

Council Plan 2023-2027 – A summary of progress by objective for the period ending 31st December 2023

A Great Place to Access Good Public Services

*The following progress has been made on **Assist and influence other public partners to improve their services in the district***

Actively participate, nurture relationships, and maximise benefits for NEDDC residents in partnerships such as Health, Economy, Resilience, etc.

Voluntary and community grants recommendations approved by panel; provisional offer letters sent to meet Derbyshire Compact. NEDDC Housing Strategy have agreed to contribute £13k towards the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centre grant (£22,377). (Programmes)

Sale of former Bridge St Depot Site completed on 10.01.24 to Derbyshire Police for new SNT Headquarters. New NHS Health Clinic being considered on remaining Council owned land at Bridge St Clay Cross. (Property & Estates)

Collate and analyse district wide data to inform improvements

Derbyshire Observatory area profiles dated from 2014 being used to inform of trends in a range of local indicators. Residents Survey (3269 respondents) being analysed. (Performance Team)

Directly assist residents and businesses to access all available public services and support

Armed Forces Community (AFC) Service Providers Consultation event held on 05/12/23 to consult on AFC needs in the District. This was supported by a social media campaign.

Administering £500 Community Recovery Grants to residents affected by Storm Babet. As at 21/12/23 98 grants awarded, totalling £53,000. 138 applications received to date, 31 not eligible. 4 business applications processed each receiving £2,500. This has been supported by a communications strategy (Economic development & Communications)

Contact Centre calls answered at first point of contact 81% (target 90%). 772 in person visits which is a significant increase on previous quarter, due to RHL moving into Mill Lane (Customer services)

Legal continue to support other teams in addressing ASB throughout the district. A closure order was made in December in Pilsley and 2 tree Preservation Orders were also made (Legal)

Revised promotional material and website information available to the public regarding damp and mould, changed the procedure for receipt of complaints where damp and mould is identified and devised a landlord checklist and guidance to address. (Environmental Health)

Refuse collection dates and times including Christmas collections all promoted by social media in December, email sign up campaign carried out as part of the campaign. Web pages have been developed. Calendar dates now provided in the

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NEWS have seen missed bins drop over Christmas catch up period from 387 in 2023 to 262 in 2024 (Streetscene).

The following progress has been made on **Continually improve Council services to deliver excellence and value for money**

Fiscally responsible and efficient

Processed new Housing Benefit (HB) & Council Tax Reduction (CTR) claims in 16.8 days (target 20). Processed change of circumstances for HB & CTR in 4.2 days, against a target of 6. Council Tax collection rate is 83.5% (on track - 97% by 31.3.24). Business rates 82.8% (on track 97% by 31.3.24). (Revs and Bens)

Implemented improved workflow procedures to enable more accurate tracking of payments for Environmental Permitting, and to take enforcement action where necessary for non-payment. (Environmental Health)

Capital receipts received in December totalled £166k. To date this year, we have generated £1.775m. The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is now drafted and going forward for approval. The budget position through to the end of 2025/26 is manageable. Future years become more challenging due to the uncertainty around national funding. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2023 requires the Council's S151 Officer to comment on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves on an annual basis. The S151 Officer has confirmed in the MTFP that estimates are robust and reserve levels adequate at this time. (Finance)

In ICT, the production server hosts have been replaced. The next estimated replacement will be in 5 years' time, although move to Cloud hosting may be viable by then and costs will be re-evaluated. (ICT)

Working on tender process through Orbit 4 for gym equipment replacement. We have secured an additional £250k from Sport England towards Clay Cross Active to de-risk the project (financially). Secured £130k from the swimming pool support fund via Sport England to off-set Gas/electric costs. Submitted a second bid for capital funding of £105k for efficiency improvements at Dronfield Sports Centre and awaiting decision. A further bid submitted to Town Deal for £110k for 240 additional solar panels. Developing a 5-year capital investment programme (Leisure)

Bid submitted for Protec funding that will use Virtual Reality to showcase Dronfield public realm works in conjunction with private sector works in the town as a way of showcasing what the finished works will look like. Awaiting outcome (Programmes)

Ongoing Disposals/Capital Receipts Programme; £552,410 - completed to date this year, £101,500 with legal pending completion, £279,000 approval obtained, £8m actively being reviewed and brought through Asset Management Board process. Major disposals now being brought forward are Pioneer House Wingerworth and Manor Farm Dronfield - both for 100% affordable housing schemes.

Eckington Depot Relocation - ongoing with target date to be operational in new premises by end of 2025. (Property and Estates)

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Listen to customers (Residents and Businesses) to improve services

Customer satisfaction survey analysis showed just under 60% of clients were satisfied with the Environmental Health service overall. The area with highest satisfaction was the way officers explained initially what could or could not be done, however customers were least satisfied with how well they were kept informed of progress. Areas for improvement will be explored during Q4 and inform the service improvement plan. (Environmental Health)

Customer Services team visiting communities to promote Self Service. Elections and Revenues also participating in these drop-in sessions. (Customer services)

Customer Satisfaction Survey completed with over 361 responses. The service achieved a score of 88.69% which is 5% higher than 2022 and far higher than the public sector benchmark of 76.6% (Leisure)

AD for Planning is attending introductory meetings with Parish Council chairs and clerks (approximately 10 to date) and collating feedback on the performance of the Planning Service. (Planning)

3,269 residents completed the Residents' Survey, analysis commenced. (Performance)

Ensure good governance and transparency in all we do

3 complaint Internal reviews received, all dealt with in standard. 48 formal complaints received this quarter, 85% dealt with in standard. 1 upheld Ombudsman complaint. (Customer services)

Ombudsman reports reviewed by the Monitoring Officer have been referred to the Standards Committee for oversight. The Annual Constitution review got underway in this period, expected completion for May Council meeting. Scrutiny work plan currently being worked up following work done in the first half of the year and successful recruitment of a Scrutiny Officer. Electoral Services have completed a Polling Place review in this period and are undergoing preparations for several elections in 2024. Work has also commenced on cyber preparedness as this will be a high-profile target during 2024. (Governance)

ICT are currently testing Exchange Online, and the rollout of mobile device management is continuing. Training exercise with ICT staff has fed into this year's work plan / forward schedule of change to make resilience improvements, including moving to cloud Exchange online and M365 security products.

Cyber event preparedness is a strategic risk for the Council. Work is ongoing in this area; current focus is on high-risk areas including elections. Gloucester cyber event lessons learned report has been taken to SMT. (Finance)

ICT are currently testing Exchange Online which provides more resilience along with Microsoft Defender End point security and Web filtering also being tested. Internal Audits completed: VAT and Treasury Management. Both received substantial assurance (Finance). IT for Members - Reasonable Assurance (ICT)

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Equalities and data protection training for Streetscene operatives commenced on 05/12/23, to continue until February 2024 (9 sessions). A series of communications were put together to mark International Day of People with Disabilities (03/12/23). (Performance)

Modernise and innovate services to continually improve

Hybrid Mail now live in several departments and proving highly effective. Roll out across the Council continues (Customer services)

An Equalities TEAMS channel has been set up and departmental representatives sought in December to cascade information, share learning, and receive comments/suggestions (Performance)

A review of all website information and e-forms for Food Safety has been undertaken and improvements will be progressed in Q4 to improve the customer journey when looking for information and reporting issues etc. (Comms & Environmental Health)

Further development of the integration between online webforms to the Licensing back-office system has taken place enabling Taxi Renewal applications to be completed online. Compared to this period last year we have seen an increase in the number of electronic Taxi Licensing applications. This integration has increased efficiency, avoiding double entry of application information (Environmental Health)

Prepared a report for Cabinet considering the use of Planning Performance Agreements to recover the cost of processing applications (Planning)

Maintain a motivated and skilled workforce

Ongoing training for Streetscene staff and good discussions taking place. Improvements suggested by workforce. (Streetscene)

Ongoing CPD training is taking place within the Environmental Health Service. We are supporting 7 colleagues to completed training and gain the necessary experience to become qualified EHOs. In this quarter 1 of the 7 became the first officer in many years to successfully complete the qualification. (Environmental Health)

The Biennial staff event took place in December which was incredibly well attended and successful. Work continues on the People Strategy and Talent Pipeline and new connections have been established with local universities. The annual appraisal process concludes at the end of December (Human resources)

Several staff across the organisation are undertaking L3 and L5 ILM apprenticeship courses including a degree apprenticeship (Leisure, Environmental Health, Planning and Programmes).

Team Meetings now in place for Contracts & Facilities Management, Estates and Engineers. One Estates officer now on day release on MSc. Property Valuation & Management. One engineer now on HNC in Land Engineering (Property and Estates)