Newark & Sherwood District Council
Corporate Planning, Performance Management and Assurance Framework

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1. <u>**Introduction**</u>

1.1 This document sets out the arrangements for effective corporate planning, performance management and assurance at Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC).

1.2 Our corporate planning process includes setting the direction for the Council, devising outcomes and identifying relevant supporting actions to help us deliver the outcomes, within the resources available.

1.3 Our performance management arrangements include the framework and processes established by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to routinely monitor and manage performance across the Council. Through strategic oversight SLT will ensure that Business Managers deliver in accordance with objectives included within their business plans which in turn will facilitate delivery against the ambitions and actions included within the Council's Community Plan.

1.4 Our corporate assurance arrangements are intended to provide assurance to SLT, and where appropriate members, on corporate and strategic matters not reported through alternate mechanisms. The activities undertaken as part of this process supplement existing assurance arrangements including, but not restricted to, internal and external audit and assurance obtained through the completion of the annual governance statement.
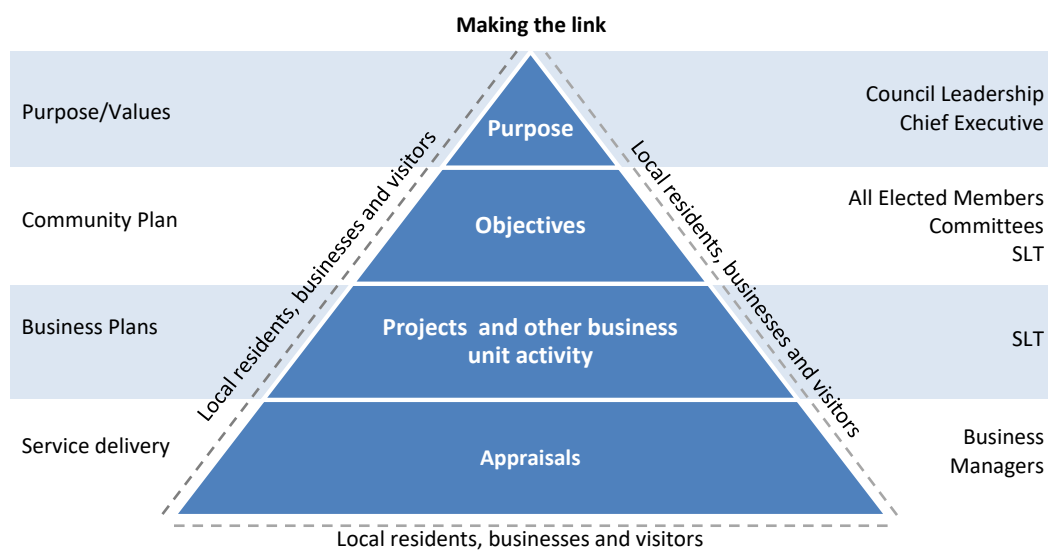
2. <u>**Scope**</u>

2.1 These arrangements apply to all directly managed services of the Council. Activities undertaken by wholly owned companies are subject to separate assurance arrangements managed through the relevant client officer.

3. <u>**Corporate Planning**</u>

3.1 Our corporate planning process will take place on a four year cyclical basis aligned to the election cycle to ensure that an up to date Community Plan exists prior to the commencement of the new financial year in which the elections take place (<u>refer to Appendix A</u>). As part of the process we will:

- engage and consult with relevant stakeholders (including but not restricted to Members, Business Managers, Partner Agencies, Residents, Parish Councils and Communities);
- have regard to our Medium-Term Financial Plan and how Council resources can be used to fund delivery of the plan;
- use performance data and information (including equality) and customer/resident feedback to inform what we need to improve on;
- clarify what the priorities for the Council are (both internal and external) and what actions the Council will take to deliver them;
- Agree Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each of the ambitions.

Note: Appendix A will be updated annually to reflect revised dates for committees.

3.2   The Council will revisit the content of the Community Plan on an annual basis, adopting a light touch engagement/consultation process to ensure that the plan remains up to date and is fit for purpose. The planning process will be undertaken simultaneously with the financial planning process.

3.3   Once the Community Plan has been adopted by the Council, business plans for each of the respective areas will be signed off including targets (where appropriate) for KPIs and operational indicators in readiness for the forthcoming financial year.

3.4   The diagram below provides an overview of how the Council ensures that appropriate linkages are made throughout the organisation from setting direction through to implementation. It provides an overview of how the Council manages performance, from a strategic perspective cascaded through to individual members of staff.

Making the link

Purpose/Values	**Purpose**	Council Leadership Chief Executive
Community Plan	**Objectives**	All Elected Members Committees SLT
Business Plans	**Projects and other business unit activity**	SLT
Service delivery	**Appraisals**	Business Managers

Local residents, businesses and visitors

4.   Performance Management

4.1   The performance management cycle of planning, doing, reviewing and revising is integral to good performance management. There are several layers of performance monitoring within the Council, which are identified in the corporate planning yearly cycle, details of which are provided at Appendix A. Further details of performance reporting and business planning processes are provided at Appendix B. By measuring and monitoring performance in this way the Council is able to monitor how effectively it is delivering its ambition and achieving objectives in an economical, efficient and effective manner.

4.2   The framework recognises the diversity of work undertaken by the Council, as well as the variety of external requirements, e.g. statutory returns, partnership arrangements, and different legal, regulatory and/policy frameworks.

4.3 Performance Management – Strategic/Corporate

4.3.1 What?

The Community Plan includes 7 key ambitions, underpinned by a number of supporting activities. A basket of KPIs, together with analysis of financial position, demonstrates how the Council is moving towards achieving its overarching objectives. The KPIs comprise quarterly and annual measures.

4.3.2 How?

Progress reports will be submitted to SLT, Policy and Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC) and Cabinet on a quarterly basis. Reports will provide an update around performance against KPIs along with commentary around activities undertaken during the quarter in relation to the ambitions and underpinning actions. Following this same reporting cycle are the financial performance reports. A separate report which details Customer Feedback, including complaints, praise and suggestions, is presented to SLT, PPIC and Cabinet twice per year.

Performance information including progress against KPIs and additional commentary will be published on the council's website. KPI's will be maintained by the performance team using a Microsoft Access database.

4.4. Performance Management - Operational

4.4.1 What?

As part of the corporate planning process each Business Manager is required to produce a business plan that is directly aligned to the Community Plan and updated annually in line with the refreshed Community Plan.

In addition to KPIs business units will maintain a range of operational indicators to demonstrate how well their individual service area is performing, and these will be included within business plans. These plans will also include a range of operational based activities above and beyond the day job that are expected to be delivered over the plan period.

4.4.2 How?

Directors will convene quarterly performance management meetings within their directorate to monitor performance.

During this meeting the Director will review performance against KPIs and corporate indicators for their service areas. Business Managers will be expected to provide an update around operational indicators and progress against actions included in their business plan.

Operational data to be referred to at this meeting will be presented by Business Managers, who are responsible for updating and maintaining their own data set from an operational

perspective. Where possible, Business Managers are encouraged to use the database for this purpose unless there is a more appropriate platform. The performance team are available to advise/assist Business Managers in relation to maintaining their operational data sets.

Financial information will also be provided by the relevant accountant for discussion at this meeting to allow for closer scrutiny of budgets and identify opportunities for re-allocation of budgets within year. Consideration will also be given to assurance around key issues currently discussed on an individual basis with Business Managers including health and safety.

An update on how the Business Unit is performing will provided to staff by the Business Manager.

4.5   ***Performance Management - Personal Appraisal***

4.5.1   What?
The employee appraisal process is fundamental to managing and improving the Council's performance and the achievement of its ambitions. Therefore, it is vital to link corporate and service priorities/targets with goals and/or objectives for teams and individual employees which in turn will allow for monitoring and managing of performance.

The Council has recently revised and updated its performance appraisal process to provide a flexible framework through which managers and employees engage in regular, quality conversations in a way that best suits them and their Business Unit.

To ensure the appropriate linkage with the Community Plan, Business Managers are encouraged to use their business plan to inform discussions with employees during the appraisal process. This will enable managers to demonstrate to employees how their role and function contributes to the achievement of the Council's ambitions, whilst also providing a platform to manage performance and identify areas for personal development.

4.5.2   How?
Within the Council's appraisal process the first appraisal meeting will normally take place between February and June using a cascade approach from the Chief Executive, through to Directors through to Business Managers and then on to all employees. The first appraisal meeting will be used to assess achievement against the previous year's objectives and to set objectives for the coming year. Regular discussions will then take place with employees throughout the year to monitor progress.

Community Plan

Objectives

Key Performance Indicators

Quarterly reporting

Managing Our Performance

Individual staff members

Personal objectives

Regular 121s

Personal development reviews

Business Units

Service Plans

Activities

Operational performance indicators

5. <u>Assurance</u>

5.1 *What?*
Assurance is an evaluated opinion, based on evidence, on the Council's governance, risk management and internal control framework. In simple terms, assurance is about knowing what is actually going on and having strong evidence to prove it. The Council needs assurance to ensure that its risk management, governance and service delivery processes are supporting achievement of its objectives whilst also operating in accordance with statutory requirements. The framework included at Appendix C provides a mechanism for this and includes an overview of what and how assurance is undertaken and by whom.

5.2 *How?*

5.2.1 *Individual Leadership and Management – Directors/Business Managers* responsible for:
- ensuring that the assurance arrangements for the Council are fit for purpose and appropriately support delivery of the Council's ambitions;
- ensuring that senior officers have regard to assurance relating to the Council's wholly owned companies in their capacity as client officer and report any issues or concerns relating to the operation of these organisations;
- day to day management and controlling of activities within the Council;
- delivery of services in line with the Code of Corporate Governance;
- escalating key governance concerns or weaknesses, as they occur.

Business Managers are expected to comply with the requirements set out in the assurance framework, unless any concerns or weaknesses have already been escalated by alternative arrangements e.g. internal/external audit or corporate oversight function.

Where concerns are escalated managers are required to identify mitigating actions and/or additional support required to increase the level of assurance.

5.2.2 *Corporate oversight – SLT.* Corporate assurance considers the organisation as a whole and is concerned with strategic matters. Members of SLT are responsible for ensuring that effective governance arrangements are in place to deliver Council services. Actions taken to ensure this include the following:

- the Council has put in place policies and procedures to guide/advise business units on governance, e.g. a Risk Management Policy and Toolkit;
- SLT to receive an annual update report from the S151 Officer (or deputy thereof) in the form of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which provides assurance around the existing governance arrangements and systems of internal control. Any areas for improvement around governance are noted within the statement, together with actions to improve. Updates around progress relating to actions are provided to SLT as part of quarterly assurance reporting;
- information to be provided to ensure services are compliant and are meeting statutory and/or defined organisational requirements. To help manage assurance SLT is provided

with data and information to show how well corporate based activities are being undertaken across the organisation against set expectations, policy or regulatory considerations. SLT to receive regular reports providing assurance in relation to risk management; Legionella, health and safety, recurring contracts, audit actions (tiaa), fraud and business continuity and other aspects of governance as required.

- assurance reports will normally be quarterly. However, SLT may require less frequent reporting where robust and effective arrangements are in place, or more frequent reporting for high risk areas or those where there is concern.

5.2.3 **Internal audit** – To provide further assurance the Council contract tiaa to provide independent and objective opinion/assurance on service delivery arrangements, management of risks, design and operation of controls, performance and governance arrangements. Work undertaken by tiaa is scheduled on a risk basis annually and may not cover all the areas requiring assurance in any one year. However, all significant risk areas will be covered over a three-year period.

6.   Data Quality

6.1   Business Managers are responsible for ensuring the quality and accuracy of the data in the systems for which they are responsible.

6.2   The performance team administers the targets, thresholds and key data using Microsoft Access. Permissions within the system allow for separation of duties between the input and authorisation of data being entered. When authorising data Business Managers are confirming the data entered is accurate.

6.3   Data quality checks in respect of Microsoft Access are normally undertaken by the performance team at least quarterly to ensure that:

- data sign off sheets (guidance) have been agreed for each performance indicator included within the system;
- KPIs and their targets are reviewed as part of the annual Community Plan refresh
- operational targets are reviewed at least annually by the Business Manager and respective Director;
- details of any new indicators are agreed with the relevant Business Manager(s);
- the accuracy of data is maintained by undertaking a sample check of data held in the database.
- new users of the system will be added at the written request of the Business Manager with permissions approved by a systems administrator

6.4   Reference should also be made to the Council's Data Quality Policy.

7.   <u>Review</u>

This framework will be reviewed every three years or more frequently if required in response to audit feedback or changes in other NSDC policies, procedures or agreement.

Corporate Planning Performance & Assurance Framework (2025)

- **Jan** — Q2 Performance Reports to Committee; Committees receive Draft Budget; Business planning presentations to SLT
- **Feb** — Performance Appraisals - Directors; Q3 Performance Report to PPIC; Q3 Performance Reports to SLT
- **March** — Performance Appraisals – BMs; Q3 Performance Report to Cabinet
- **April** — Corporate Planning Performance & Assurance framework
- **May** — Performance Appraisals - employees; Statement of Accounts and summary of performance completed.
- **June** — Performance Appraisals BMs - employees; Year End Performance Reports to SLT; Year-end Performance Reports Committee
- **July** — Analysis review of Resident Feedback; Start of Budget Process; Resident satisfaction – obtain feedback.
- **Aug** — Qtr1 Performance Report to SLT; Review of Community Plan in light of Resident Feedback; Issue Staff Survey (bi-annual) and internal support survey.
- **Sep** — Analysis Review of Staff Survey (bi-annual) and internal support survey; Q1 Performance Reports to Committee
- **Oct** — Corporate Planning Performance & Assurance framework
- **Nov** — Business planning development; Qtr2 Performance Report to SLT; PPIC receive Community Plan and final draft budget.
- **Dec** — Business planning development; Business planning commences; Community Plan and Budget papers submitted to full Council for approval.

Performance reporting and business planning processes

Community Plan

To facilitate the management of performance the following arrangements will be put in place:

- following on from the development of the Community Plan, a basket of KPIs will be approved so that performance progress can be measured against the high level ambitions agreed by SLT and Members;
- KPIs will be maintained ensuring that data is input as soon as possible after the quarter end;
- The Performance Team will produce quarterly performance reports on KPIs including commentary and analysis. These reports will include appendices relating to corporate performance and assurance;
- SLT will discuss performance and progress towards objectives prior to reports being submitted to PPIC;
- Members will receive KPI reports and provide commentary/feedback to inform future direction of Council activity;
- the Community Plan will be refreshed on an annual basis.

Business Plans

To ensure appropriate linkage with the Community Plan the following arrangements will be put in place:

- Business Managers will identify PIs which they use to understand and measure the performance of their Business Unit as part of, and identified in, their business plan;
- Business Managers will ensure PIs are signed off by their Director as part of the signing off of their business plan;
- PIs will be maintained in the most appropriate place for the business unit, which is currently done via Microsoft Access
- Data from operational PIs will be used by Business Managers to report progress to their Director in a format agreed between the Director and their BM;
- Business plans will be refreshed annually to include a summary of the previous year's performance.

Wholly owned companies/arms length organisations (Arkwood, Active4Today)

To provide the necessary levels of assurance to the Council, client officers will ensure that:

- performance indicators are agreed between the client officer lead and wholly owned company (through/following approval of the business plan/service level agreement (SLA));
- PIs are maintained onMicrosoft Access, with the organisation given the access to input; ;
- regular meetings are held between the client officer and the organisation to discuss performance against the SLA/business plan using data collected
- Reference to wholly owned companies/arm's length organisations is included in the business plan as appropriate.

Council performance management

In addition to performance data generated by the Performance Team and SLT will also have regard to:

- quarterly sickness reporting;
- 6 monthly Customer Feedback reports (including complaints), service requests, and requests for information;
- financial performance reporting; and
- Health and Safety updates provided on a six monthly basis.

Assurance reporting

As well as considering performance related matters SLT will also have regard to assurance, arrangements relating to review/reporting as set out below:

- quarterly assurance provided by the Performance Team in respect of risk management, Legionella, health and safety, recurring contracts, audit actions (Assurance Lincolnshire), Fraud, and Business continuity. Assurance arrangements relating to other aspects of governance, e.g. policies, projects, contracts and equality and diversity will be developed as appropriate;
- actions identified for progression within the AGS;
- monthly Legionella assurance reports;
- outcomes from quarterly strategic risk reviews;

Role of the Performance Team (Transformation & Service Improvement)

To facilitate corporate planning, performance management and assurance management the performance team will:

- maintain the Council's Performance Management System;
- manage the business planning process;
- undertake assurance in terms of KPIs, strategic risks, business planning and Legionella and other aspects of governance identified by SLT and produce reports to the required timescales;
- provide support to client officers in relation to the collation/presentation of data for performance managing wholly owned companies/arms length organisations;
- provide performance support for Directorate Management Meetings and work with Business Managers each quarter to gain assurance on performance, risk, partnerships, policies and strategies, contracts, audit recommendations, health and safety and equality and diversity and other matters as required;
- provide quarterly reports for SLT and members on progress against the Community Plan, including detailed analysis of KPIs;
- provide appendices to the quarterly reports for SLT to include assurance;
- provide performance support for Directorate Management Meetings as required
- provide advice to Business Managers regarding recording, monitoring and managing of local PI data referenced in their business plan.

Assurance Map/Framework

WHO	Individual leadership and management	Corporate oversight (SLT through corporate support)	Internal audit
WHAT	Day to day responsibility for managing and controlling activities	Regular, appropriate and proportionate review of policies, procedures, risk and performance	Independent assurance on service delivery arrangements, risk, design & operation controls, performance & governance

HOW			
HOW	Business planning	Quarterly review of strategic risk and corporate assurance	Annual audit plan
	Regular review of new legislation		Annual risk assessment to inform audit Plan
	Identification of key risks	Regular meetings of Risk Management Group with exception reporting to SLT	All areas covered with three year period
	Activity matched to corporate priorities	Quarterly performance reporting on key indicators to SLT & elected members	
	Robust performance management	Annual Statement of Accounts includes section highlighting/summarising key achievements and performance	
	Effective budgeting	Annual Governance Statement	
	Business continuity planning in place	Annual Risk Management Workshop	
	Annual appraisals with individual staff		

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