

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 10 February 2021

Report Title	Draft Vision Statement
Chair of the Vision and Culture Task and Finish Group	Councillor Russell Roberts
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List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present a draft vision statement for the North Northamptonshire Council for endorsement by the Committee.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 It is good practice for large organisations, including councils, to set out a clear vision for the future. A vision statement can help make a connection between councils, their residents, staff, councillors, and partner agencies. If used properly, a vision can help inspire the right people and drive an organisation forwards in a purposeful direction.
- 2.2 This report proposes the following draft vision statement for North Northamptonshire Council:
- “We will work with the local community to make North Northamptonshire a place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life, driven by excellent public services. We will strive for an area that is safe and attractive with a thriving economy and green environment.”***
- 2.3 The draft vision statement is the result of the work of the Vision and Culture Task and Finish Group. Its development has been heavily influenced by broad stakeholder engagement.
- 2.4 The vision statement, if endorsed by this Committee, will technically remain in draft until it can be considered by the new Council for formal adoption through the constitutional process. Its endorsement at this stage will however assist an early dialogue around the long-term aspirations for North Northamptonshire. It will also help provide future waypoints for the organisation.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Executive Committee:

- a) Endorse the following draft vision statement for North Northamptonshire Council:

“We will work with the local community to make North Northamptonshire a place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life, driven by excellent public services. We will strive for an area that is safe and attractive with a thriving economy and green environment.”

3.2 *(Reason for Recommendations –*

- a. The draft vision statement is a proposed output set out in the Terms of Reference for the Vision and Culture Task and Finish Group. It is also good practice to develop a vision statement.)*

4. Report Background

Vision and Culture Task and Finish Group

- 4.1 A Member Task and Finish Group started work in July 2020 to help develop a vision and culture for the new North Northamptonshire Council. The Group was chaired by Councillor Russell Roberts and also included Councillors John Farrar, Martin Griffiths and Ken Harrington. The terms of reference sought to establish a high-level vision statement and set of values for the new council.
- 4.2 Progress has been made in developing a set of draft values. However, the Task and Finish Group felt it was appropriate that the Council’s new leadership team have the opportunity to carry out further work to shape them. In particular, to shape those that focus on how the organisation will create an environment that supports its staff, allowing them to be their very best.

Stakeholder Feedback

- 4.3 The development of the draft vision statement set out in 2.2 and 3.1 of this report has been shaped by stakeholders. Several stakeholder groups met in workshops during the latter quarter of 2020 and provided valuable feedback. This has been used to inform the development of the draft vision (and values).
- 4.4 The workshops were attended by a broad range of stakeholders and positive feedback was received after the events. Members may wish to note therefore that the process of developing a draft vision and set of values has initiated a positive dialogue with representatives from the local community.
- 4.5 Further information about the stakeholder engagement process has been included in section 6.4 of this report.

Local Government Association - Guidance

- 4.6 In recognition of the challenges facing councils when embarking on the process of developing their vision, the Local Government Association (LGA) has provided some guidance. Key advice from the LGA regarding the development of a vision statement for a council is:
- (a) Think long-term and be future focussed
 - (b) Be ambitious and inspiring
 - (c) Keep the vision clear and concise
 - (d) Be confident and conversational – to help initiate local debate
 - (e) Have purpose, that is, focus on the ‘why’ not the ‘who’ or ‘what’
- 4.7 The LGA’s advice acknowledges that not everyone will agree with a council’s vision, but if it triggers a debate and dialogue, then this itself can be a positive outcome. Nevertheless, it is considered good practice for organisations, including councils, to set out a clear vision for the future. A vision statement can help make a connection between councils, their residents, staff, and partner agencies. If used properly, it can help inspire the right people and drive an organisation forwards in a purposeful direction. In essence, a vision statement clarifies what an organisation is aiming for, setting out its purpose at the highest level.
- The draft vision and wider policy framework**
- 4.8 The vision statement, if endorsed by this Committee, will effectively remain in draft until it can be considered by the new North Northamptonshire Council for potential formal adoption through the constitutional process.
- 4.9 Members will be mindful of the fact that the vision statement is just one part of the corporate policy framework that will shape the future direction of the Council. Agreeing what are often referred to as a set of values, strategic objectives, corporate priorities, and a whole range of supporting policies will together help shape the future direction of the Council.
- 4.10 A corporate planning framework is being developed and officers will work with Members so that a Corporate Strategy / Plan can be approved following the election of the new Council. A Corporate Strategy / Plan will usually contain specific, measurable, time-bound objectives and targets. There will therefore be plenty of opportunity for Members to get involved in defining the Council’s future direction.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 This report delivers a specific outcome as set out in the terms of reference for the Vision and Culture Task and Finish Group. The main choice the Shadow Executive faces is whether to endorse the draft vision statement at this stage.
- 5.2 An early endorsement can help transmit a signal about the aspirations that are taking shape for North Northamptonshire Council and the area it serves. It can also help trigger a debate in the community about what the future aspirations of the Council and area it serves should be. Given the transitional period local councils are in, it can provide a good basis on which to give staff an aspirational waypoint on which to focus. Importantly, it will provide

reassurance to the stakeholders, who invested their valuable time engaging in a dialogue, that they are being listened to.

- 5.3 Given that the draft vision statement will need to navigate the new Council's constitutional processes, the benefits of early endorsement are deemed to outweigh the risks.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals set out in this report at this time.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals set out in this report.

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

6.4 Consultation

Broad Stakeholder Engagement

- 6.4.1 The work of the Task and Finish Group was informed by several stakeholder focus group workshops that were held in November 2020. These comprised of stakeholders from a broad range of groups, including:

- Town and Parish Councils
- Borough and District Council Members
- Voluntary sector, local businesses, and education representatives
- Employees and Trade Unions
- Children and Young People's Panel

- 6.4.2 The focus groups were asked to consider several prompts, including:

- The ambition for the new council and what 'best' looks like
- What should be the purpose of the new council
- What would success look like
- Ideas on areas to include in a vision statement
- What values are considered most important

- 6.4.3 The results and feedback from the stakeholder workshops were used to shape the draft vision for North Northamptonshire, set out in 2.2 and 3.1 of this report. It is important to note that a great deal of information was produced by the stakeholder workshops. This information is being used to help shape and refine a set of draft values for the new Council. This is however considered outside the scope of this report.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 None. Note that before a vision is formally adopted by North Northamptonshire Council it will need to navigate the Council's Constitutional procedures.

6.6 **Climate Impact**

6.6.1 The draft vision includes a reference to 'striving' for a 'green environment'. This was a theme that came out of the stakeholder workshops. The draft vision aims to help clarify the Council's aspirations in this regard.

6.7 **Community Impact**

6.7.1 The vision statement, if formally adopted by the new Council, could have a significant positive impact on the community in the future. It should be noted however that the vision will need to be supported by a set of values, strategic objectives, priorities, and policies, all of which will need to be developed in due course.

7. **Background Papers**

7.1 The draft vision statement is a result of the Vision and Culture Task and Finish Group. The Terms of Reference for this Task and Finish Group were included as Appendix 5 of a report (item 6 of the agenda) considered and approved at the North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive Committee held on Thursday 11th June 2020.

7.2 The LGA Guidance referred to in sections 4.6 and 4.7 can be found at [FACTSHEET - Vision Setting.pdf \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

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