

CABINET – 11 JANUARY 2022

SUNDERLAND CITY PLAN 2019-2030 – ANNUAL ASSURANCE PROCESS

Report of the Executive Director of Corporate Services

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report submits for Cabinet's consideration details of the City Plan and Indicative Timeline assurance process and the proposed updating of the Plan and Timeline.

2.0 Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the details of the City Plan and Indicative Timeline assurance process and recommend the proposed updates to the Plan and Timeline to Council for approval.

3.0 Context

- 3.1 The City Plan is the council's sole strategic plan. It is an Article 4 Plan subject to approval by Full Council.
- 3.2 The City Plan and accompanying Indicative Timeline cover the period 2019-2030 and describes the Challenges, Themes and Commitments for the regeneration, growth and recovery of the city post the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.3 Following the City Plan's and Indicative Timeline's initial publication in 2019 it was intended that annual reviews would be undertaken of both. The first review took place last year and resulted in the revisions included within the current versions on the council's website.
- 3.4 The first such review was undertaken last year as the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic started to become apparent and resulted in revisions that are included within the current version of the City Plan, including:
- The inclusion of a Covid-19 specific Challenge
 - Refinements to the wording of other Challenges
 - References to Smart City to recognise the nationally significant work being undertaken
 - Refinements to the wording of the Commitments
 - The updating of the Indicative Timeline of activities through to 2030

4.0 Current Position

- 4.1 Given the continuing emerging impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and other related socio-economic and structural changes impacting on the city, evidence has been collated to determine whether changes need to be made to the City Plan and Indicative Timeline this year, including:
- The council's quarterly performance reporting process
 - Responses to quarterly performance reporting to Scrutiny
 - Specialist analysis and considerations from council services and city partners
 - Analysis of wider socio-economic, demographic and deprivation data and intelligence.

- 4.2 Input from city partners is an addition to the process this year and going forward will help evidence more, for residents and stakeholders, how collective progress is being made towards achieving the City Plan vision.
- 4.3 Following analysis of the evidence, the majority of the City Plan remains relevant. But in considering the 'Challenges' and given the significant, current focus on tackling global climate change, it is proposed that a related Challenge to support the council's and city's commitments in respect of achieving carbon neutrality is included:

"Sunderland will play its role in tackling the global challenge of climate change, working together across the city to be carbon neutral by 2040"

- 4.4 It is further proposed to amend the 'commitment' under the Healthy Smart City theme as follows:

Current: *a city with great transport and travel links*

Proposed: *great transport links with low carbon and active travel opportunities for all*

- 4.5 The analysis also indicates that the Indicative Timeline requires updating to reflect the breadth and current status of key projects in the city that will contribute to delivery of the Plan.
- 4.6 At the meeting of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on 9 December 2021, members recommended that some of the components of the *Carbon Neutral City Council by 2030*, and *Adult Mental Health Strategy Delivered (in 2026)* timeline activities be inserted into the timeline in the intervening years. This would help demonstrate progress towards completion of these activities and also their relationship with the delivery of other objectives.
- 4.7 Where possible, this additional detail and contributing activities will be added to timeline in advance of publication of the final, approved version. No entries will be removed from the timeline as set out in the attached draft plan, in the process.
- 4.8 The draft updated City Plan 2019-2030 and Indicative Timeline are attached to this report at Appendix 1.

5.0 Reasons for the Decision

- 5.1 Production of a corporate plan is required under the council's Constitution, as an Article 4 Plan.
- 5.2 The City Plan and Indicative Timeline are considered to fulfil the role of a corporate plan for the period 2019-2030 as the primary statement of the council's and the city's strategic direction and key priorities.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 Alternative Options considered and rejected as part of the City Plan assurance process were:

Option 1. Do Nothing: This option was not considered appropriate. Evolving circumstances emphasise the need for the City Plan and Indicative Timeline to be the subject of an assurance process in order that they are fit for purpose to express the council's strategic direction and intentions for the years 2022-2030.

Option 2. Develop a new City Plan: This option was not considered appropriate. The City Plan and Indicative Timeline are intended as the long-term primary statement of the council's and the city's strategic direction and key priorities in the context of evolving circumstances.

7.0 Impact Analysis

Equalities - The City Plan and Indicative Timeline form the basis for how promoting equality and reducing inequalities is fundamental to council's approach. Further to this the City Plan and Indicative Timeline are subject to Equalities Analysis, through the delivery activities underpinning it, which will be subject to Equality Analyses at the appropriate stage of their development.

Sustainability - The City Plan and Indicative Timeline are subject to a Sustainability Analysis, through the delivery activities underpinning it, which will be subject to Sustainability Analyses at the appropriate stage of their development

8.0 Other Considerations/Consultations

Co-operative Values – At Annual Council in May 2015, it was resolved that the following statement be included in the Constitution to reflect the values of the “Cooperative Council”.

“Sunderland City Council is a co-operative council and in being so will act ethically in all its actions while adhering to and actively promoting its co-operative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. These values will underpin its decision making and actions.”

As the council's sole strategic plan and the key means of articulating and communicating the council's priorities and direction in leading the citywide response to the key challenges impacting on Sunderland, the City Plan and Indicative Timeline lie at the heart of the council's approach as a “Co-operative Council”.

Financial Implications – Any financial implications arising as a result of actions set out in the City Plan and Indicative Timeline can be met through existing budget provision or will be included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy as appropriate, and subject to the annual approval process.

Legal Implications – The Assistant Director of Law and Governance has been consulted to ensure that correct process is followed for the formal adoption of the City Plan and Indicative Timeline as part of the council's Policy Framework under Article 4 of the Constitution.

Policy Implications – The development of the City Plan and Indicative Timeline assurance process has been coordinated by the Executive Director of Corporate Services.

The assurance process has been developed and implemented in conjunction with the Chief Officer Group, the Cabinet and the Sunderland Partnership.

9.0 List of Appendices

Appendix: City Plan “Sunderland 2019-2030” and Indicative Timeline

10.0 Background Papers

City Plan and Indicative Timeline assurance process contributions and analysis.

Appendix 1: Draft Updated City Plan “Sunderland 2019-2030” and Indicative Timeline

