



## EXECUTIVE 15 July 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>The Corporate Plan</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Cllr Jason Smithers, Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Guy Holloway</b> <b>Assistant Chief Executive</b> <a href="mailto:guy.holloway@northnorthants.gov.uk">guy.holloway@northnorthants.gov.uk</a>

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Forward Plan Reference (if yes to Key Decision)</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1974</b>	

### List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan – Indicative process and timeline

Appendix 2 – Corporate Planning Framework (Example)

Appendix 3 – Consultation and engagement - Stakeholders (example)

### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1. To set out an indicative process and timeline for the development and adoption of a Corporate Plan for North Northamptonshire Council.
- 1.2. The report provides background as to what a Corporate Plan is, the type of information that it could contain, why it is important and suggests a process for its development, reflecting the requirements of the Council's Constitution and good practice.

### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 The Corporate Plan, sometimes referred to as a Corporate Strategy, forms a central part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework as set out in the Council's Constitution.

- 2.2 The content of a Corporate Plan is not set out by statute. The Council has flexibility as to what it contains, its format and how it develops the Plan. It is important however that the Council follows the processes set out in the Constitution. Executive members will also be mindful of good practice and will likely wish to make the most of the opportunities available in developing the plan.
- 2.3 A Corporate Plan will typically, but not always, set out the vision for the Council, its values, define its overarching strategic objectives, set out its priorities and associated actions, outcomes, performance indicators and targets.
- 2.4 The Corporate Plan provides a vehicle to set out the context and narrative of the Council so that all stakeholders understand the Council's current position, where it aims to go and how it intends to get there. Members may also wish to include information about its approach to transformation, future public engagement and other areas considered important.
- 2.5 One of the opportunities facing the Council is the process of engaging with stakeholders and partners in determining the strategic objectives and priorities of the new Council. There is an opportunity to reach out to a broad set of stakeholders to help define where the Council needs to go; an opportunity to engage in a dialogue and to listen to partner agencies, residents and parish and town councils. There is, therefore, merit in determining an engagement approach that best delivers this objective but, at the same time, does so in a timely and efficient manner.
- 2.6 This report sets out an indicative process and timetable that members can use as a guide – included as Appendix 1.
- 2.7 The Corporate Plan, once shaped by the relevant Executive Advisory Panel and consultation and engagement feedback, will be written and approved in draft by the Executive. It will then need to be formally adopted by Full Council.
- 2.8 It would seem prudent for the Council to adopt the Corporate Plan in time for the budget consultation process in December 2021. In reality, a draft Corporate Plan would also be useful in helping shape the preparations for the budget consultation process.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:
- a) Notes the purpose, importance and potential contents of the Corporate Plan.
  - b) Approves the indicative process and timetable set out in Appendix 1.

#### Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.2 To enable to the timely development and adoption of a Corporate Plan for North Northamptonshire Council.

## **4. Background Information**

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### **What is the Corporate Plan?**

- 4.1 The Corporate Plan forms a central part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework as set out in the Council's Constitution. The Corporate Plan sits at the top of the Council's corporate policy framework, overarching all other Council policies. The relationship and cascade between the Corporate Plan and other Council strategies and plans is shown diagrammatically as Appendix 2.
- 4.2 In simple terms, the Corporate Plan sets out what the Council is about, where it wants to go, both as a Council and in terms of the outcomes for the area and people who the Council represents. It sets out the policy choices that have been made or need to be considered in order to get there.

### **What type of information should the Corporate Plan contain?**

- 4.3 Some councils set out their Corporate Plan on just a handful of pages; others use many more. The length and content should really reflect the situation facing the council and the needs of stakeholders. There is no hard and fast rule and one size does not fit all. The Corporate Plan should however be clear to read and easy to understand for everyone who wishes to review it.
- 4.4 The types of information that often tend to be in a Corporate Plan include:
- a. The Council's vision for the area.
  - b. The values adopted in the way the Council performs its role.
  - c. High level strategic objectives.
  - d. Corporate Priorities – those things that are most important to the Council.
  - e. The desired outcomes for the area.
  - f. Key actions.
  - g. Performance indicators and targets.
- 4.5 The Corporate Plan can also be a good vehicle to set out the context and narrative of the Council so that all stakeholders understand where the Council is, where it aims to go and how it intends to get there. Members may also wish to include information about important matters such as the approach to transformation, future public engagement and other areas considered important.

### **Why is the Corporate Plan important?**

- 4.6 The Corporate Plan forms a central part of the Budget and Policy Framework of the Council. It therefore needs to follow the correct procedural rules. Once the Corporate Plan is developed, it will need to be adopted by Full Council. This formal adoption provides a clear basis on which the Council can make subsequent policy decisions and develop other strategies and linked action plans. It places the Council on a concrete footing on which to develop related strategies and make future policy decisions.
- 4.7 The process of developing the Corporate Plan can be as important as the act of adopting the Plan. Developing a Corporate Plan provides the opportunity to

engage with and listen to stakeholders and local communities on what matters most to them. Further information on the considerations relating to consultation and engagement are set out in section 6.4 of this report.

### **Setting out a process for developing the Corporate Plan**

- 4.8 An indicative process and timeline for developing the Corporate Plan has been set out as Appendix 1. This process is in line with the procedures set out by the Council's Constitution. However, the timescales should be seen as indicative at this stage.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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### **Need for speed versus the need for meaningful engagement**

- 5.1 There is clearly a need to develop and adopt a Corporate Plan without delay. The Corporate Plan will provide vital clarity to councillors, staff, residents and stakeholders. However, it is also important that the Council takes sufficient time to engage and consult meaningfully with residents and stakeholders. The trade-off between the two requires careful consideration.

### **The need for clarity in a fast-moving environment**

- 5.2 Given the transformation taking place at the Council, it would seem important that the Corporate Plan leaves room for the organisation to be flexible, light on its feet and responsive to change. There may be merit in focusing in on the higher-level vision, strategic objectives and priorities in the initial stage so as to provide room for the Council to further define itself and maintain a meaningful dialogue with its local communities.

### **A strategy for the Council versus a strategy for the wider area**

- 5.3 The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision, objectives and priorities. It would be prudent to consider how best to work with partners in order to identify a shared vision and set of priorities for the area. Although outside the scope of this report, the Corporate Plan could include a narrative on this, setting out the Council's future approach.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 At present there are no resources or financial considerations. However, the Corporate Plan forms a central part of the Budget and Policy Framework.

### **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 Development and adoption of the Corporate Plan will be in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically in relation to the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

### **6.3 Risk**

6.3.1 The main risks are identified as:

- a. Failure to follow the Constitutional process leaving the Corporate Plan and cascading strategies and policies open to potential future challenge.
- b. Not engaging and consulting effectively with stakeholders would run the risk of failing to identify the right priorities and missing the opportunity to build trust with local communities.
- c. Failing to adopt the Corporate Plan before the budget consultation process could reduce the ability of the Council to explore a wider set of budget options.

## 6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 The process for developing a Corporate Plan presents an excellent opportunity to consult and engage with stakeholders. There is inevitably a trade-off between the amount of time required to carry out a meaningful programme of consultation and engagement, and the need to develop a plan with some fleet of foot.

6.4.2 Looking at the consultation and engagement activities of other councils, for example, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) which as a new Council was recently in a similar position to North Northamptonshire Council, the indicative plan set out in Appendix 1 does provide scope for a meaningful process.

6.4.2 A stakeholder mapping exercise would be carried out to help inform the Council's approach. An initial list of potential consultation and engagement stakeholders has been drafted and included as Appendix 3. This will however require further work.

6.4.3 The use of Executive Advisory Panels play an important role in the Budget and Policy Framework, including developing proposals for the Corporate Plan.

## 6.5 Consideration by scrutiny

6.5.1 The Council's Scrutiny function will play a vital role in the scrutiny of the delivery of the Corporate Plan once adopted. The Chair of the Scrutiny Commission and other members of the Council will be notified of how consultation is to be undertaken after publication of initial proposals.

## 6.6 Climate Impact

6.7 The Corporate Plan provides the perfect opportunity for the Council to set out its approach to climate impact.

## 7. Background Papers

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7.1 The North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority established a Culture and Vision Task and Finish Group to look at the development of a draft vision for the new

Council. The Task and Finish Group carried out a range of consultation with key stakeholders and developed a draft vision for the new Council. [Meeting of North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive Committee on Wednesday 10th February, 2021 - North Northamptonshire Council](#) (Item 7 refers)