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| Meeting: | Executive |
| Meeting date: | 14 September 2023 |
| Report of: | Ian Floyd Chief Operating Officer |
| Portfolio of: | Cllr Douglas Leader, responsible for Strategy, Policy and Partnerships |

Decision Report:

Approval of the Council Plan 2023-2027

Subject of Report

1. This report presents the draft Council Plan 2023-2027 to Executive, recommending Executive then invite Council to consider the draft Council Plan on 21 September 2023.

Benefits and Challenges

2. *One City, for all*, the draft Council Plan (**Annex B**) is the City of York Council's corporate strategy for the next 4 years (2023-2027). It will guide the council's priorities whilst providing a framework for financial and performance management, and to help the city identify and respond to new opportunities or challenges.
3. It sets out our organisation's contribution to delivering the vision for the city and long-term ambitions contained within the 10-Year Plan and 10-Year Strategies (York 2032), which is collectively owned by, and developed with, city partners.

4. It responds to the unprecedented pressures on council funding and is designed to inform decision making together with resource and funding allocation, recognising that whilst remaining ambitious for the city, the council must ensure financial resilience and stability and as such, cannot deliver everything alone.
5. Approving the Council Plan provides a framework to allocate resources to take future decisions to balance competing priorities whilst remaining ambitious for the city.
6. The Council Plan sets out bold action to tackle climate change, describes opportunities to explore working with regional and local partners, sets out the Four Core Commitment outcomes that will inform our work going forward, together with a renewed focus on improving customer experience across all operations.

Policy Basis for Decision

7. The draft Council Plan 2023-2027 is aligned to the 10-year Plan (York 2032) which was approved by Council in December 2022.
8. The Council Plan is a key part of the Council's Strategy and Policy Framework, approved by Executive in November 2022. It sets out the vision and priorities for the council over the next four years. and informs the financial strategy, performance management and service planning.
9. The Council Plan is listed in the Constitution Scheme of Delegation (Appendix 1) as one of the policies that requires the approval of Council following consideration by Executive.
10. The Council Plan is part of the council's corporate code of governance.
11. Underpinning the priorities set out in the Council Plan are our Four Core Commitments - the four outcomes we will put at the heart of council services and the decisions we make. They are for each and every one of our residents to benefit from:
 - **Equalities** - providing equal opportunity, balancing human rights, standing up to hate, championing communities

- **Affordability** - finding new ways so everyone benefits from the city's success, targeting support where it's most needed
- **Climate** - understanding the impact our decisions have on the environment, adapting the city to prepare for extreme weather events
- **Health** - improving health and wellbeing, reducing health inequalities, targeting areas of deprivation

Financial Strategy Implications

12. The Financial Strategy 2023/24 - 2026/27 will be refreshed to align with the new Council Plan. In July 2023, Council approved a Budget Amendment that set out specific funding for some of the actions in the draft Council Plan. Following budget consultation, Council will be invited to consider the refreshed Financial Strategy in February 2024 which will set out the funding available to deliver the Council Plan.
13. Nationally local authorities are facing a significant funding shortfall, and with pressures in key areas such as children and adult services. Ensuring financial stability is an overarching priority for the Council, and to deliver it will require some very difficult decisions, and it will not be possible to maintain existing service levels across all areas.
14. The draft Council Plan is a statement of intent, with actions taking place only once funding has been secured. Achieving some priorities will require consideration of reducing/stopping funding for lower priority areas, and exploring innovative ways of increasing income, together with a focus on securing external grant funding.
15. The difficult financial position will mean we will need to look carefully at how all our resources are deployed and this includes our employees. We will continue to support our staff, seeking wherever possible to achieve staffing reductions through reductions in interim staff, and through vacancy management wherever possible.
16. Despite the challenges the Council will seek to ensure the organisation remains a place where employees feel supported, and where they can achieve great things.

Recommendation and Reasons

17. It is recommended that Executive approve the Council Plan and that they recommend it to Council to final approval on 21 September 2023.

Reason: Approving the Council Plan will mean Executive has, through the Council Plan, made a clear statement of the council's vision and purpose and as a result, the Council Plan guide the council's priorities, providing a framework for financial and performance management, including dealing with competing demands and defining a programme to ensure best-value for residents.

Background

18. The previous Council Plan covered the period 2019-2023 and ran until May 2023. Following the election, the draft council plan has been developed to reflect the manifesto commitments the new administration were elected to deliver.
19. The Council Plan's role is to:
- Make a clear statement of the Council's purpose and vision and is used as the basis for all corporate and service planning.
 - Prioritise resources to deal with competing demands and for considering the impact of decisions on the financial strategy.
 - Inform annual reports that will share how the council's activities and achievements meet outcomes, including defining its financial position and audit programme to ensure best-value to residents.
20. The draft Council Plan describes the ambition of the new administration, setting out the vision for the council and priorities, together with the metrics that will demonstrate the difference delivering the Council Plan will make. The key priorities, with examples of actions in the plan are:
- a) Health and wellbeing: A health generating city for children, for adults, for all
 - i. Start the journey towards becoming an anti-poverty city within a decade, including supporting young people and families, reducing food insecurity and exploring the

benefits of free school meals for all primary school children

- ii. Continue our improvement journey to deliver good and outstanding children's services with the voice of the child heard throughout all council operations
 - iii. Co-design a Housing with Support Strategy setting out the care choices people have so older and disabled people could stay in their own homes as long as possible.
- b) Education and skills: High quality skills and learning for all
- i. Provide access to good health and social care opportunities, training and skills
 - ii. Showcase renewable energy and retrofit expertise, with a Green Skills Village at it's heart
- c) Economy and good employment: A fair, thriving, green economy for all
- i. Realise the economic opportunity provided by devolution, York Central and the bioeconomy.
 - ii. Promote the Good Business Charter and Living Wage Foundation
- d) Transport: Sustainable accessible transport for all
- i. Develop a Movement plan to make it easier to move through the city, reducing traffic around primary schools and making significant progress towards reducing carbon by 71% and traffic by 20%
 - ii. Return Blue Badge accessibility by rolling back restrictions to those in place before November 2021
- e) Housing: Increasing the supply of affordable housing
- i. Increase the % of affordable homes (exploring opportunities through planning, travellers' sites, community led projects, social housing, etc.) and seeking to exceed Planning policy on affordable homes
 - ii. Take decisive action to reduce emissions improving the quality of existing council housing and launch a one-stop shop to support households retrofitting their properties

- f) Sustainability: Cutting carbon, enhancing the environment for our future
 - i. Reduce energy consumption and generate more local sources of renewable energy
 - ii. Increase biodiversity and plant an additional 4,000 trees across the city

 - g) How the Council operates
 - i. Improve customer experience across council operations
 - ii. Be recognised by LGA as “excellent” in Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion
21. The plan recognises there are significant funding challenges facing local government as a sector, and the Council will need to make difficult decisions in the coming years. To deliver the ambition will require the council working closely with the city and partners to unlock investment, work more closely with partners and identify opportunity for change in delivery models.
22. In particular, the Council will look to work closely with major key partners, such as the NHS, Universities, and other local authorities. Of particular relevance are the following:
- a) The creation of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority in 2024, which provides significant funding to the region, with opportunity to attract further funding in coming years. The Council will work closely with North Yorkshire Council, and the Combined Authority to ensure investment is delivered to the region.
 - b) The York Health and Care Partnership – with the Council working closely with key partners across the NHS, voluntary sector, and educational organisations. Dealing with challenges in relation to Adult care for example will require a strong focus on integration.
23. The Council will also consider innovative ways to secure funding. This will continue the focus on external funding but also explore new models, including a York Community Fund, and opportunities to achieve new income streams.
24. To monitor performance and progress of the Council Plan actions, the Performance Management Framework (**Annex Bi**) has been updated to align with the new administration’s priorities. This will

inform how performance is presented to Executive every quarter going forward.

Consultation Analysis

25. The draft Council Plan is based on commitments made by the new administration throughout the pre-election period, whilst reflecting the extremely challenging and ongoing budget pressures.
26. It has been developed through internal consultation with Executive members, Corporate Management Team and policy leads.
27. It recognises the important role residents, community groups and businesses play in shaping and steering policy with city-wide consultation and engagement core to delivering the new policies set out in the draft Council Plan.
28. It responds to the vision and priorities set out in the 10-Year Plan and 10-Year strategies, which incorporated extensive consultation with residents, businesses and partners during the *Our Big Conversation* programme of engagement.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

29. Executive has the option to approve or reject the draft Council Plan 2023-2027.
 - a) Approval of the draft Council Plan will set direction for officers over the next four years and initiate updates to internal governance and delivery processes, for example: the financial strategy, performance framework (Annex Bi) and service planning.

Organisational Impact and Implications

Financial, the new Council Plan provides a strategic framework for financial management under which the Council will operate to 2027. Whilst there are no specific financial implications arising from the Council Plan itself, it will inform how we set our budget. It also reflects on and takes into account our challenging financial position, emphasising the need for financial resilience and stability. As outlined earlier in the

report, not all the priorities included in the Council Plan can be delivered within existing budgets and therefore this will require consideration to be given to reducing or stopping funding for lower priority areas, and exploring innovative ways of increasing income, together with a focus on securing external grant funding.

Human Resources (HR), The Council plan cannot be achieved without a dedicated and skilled workforce. Key priorities are identified in the plan and we are confident that officers can deliver the ambitions identified with appropriate connectivity and working alongside key partners. Ongoing financial challenges mean that innovative ways of working and delivering priorities are a must. Officers will be supported to ensure that they have the tools, resources and conditions to drive efficiencies, deliver affordable and appropriate services and be proud that they can achieve a good job for our City. Continued development of our employees is paramount including employees wellbeing, training and maintaining a quality employment offer which are at the heart of CYC's values and workforce strategy and plan. It is important that despite the financial challenges and ambitious priorities, employees feel valued, motivated and supported by management, each other and the Executive. Failure to continue to invest in employees and ensure that CYC remains an attractive employer will impact on the delivery of priorities for the City. It is acknowledged that the Council will likely reduce in size and this will have staff implications; it is important that we are open, transparent and work with employees where staffing implications are relevant and where appropriate aim to reduce and mitigate compulsory redundancies. All staffing implications will follow HR procedures.

Legal The Council plan plays a key role in ensuring that the council manages its resources effectively and monitors its performance. It also helps the Council to maintain openness. In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Authority (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and the City of York Council Constitution, the Executive is responsible for guiding the Council in the formulation of its corporate plan of objectives and key priorities. Full Council must approve, adopt, amend, monitor and /or review the plans, strategies and policies which together make up the Council's Policy Framework, including the Council Plan.

Procurement – Whilst there are no direct procurement implications relating to the Council Plan itself, procurement will be a main tool used to deliver some of the upcoming priorities. Should any priorities requirement procurement, all works and/or services must be procured via a compliant, open, transparent, and fair process in accordance with

the council's Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable, the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Creative and innovative ways of procuring will be explored to ensure York's local supply chain can tender for any contracts to support and improve the local economy. Further advice regarding the procurement process and development of procurement strategies must be sought from the Commercial Procurement team.

Health and Wellbeing The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 -2032 sets a key ambition to make York a Health Generating City, together with a Core Commitment to reduce health inequalities and improve wellbeing. This can only be achieved if the council supports the embedding of health outcomes throughout all policy areas. The Health in All Policies approach is shown in this Council Plan and will help ensure that as decisions on policy are made in the future, the health impacts are assessed for specific proposals.

Environment and Climate action The commitment to climate action is evident in the Council Plan, with one of the four core commitments to embed sustainability and understand the impact of decisions on the environment a key outcome of the Council Plan. Individual actions environmental impact will be assessed throughout the delivery cycle.

Affordability One of the four core commitments to improve the affordability of the city is a key outcome of the Council Plan. Individual action's affordability will be assessed throughout the delivery cycle.

Equalities and Human Rights One of the four core commitments is focused on equalities and human rights and is a key outcome of the Council Plan. Human Rights and Equalities Impact Analysis process will be updated to reflect this outcome so that individual action consideration of both human rights and equalities can be assessed throughout the delivery cycle.

Economy The York Economic Strategy 2022-2032 is one of the 10-Year Strategies which form the underpinning framework of the Council Plan.

Systems and data architecture Individual actions in the Council Plan, when taken forward, will be assessed for data/architecture impacts. There are some minor impacts on creating processes to record and retrieve data to support the Council Plan indicators, delivered as part of business as usual.

Data Protection and Privacy Data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) are an essential part of our accountability obligations and is a legal requirement for any type of processing under UK GDPR. Failure to

carry out a DPIA when required may leave the council open to enforcement action, including monetary penalties or fines. DPIAs helps us to assess and demonstrate how we comply with all of our data protection obligations. It does not have to eradicate all risks but should help to minimise and determine whether the level of risk is acceptable in the circumstances, considering the benefits of what the council wants to achieve. As there is no personal data, special categories of personal data or criminal offence data being processed to inform approval of the Council Plan, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA. This is evidenced by completion of DPIA screening questions. However, there will need to be consideration and completion of DPIAs where required, within delivery of the plan.

Communications A communications plan to launch the Council Plan has been prepared. In the meantime, the Communications Strategy and Internal Communications Plan will be refreshed to reflect and embed the new Council Plan.

Risks and Mitigations

Delivering the Council Plan could lead to the following risks:

- **Delivery focuses on ambitions:** The council plan is ambitious, both for the city, the council and also in terms of deliverability. To ensure statutory services are delivered whilst ambitions are also delivered, the council will commit to delivering priority actions first and only consider additional actions if service delivery remains stable.
- **Financial stability compromised:** the council has a statutory responsibility to remain financially stable and there is a risk of ambition compromising this stability. As the plan is a statement of intent, no action will progress without sufficient funding in place. Financial stability will be managed through financial controls such as the financial strategy and annual budget process, ongoing discussion, scrutiny and assurance including regular reporting to Audit and Governance.
- **Financial situation worsens:** the duration of the council plan is four years and at this stage, with ever increasing external pressures, rising demands and rising costs, it is assumed that the financial situation will worsen. Regular service planning and the annual budget process are in place to ensure services do not over commit to projects that are not deliverable.

- **External funding / investment is not available:** Just as the council is experiencing unprecedented funding challenges, so too is the city. As a result, there is a risk that the investment needed to deliver some of the actions will not materialise. As the council plan is a statement of intent, actions will not progress without funding in place, which will be reported through the Monitor.
- **Reduced customer experience:** There is a risk that customer experience will worsen as funding is reduced and services stop/scale back. Regular performance monitoring and a council-wide focus to identify what can be delivered to manage customer expectations, together with ongoing discussions with Executive will help mitigate this risk.
- **Reputation impacted:** the council plan sets out some bold ambitions, including being net zero by 2030, reducing traffic by 20%, increasing the number of affordable homes, and that if these ambitions are not met, the council's reputation will be negatively impacted. To mitigate this risk, the council will regularly share performance and be honest with the city about what is or isn't achievable and if not, why not.
- **Rising demands:** There is a risk that as external issues come to the fore (cost of living, rising costs, complex needs, etc). the rising demand on service overwhelms ambition. The council has a statutory responsibility to meet specific services and as a result the council plan progress will be continually reviewed to ensure delivery is not at the expense of statutory services.

Wards Impacted

30. All

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

Author

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|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Name: | Ian Floyd |
| Job Title: | Chief Operating Officer |
| Service Area: | Council |

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| Telephone: | |
| Report approved: | Yes |
| Date: | 06/09/2023 |

Co-author

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Name: | Claire Foale |
| Job Title: | Assistant Director Policy and Strategy |
| Service Area: | Governance |
| Telephone: | 01904 552057 |
| Report approved: | Yes |
| Date: | 4 September 2023 |

Background papers

Council December 2022: approval 10-year plan

[Agenda for Council on Thursday, 15 December 2022, 6.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 36

Council February 2023: approval of Financial Strategy 2023/24 - 2026/27

[Agenda for Council on Thursday, 23 February 2023, 6.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 50

Council July 2023: budget amendment

[Agenda for Council on Thursday, 20 July 2023, 6.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 24

Executive November 2022: approval strategy and policy framework

[Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 22 November 2022, 5.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 46

Code of Corporate Governance: [code-of-corporate-governance \(york.gov.uk\)](#)

Constitution: [Appendix 1- Scheme of Delegation.pdf \(york.gov.uk\)](#)

Annexes

- Annex A: Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Annex B: Draft Council Plan 2023-2027
- Annex Bii: Performance Management Framework 2023-2027