b>
4 July 2011 <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	All Member Conference to consider the CEI programme and how Scrutiny can provide challenge and support to the programme. Chief Executive and Strategic Directors to attend.
28 July 2011 <b>Council</b>	Council considers the report on the proposed restructure of the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements. This determines the Scrutiny process for the 2012/13 Budget.
5 September 2011 <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. The 5 Sub Groups of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine areas of the process falling within their remit. Meetings to continue until the end of December 2011.
5 September 2011 <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>  8 September 2011 <b>Council</b>	Report of the sub group established by Finance Sub Committee to examine the Notice of Objection process for 2012/13 presented firstly to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Council.
6 September 2011	Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement process begins. Ends in January 2012.
12 September 2011 <b>Cabinet</b>	Cabinet approves the process being proposed for 2012–2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy for 2012/13.
12 September 2011 to 31 October 2011	Detailed work undertaken on the 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process
27 September 2011 <b>All Members' Council Strategic Plan &amp; Budget Briefing</b>	First All Members' Council Strategic Plan & Budget Briefing for consideration of the CEI programme & Service and Spending Review process.
31 October 2011	Initial Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to be completed.

<b>Date / Meeting</b>	<b>Detail</b>
28 November 2011 <b>Cabinet</b>	Cabinet considers its 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan proposals & initial budget proposals in relation to general fund, schools, housing revenue account & Capital Plan.
29 November 2011 <b>All Members' Council Strategic Plan &amp; Budget Briefing</b>	Second All Members' Council Strategic Plan & Budget Briefing for consideration of the Cabinet's initial 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan & Budget proposals.
Early December 2011	Estimated date of the 2012/13 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
End of December 2011	Full EIAs completed
9 January 2012 <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	Overview and Scrutiny consider the results of their review of the 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process.
18 January 2012 <b>Cabinet</b>	Cabinet considers its draft Council Strategic Plan & budget proposals for 2012-2015 in relation to general fund revenue, schools, housing revenue account & Capital Plan, taking into account feedback received as part of Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement.
2 February 2012 <b>Council</b>	Cabinet submits to the Council its estimates of amounts for the 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan, budget & council tax levels. Annual housing rent increase for 2012/13 approved by Council.
21 February 2012 <b>Council</b>	Reconvened Council meeting to consider Cabinet's estimates of amounts for the 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan, budget & council tax levels. Consideration of any Notices of Objection.
23 February 2012 (if required) <b>Cabinet</b>	Cabinet Meeting to consider any objections to Cabinet's Council Strategic Plan & Budget proposals.
1 March 2012 (if required) <b>Council</b>	Council meeting to agree the Council Strategic Plan for 2012-2015, the general fund revenue budget for 2012/13; the council tax level for 2012/13 & Capital Plan for 2012-2022.

Governance and Assurance Framework (incorporating the Monitoring and Reporting Cycle)

- 1.5.25 The Elected Mayor and Cabinet are responsible for formulating the Council's Strategic Plan. The Cabinet Member for Finance, in close consultation with the Elected Mayor, has been nominated as the lead Cabinet Member for the overarching 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process.



The Strategic Director of Finance and Resources and the Interim Strategic Director will be joint project sponsors.

### Scrutiny of the 2012-2015 Service and Spending Review process

- 1.5.26 As part of last year's process, on 17 January 2011 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Budget and Council Plan Study Group on Cabinet's 2011-2015 Service and Spending Review process. On 9 February 2011, a report from the Elected Mayor was sent to all Members and Co-opted Members of the Council setting down the response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations. These recommendations have been considered as part of setting the framework for the 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and Budget setting process.
- 1.5.27 Following the internal review of Overview and Scrutiny in North Tyneside which was agreed by Council on 28 July 2011, part of the purpose of the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee is, on an annual basis, to co-ordinate and undertake the challenge of the Cabinet's budget and strategic planning proposals. In addition to this, the responsibilities of all Overview and Scrutiny sub committees include, on an annual basis, to undertake the challenge of the Cabinet's Budget and Council Plan proposals related to the portfolio of each sub committee.

## **Section 2 - The North Tyneside Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy for 2012/13**

- 1.5.28 North Tyneside Council is committed to being a resident-focused Council. One key requirement for achieving this is to ensure that residents' views are gathered and considered during the annual Council Strategic Plan and Budget Setting process. The aim of the Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy for 2012/13 is to continue the stepped improvements to the process which we aim to make each year. The public increasingly expects to be consulted about their local services and have their say in how their money is going to be raised and spent. Our aim is for the Council to increase the involvement of local people in decisions about the level of council tax and budget issues.
- 1.5.29 All of the groups we engaged with last year will once again be consulted as part of this process. This year we will also include consultation with minority groups in the community and Sure Start centres. We will also publicise the opportunities to engage more widely via social media to raise awareness of the consultation events. As part of the 2012/13 process we are using an "on-line" model to capture residents' views on priorities. Such a model would allow residents to focus on priorities and the implications of decisions regarding changes in priorities and increasing or reducing spend in specific areas. We will continue the process of consulting with individuals and groups earlier than last year, thereby allowing more time for the results of the engagement to inform the Budget and Council Strategic Plan proposals for 2012/13.

### *Residents Focused Engagement*

- 1.5.30 Residents' engagement will form a key strand of the budget engagement strategy for 2012/13. This will be achieved through engagement with the Residents' Panel and through specific area based engagement.

*Widening Horizons Magazine*

- 1.5.31 To continue the improvements to the engagement process made last year, we will use the Council's Widening Horizons magazine to publicise information and to keep residents informed.

*Residents' Panel*

- 1.5.32 The Residents' Panel consists of around 1,200 members of the public who are randomly selected. A Council Strategic Plan and Budget engagement session will take place with the Residents' Panel on 4 October 2011.
- 1.5.33 The Residents' Panel will also be invited to the Area Forum Meetings in November and December 2011 to enable them to contribute to the consultation as it develops.

*Area Based Residents' Consultation*

- 1.5.34 The Council's area based engagement arrangements through Area Forums are quite well established and will contribute to the process.

Engagement with Other Stakeholders

- 1.5.35 Consultation with residents will form only one strand of the Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy. We will also engage with other key stakeholders and interest groups. Details of the ways in which engagement will be carried out and how feedback will be provided, is set out at Appendix A to this report.
- 1.5.36 In addition to residents, the key groups we intend to meet as part of the 2012/13 budget engagement process include:
- The Older People's Engagement Network, known as OPEN in partnership with Age Concern;
  - The Older People's Forum;
  - The North Tyneside Strategic Partnership (NTSP);
  - The Young Mayor and Cabinet;
  - Schools Forum;
  - Chairs of School Governors;
  - Headteachers Convenors;
  - Trade Unions;
  - Voluntary and Community Sector, including Faith Groups;
  - 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;

- Area Housing Forums;
- Users of Sure Start centres;
- Staff panel;
- Elected Members;
- Faith groups; and,
- Disability groups.

1.5.37 The aim will be to meet with each group at least once, and we will examine the potential to hold further meetings with specific groups as we go through the process.

**1.6 Decision options:**

1.6.1 The Council's Constitution and Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules set down the stages to be completed in relation to agreeing the Council Plan and Budget of the Council. There are no other options available in relation to this. The Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy forms part of the Service and Spending Review process.

1.6.2 Cabinet is referred to the legal requirements as stated in paragraph 2.2 of this report.

**1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

The reasons for the recommendations are mainly legal in nature, as stated in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of this report.

**1.8 Appendices:**

Appendix A – Summary of Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement to be undertaken.

**1.9 Contact officers:**

Jon Ritchie, Finance Service  
Tel No 643 5800

Jacqueline Laughton, Chief Executive's Office  
Tel No 643 7070

Vicki Dixon, Finance Service  
Tel No 643 5723

Geoff Huzzard, Finance Service  
Tel No 643 5716

Julia McFadzean, Chief Executive's Office  
Tel No 643 5630

### **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) Council's Constitution and Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (P).
- (b) 2011-2015 Council Strategic Plan (P).
- (c) 2011-2015 Service and Spending Review Framework: Elected Mayor and Cabinet Budget Resolution for 2011/12, 3 March 2011 (P).

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

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

- 2.1.1 The financial implications arising from the outcomes of this report will be 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, schools' funding and the 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 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 in accordance with the Council's Reserves and Balances Policy most recently agreed by Council on 3 March 2011.
- 2.1.3 The only direct financial implications arising from this report will be any residual costs arising from support for area based engagement, Residents' Panel and any other specific engagement events and the possible use of an "on-line" model. These costs will be met from existing budgets.
- 2.1.4 The Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement strategy for 2012/13 will in part help to inform decisions about what will be included in the three-year Council Strategic Plan and Financial Plan for 2012-2015. Decisions on the budget for general fund, capital plan, housing revenue account and schools' funding will need to be made within the overall context of the resources available to the Council and within the legal framework for setting budgets.

## **2.2 Legal**

- 2.2.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 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.
- 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 setting process has been prepared to comply with the time-scales required within the Budget & Policy Framework Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

## **2.3 Community engagement**

- 2.3.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Elected Mayor, the Cabinet Members for Finance and Community Engagement and the Chief Executive, Interim Strategic Director and other members of the Senior Leadership Team. These proposals will be scrutinised as set down in the Council's Constitution and Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
- 2.3.2 The Council Strategic Plan and Budget Engagement Strategy for 2012/13 as outlined in this report sets out the process by which the public, key partners and other stakeholders will be involved in the consultation on the 2012/13 Council Strategic Plan and Budget as part of the 2012-2015 Service and Spending Review process.

## **2.4 Human rights**

All actions and spending contained within the Council Strategic Plan are fully compliant with national and international Human Rights Law. This will be detailed as part of the Council Strategic Plan and Budget at the appropriate stage in the process. 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

In undertaking the process of the Council Strategic Plan and Budget the Council's aim will at all times be 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 will be taking 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 are making 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. Appendix A provides the approach we are taking with minority groups.
- The outcome of any decisions made following the community engagement on the council strategic plan and budget process 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 / will be established as part of the Council's agreed approach to project management. Risks will be entered into the appropriate Directorate or Corporate / Strategic Risk Register(s) and will be subject to ongoing management to reduce the likelihood and impact of each risk.

## 2.7 Crime and disorder

2.7.1 Individual proposals within this report do not themselves have direct implications for crime and disorder. However, ultimately decisions may be made and considered as part of the overall Service and Spending Review process and budget setting process of the Council, as set down in this report. These will be detailed as part of reporting the Council Strategic Plan and Budget at the appropriate stage in the process.

2.7.2 Under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, local authorities have a statutory duty to work with partners on the reduction of crime and disorder. The Partners' representation at Cabinet and North Tyneside Together projects will ensure we work closely with our partners when taking decisions.

## 2.8 Environment and sustainability

The proposals within this report do not themselves have direct implications in relation to the environment and sustainability. However, ultimately decisions may be made and considered as part of the overall Service and Spending Review process and budget setting process of the Council, as set down in this report. These will be detailed as part of reporting the Council Strategic Plan and Budget at the appropriate stage in the process.

**PART 3 - SIGN OFF**

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