

CPC AR Code	Additional Recommendations	CPC Key Recommendation Code	Key Service Action	Progress Status	Directorate
Develop a more stretching savings strategy to get back to a sustainable balanced budget over the next three years and ensure there is sufficient one-off resource available to drive a single corporate transformation programme based on strict Invest					
AR1.1	Develop a robust savings plan that addresses the funding gap as well as the financial pressures and risks that have been identified so that they can be managed and mitigated against (AR1.1)	KR1	Develop a stretching savings strategy working with Chief Officer Group colleagues to deliver a sustainable balanced budget over the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan aligned to the transformation programme.	On Track	Finance
			Initial review of Budget Monitoring report has been completed. Following discussions with Chief Officer Group the revised budget monitoring reporting will be implemented from April 2026, taking into account feedback from Directors with regards to their own areas.	Completed	Finance
AR1.2	Consider the creation of a properly resourced single transformation programme, making effective use of one-off resources for projects that meet strict Invest to Save criteria (AR1.2)	KR1	Underway - stocktake of all transformation activity considered at Chief Officer Group with status and next steps agreed. Consideration underway for future years' transformation alignment with the Medium Term Financial Plan and organisational change.	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
AR1.3	Explore opportunities to deepen and broaden work with partners to develop positive approaches to prevention and early intervention to reduce demand for the most expensive services (AR1.3)	KR1	Development of a neighbourhood-working model underway with city partners	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
AR1.4	Tie opportunities arising from Smart City management more closely to financial planning to ensure efficiency and productivity so that gains are quantified and realised (AR1.4)	KR1	Smart City activity now considered in light of transformation activity and aligns closely to identified savings plans.	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
AR1.5	The Smart City strategy must continue to prioritise digital inclusion, easier access to services, and stronger resident engagement (AR1.5)	KR1	5G Innovation Regions Project delivering 5G Enabled Events and Connected Intelligent Transport Systems	Completed	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
			Development of IT solutions, including OPENPortal, enhancements to online applications and digital access for customers including ebilling.	On Track	Finance
			Gigabit fibre connectivity delivered to over 95% of premises across Sunderland and ongoing expansion of WI-FI and 5G Networks across the city	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
Build on the work undertaken with the Belong Network to co-produce with residents and trusted local organisations a strong narrative that generates an authentic and collective sense of belonging, and an agreed set of practical actions that make					
AR2.1	Recognising the overall improvements in resident satisfaction, continue to address the variable resident satisfaction and perceptions – geographic, service specific, cohorts – which may be a symptom of a wider disconnect between public institutions and lived experiences (AR2.1)	KR2	Deliver and commission services and activities to improve quality of life and resident satisfaction in all areas of the city.	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
AR2.2	Seize opportunities to further embed co-design of solutions with communities and key delivery partners, particularly in areas such as community cohesion, public safety, skills training, health, etc (AR2.2)	KR2	Deliver mobilisation meetings with key partners across the city to establish, agree and embed clear referral pathways into the Connect to Work programme, ensuring strong collaboration and shared understanding of roles and processes.	Completed	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
			Develop a five-year Skills Strategy for the city that focuses on the priorities for adult skills in the city and includes a delivery plan which will set out the actions adult skills partners and providers will undertake to deliver the ambitions of the strategy.	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
			Strengthen partnership working by bringing together VCSE organisations, elected members and local partners to collaborate on the development and delivery of community resilience priorities	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
AR2.3	Rebuild community confidence and engagement through the Stronger Communities Framework and support the Sunderland Partnership to deliver shared campaigns and a unified communication framework that connects regeneration to residents' lives (AR2.3)	KR2	Capture and curate authentic stories from Sunderland's residents to build a unifying narrative that strengthens community pride	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
			Develop an engagement programme pipeline that reflects the place (geographic) and service (theme) priorities of the people of Sunderland.	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
			Develop and implement a partnership Social Cohesion Strategy for the City (now published as the Sunderland Stronger Communities Framework)	Completed	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
			Identify ways in which the Citi Comms Group can support and build the VCSE sector's marketing and communications capacity	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
			Implement an enhanced programme of Community Engagement	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs

			Strengthen resident engagement by utilising the Commonplace digital platform through initiatives such as the Your Sunderland hub, to gather community insights, support transparent consultation, and enhance participation	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
			Strengthen the role and work of the Sunderland Partnership Citi Comms Group	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
AR2.4	Accelerate the shift in narrative from 'programmes and projects' to 'places and people' – focusing on what a package of interventions will actually mean for local communities and how it will improve residents' lives (AR2.4)	KR2	Updated 'story-telling' approach to community communications and engagement in place with a focus on demonstrating impact.	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
AR2.5	Community cohesion should not be treated as a standalone programme, but it should be woven into every aspect of planning, service delivery, and communication (AR2.5)	KR2	Stronger Communities activity development and service contributions embedded into the council's annual service planning process, the Sunderland Partnership's annual City Plan assurance process and the Citi Comms Group's work and activity.	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
AR2.6	By building on the successful partnership with the Belong Network, the council should co-produce with residents and trusted local organisations a powerful and authentic narrative that fosters a shared sense of belonging; and a clear set of practical actions tailored to the needs and priorities of each community. Trusted community organisations and the VCSE sector should then be placed at the heart of delivery. The council can also build on and scale proven approaches – such as the SARA model – to empower communities across the city by transferring assets, providing micro-finance and supporting the wider development of social capital - enabling the VCSE sector to lead wherever possible (AR2.6)	KR2	Maintain connections with VCSE and support where necessary in terms of their capacity to continue to deliver/expand delivery of key activities and services within community settings	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
Deepen the Sunderland Partnership by more fully exploring data trends to inform future priority setting. Also focus on a more rigorous approach to setting SMART targets in agreed delivery plans with clear lead owners and mutual accountability					
AR3.1	Deepen the Sunderland Partnership by more fully exploring data trends to inform future priority setting. Also focus on a more rigorous approach to setting SMART targets in agreed delivery plans with clear lead owners and mutual accountability (AR3.1)	KR3	Initial Impact Framework in place aligned with City Plan ambitions (as the basis for organisational quarterly performance monitoring). Revised framework under development with the aim of providing better oversight to City Board members, and more informative and transparent accountability to residents. Rebuild community confidence and engagement through the Stronger Communities Framework and support the Sunderland Partnership to deliver shared campaigns and a unified communication framework that connects regeneration to residents' lives. Coordinate delivery of the Stronger Communities Strategic Framework	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
AR3.2	Strengthen shared system leadership by bringing greater political leadership into the Sunderland Partnership and City Board and ensure all partners remain aligned with the long-term city plan beyond individual projects (AR3.2)	KR3	Review of Partnership and Board structures, links and ways of working underway.	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
AR3.3	Both the Sunderland Partnership and the City Board benefit from good engagement from most partners. However, there is scope to enhance their impact by introducing stronger political leadership; securing a clearer shared commitment to system-wide leadership; and ensuring more consistent and equitable contributions from all partners (AR3.3)	KR3	Please see AR1.3 and AR3.2.		
Complete the development of a workforce strategy that supports the existing workforce and plans for the future, including recruitment and retention, talent management, learning and development, and succession planning					
AR4.1	Finalise and implement a workforce strategy that supports the current workforce while planning for the future covering recruitment and retention, talent management, learning and development, and succession planning (AR4.1)	KR4	Deliver the Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022-2025)	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
			Deliver the Learning & Development programme and Organisational Development activity	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
AR4.2	Further develop the appraisal system so that there is a clear 'golden thread' linking individual objectives to strategic outcomes and turning appraisals into genuine personal development plans (AR4.2)	KR4	Appraisal process review underway with a focus on strengthening the golden thread between strategy, service delivery and individuals.	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services

Further develop a structured management development programme across the council; and review Member development to enhance their role as community connectors to drive forward delivery at local levels					
AR5.1	Closely monitor leadership capacity given the demands of large capital programmes, ongoing transformation and external social pressures; build in more time for strategic reflection (both internally and with partners) and for reviewing impact (AR5.1)	KR5	Remit and structure of Corporate Leadership Group reviewed to facilitate more collective planning and reflection. For partnership level please see AR3.2	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
AR5.2	Address variations in management performance and culture by using the 360-degree feedback investment to create cross-directorate cohorts of managers for focused development (AR5.2)	KR5	People Strategy 2026–2031 under development including the priority of building effective leadership.	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
AR5.3	Review and enhance Member development to strengthen their roles as community connectors, enabling them to drive local delivery and maximise their impact in committees and in their wards. As part of this process, review the Area Committee structure to empower individual communities (AR5.3)	KR5	Develop and ensure delivery of Area Committee Area Plans during 2026 - 2027 to support the delivery of the City Plan and other significant strategies for the city.	Completed	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
			Develop and ensure delivery of Area Committee Area Plans during 2027 - 2030 to support the delivery of the City Plan and other significant strategies for the city.	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
			Member induction/development on the Area Committee role	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
			Review the role of Area Committees and the elected members alongside partners and community representatives, to produce refreshed terms of reference. Particular focus on data, insight and engagement, to bolster resident engagement and links to communities to support the development and delivery of Area Committee Area Plans and any priorities at a local or neighbourhood level. Additionally review how Area Committees are operating within revised boundary areas	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
Produce and deliver a programme of governance reviews (encompassing Overview and Scrutiny, Full Council, Area Committees and the council's relationship with its arms-length organisations) with cross party engagement and using independent					
AR6.1	Strengthen Overview and Scrutiny with greater pre-decision involvement; a work programme aligned to city plan outcomes; stronger portfolio holder engagement and senior officer support to enable appropriate challenge (AR6.1)	KR6	Implement and embed recommendations from the Scrutiny review.	Completed	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
AR6.2	Keep governance arrangements of arms-length organisations under review to ensure the council, and therefore the residents' interests, continue to be protected (AR6.2)	KR6	Lead on programme to continually improve accessibility to all, to enable wide participation in elections (e.g. information gathering and awareness raising).	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
AR6.3	Consider reviewing the council's constitutional arrangements on a cross-party basis following the next local elections (AR6.3)	KR6	Review ready to be implemented at the appropriate time following elections in May 2026.	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
Key Recommendation - Other					
AR7.1	Review whether there can be more transparency around performance against targets under the corporate plan so that key stakeholders have a clear line of sight (AR7.1)	KR7	Chief Executive and Chief Officer dashboards under development aligned with annual target refresh process now completed (ensuring metrics include clear targets, KPIs and target rationales).	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
AR7.2	Continue to deepen relationships with NECA and its member organisations to maximise regional opportunities and funding for Sunderland (AR7.2)	KR7	Effective relationships in place at all levels with participation in newer arrangements to foster effective working relationships and officer links under each NECA portfolio.	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs
AR7.3	Considering the changing external environment, keep policies and practices under review to protect the safety of both Members and officers (AR7.3)	KR7	Health and Safety (including Member Safety Protocol) arrangements are regularly reviewed including participation in national programmes and learning from best practice.	On Track	Smart Cities and Enabling Services
AR7.4	The council should develop a consistent, organisation-wide outcomes framework that also extends across partnerships to ensure measurable improvements in services that directly affect residents (AR7.4)	KR7	Please see AR3.1	On Track	Strategy and Corporate Affairs