North Northamptonshire Council

EXECUTIVE
12th October 2023

Report Title	North Northamptonshire Future Vision – Big50 Progress Update
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Lead Member	Cllr Jason Smithers, Leader of the Council

Key Decision	☐ Yes	☒ No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972		

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Feedback from the Big50 conference held in July 2023
Appendix B – Revised draft Big50 Vision document

1.   Purpose of Report

1.1.   To provide a progress update on the work carried out on creating a vision for North Northamptonshire up to 2050.

1.2.   To provide feedback from the Big50 Conference that took place in July 2023.

1.3.   To recommend the development of actions to help further develop the Big50 future vision and ensure its delivery on a short, medium and longer-term timeframe.

2.   Executive Summary

2.1   Everyone in North Northamptonshire has hopes and aspirations for what we want for ourselves, our families and our place. It is clear that the only way to achieve those ambitions is for communities, the Council, businesses and

voluntary sector organisations to come together to imagine and deliver a better future for North Northamptonshire.

2.2   North Northamptonshire Council is proud to be a place ambassador and to convene the right people to really effect change and realise the vision for the future. It recognises that great partnership working is the key to succeeding in ensuring the best life in North Northamptonshire.

2.3   In May 2023, the Executive commenced an ambitious piece of work on creating the vision by considering the rationale, thinking and work carried out at that time on creating a vision for the future of North Northamptonshire up to 2050.

2.4   The report explained that the proposed vision for the best life in North Northamptonshire in 2050 had been based around three key priorities:

- **A Proud Place**: A place with clear goals and a plan of how to get there, where people feel inspired and safe.
- **A Prosperous Place**: A place full of thriving businesses and a skilled population who can achieve their ambitions.
- **A Proactive Place**: A place which understands the issues its people face and how to address them early, so everyone can live the best life.

2.5   The report recommended holding a Big50 conference to bring together a wide range of stakeholders to help test the draft priorities and refine the wider vision for North Northamptonshire.

2.6   This report provides the outcomes of the Big50 conference which was well attended and considered a huge success. In addition, it sets out the specific actions arising for which the Council is responsible in terms of further development and delivery of the vision.

3.   Recommendations

3.1.   It is recommended that the Executive:

a.   Note the progress that has been made on developing an area-wide vision for North Northamptonshire up to 2050.

b.   Acknowledge the positive contribution made towards the development of the vision through the work of the Big50 Steering Group, the Big50 conference and all who took part in it.

c.   Endorse the co-design of a short, medium and longer-term action plan with the Steering Group.

3.2. Reason for Recommendations – Local councils are ideally placed to act as place shapers and enablers of change in their area. North Northamptonshire Council, in its Corporate Plan adopted in December 2021, made a clear commitment to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations from public, private and voluntary sectors to help improve the quality of life in North Northamptonshire. The work on setting out a broader, longer-term vision for North Northamptonshire represents the next natural step in the achievement of this aim. A shared vision for the future of North Northamptonshire will help focus the efforts of organisations working locally on achieving a common set of priorities and goals for the area. The recommendations ensure that the work carried out to date by all entities involved progresses in a transparent, inclusive and engaging way.

3.3. Alternative Options Considered:

i) Continue 'as is' without a wider area vision – In practical terms, this would mean continuing to focus on the Council's own vision and leave partner agencies to focus on theirs. There is nothing wrong with this approach. Indeed, there is already a lot of activity focused on aligning approaches and target outcomes which are embedded in the current ways of working. It would however leave a gap in terms of a cross-cutting, widely adopted vision for the area. Given the clear support for a wider area vision evident at the Big50 conference, failure to pursue the opportunity would represent a suboptimal position.

4.   Report Background

4.1   North Northamptonshire is already a place that we should be proud of; we have a balance of idyllic countryside, villages, and waterways with the convenience of major towns; all of this is coupled with fantastic connectivity with easy access to major cities within England. We are however ambitious for the future; we want better lives and opportunities for future generations. This is a shared ambition for everyone who lives, works or cares for our place.

The start of the Big50 Conversation
4.2   The Council is proud to have started the conversation (late 2022) with a small group of stakeholders about what the future for North Northamptonshire could look like up to 2050. In May 2023, this initial work was considered by the Executive which allowed them to clearly set out the rationale, thinking and work carried out at that time.

4.3   The Executive were clear however that to truly start to create a vision for what the best life for North Northamptonshire looked like, a wider group of stakeholders would need to come together. It was agreed that a Big50 conference would be convened.

The Big50 Conference
4.4   To help ensure the early development of broad ownership of the vision, the Council set up a partner-led stakeholder steering group to oversee the planning and delivery of the Big50 conference. Representatives from the voluntary,

business, education, private sector housing, police, health and the Council worked at pace to organise and deliver the conference.

4.5   The conference was held on 11th July 2023 and was very well attended by a range of stakeholders. It produced a wide range of beneficial outcomes in terms of feedback on the draft vision and priorities as well as ideas to help future delivery.

4.6   The conference in effect provided a litmus test. It showed that there is broad support and appetite for a wider, longer-term vision for the area. Indeed, despite the relatively short planning window between May's Executive report and the conference in July, the event was full to capacity.

4.7   Those who attended the conference were asked to consider a vision for the best life in North Northamptonshire in 2050 based around three key priorities:

- **A Proud Place**: A place with clear goals and a plan of how to get there, where people feel inspired and safe.
- **A Prosperous Place**: A place full of thriving businesses and a skilled population who can achieve their ambitions.
- **A Proactive Place**: A place which understands the issues its people face and how to address them early, so everyone can live the best life.

4.8   The draft vision and covering report that was considered at the May's meeting of the Executive can be accessed via the following weblink: Draft Vision

Feedback from the Big50 Conference

4.9   The Big50 conference was attended by 117 delegates which 65 different organisations represented at the event. There were 875 plus responses recorded in response to key questions and 80 plus future commitments were provided by delegates.

4.10   Attendees were asked to consider *'What does a good life in North Northamptonshire in 2050 look like?'.* Clearly there are things that we cannot possible know yet such as economical and environmental changes, technological and medical advances and the changes to how people live their lives as a result of these. However, the question was based upon what we know now, and what we can rationally predict.

4.11   The following areas made up over half of the responses provided by conference attendees:
- Health;
- transport;
- community;
- education & skills;
- the environment;
- and jobs.

4.12   For each of the areas identified in 4.11, delegates provided more detail as to what is required, and this detail is provided in the conference feedback provided

as **Appendix A**. For example, against the 'Health' category, delegates associated the following with having a good life in 2050:

- Living longer, healthier lives
- Easy access to healthcare services
- Great healthcare services
- Improved mental health services
- Inclusive activities for all ages

4.13 There was also clear feedback on the key question ***'What needs to be true to deliver the vision?'.*** A number of themes emerged from the results including:

- Education and training
- Jobs and skills
- Community
- Business and employment
- Transport
- Environment
- Funding; and Action

4.14 For each of the areas identified in 4.13, delegates provided detail as to what they felt will be required to deliver the vision. This detail is provided in the conference feedback provided as **Appendix A**. For example, against the 'Education and training' category, delegates described the following factors that need to be true to deliver the vision:

- Local collaborative policies are required
- We need to be brave in the targeting of resources
- We need to link up more businesses with education and training providers,
- Skills need to be targeted across a broad curriculum
- A focus on physical and mental wellbeing is required

4.15 The detailed feedback from the event has provided the opportunity to update the vision document. This amended vision document has been provided as **Appendix B.**

4.16 Given the positive attendance at the conference, it is clear there is demand for a wider vision for North Northamptonshire. As our shared ambitions grow, there is an opportunity to engage with more organisations, involving them in the further development of the vision and importantly, its delivery.

4.17 Another key piece of feedback from the Big50 conference was focused on the role of North Northamptonshire Council. A number of delegates commented that they feel that the Council is well placed to provide a coordination and leadership role in developing the wider vision for the area. This, coupled with the constructive feedback received on the proposed vision itself, provides a clear case for continued activity on the development and delivery of a broader vision for the area.

5.   Issue and Choices

5.1   The immediate next step is that an action plan is co-developed with partners in order to further develop and deliver the Big50 Vision. The Steering Group were very mindful of the fact that any long-term vision needed to be able to deliver results in the short term as well as the medium and longer-term. Work will continue with the Steering Group to develop this action plan and ensure that there are clear points where progress can be monitored.

5.2   Whilst the action plan is an important document to support delivery, there will be a number of outcomes that can be delivered at pace by those stakeholders who attended the conference. An example of this is the Principal of Tresham College, who has been quick to convene a skills meeting to help to drive forward the skills development agenda.

5.3   There will be clear themes that actions will fall within, and it is likely that a governance structure will need to be quickly developed by the Steering Group to support delivery. Education and skills development was a recurring theme through the conference, and it was acknowledged that it cuts across all sectors. This is an obvious theme and already following the initial skills meeting that was convened, a skills conference is being planned for the first half of 2024.

5.4   It was proposed by a number of Big50 attendees that another conference is held 6th February 2024 to help keep momentum behind the vision, its development and critically, its delivery. This would provide the opportunity to reach out more widely to partners and stakeholders and ensure that momentum is maintained. This will be determined by the Steering Group with a view to making this event happen.

6.   Next Steps

6.1   A number of actions have been identified for the Council in relation to the Big50 vision:

(a) Continue to support the regular meeting of a Big50 Future Vision Steering Group.
(b) Co-produce, with the Big50 Steering Group, a future vision action plan to help progress the development and delivery of the Big50 future vision.
(c) Assist with the organisation of a second Big50 conference, suggested 6th February 2024
(d) Identify ways to engage more broadly in the local community on the draft vision for North Northamptonshire and on activities that help expedite its delivery.
(e) Identify specific actions for the Council to help in the continued delivery of the future vision and its development. This could, for example, involve the Council using its role as a community ambassador, to help promote the Big50 Vision and kickstart partner-led workstreams and initiatives.

(f) Ensure that the Council continues to learn and adapt its approach to community leadership based on its experiences, such as those learnt in developing a draft vision and convening the Big50 Conference.

6.2 Work has started on the development of a Big50 Future Vision action plan. This will be co-produced with the Big50 Steering Group.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

7.1.1. The work undertaken to date included the commissioning of consultants for the first phase of work. This was procured following the Council's current procurement and the use of a call off contract. This initial phase of work has been met from within existing budgets.

7.1.2. The next phase of works that follows the first conference is still being scoped out. It is envisaged that a lot of this work can be carried out within existing resources, working with partners such as the Steering Group. It is likely that a further procurement will be required if external resource is required to organise a second Big50 conference. If the Council leads on this, then this would be carried out within existing budgets and in accordance with the Council's contract procedure rules.

7.1.3. The action plan that will be developed may lead to additional budget implications for the Council although these will be addressed in future reports where necessary.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. Any Council decisions which arise out of the Vision will need to be considered in accordance with usual decision-making processes.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. The development of a North Northamptonshire Vision is likely to support a broad number of the Council's corporate policies and plans and will be reflected in the action plan that will be developed.

7.3.2. Based on the proposed three vision priorities of:

- **Proud Place**: A place with clear goals and a plan of how to get there, where people feel inspired and safe.
- **Prosperous Place**: A place full of thriving businesses and a skilled population who can achieve their ambitions.
- **Proactive Place**: A place which understands the issues its people face and how to address them early, so everyone can live the best life.

7.3.3. All six of the Council's key commitments and strategic priorities relate to these three headline vision priorities and will contribute to their delivery.

7.4. Risk

7.4.1. There are no significant risks to the Council arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.4.2. There may be wider risks at the conclusion of this work for the Council which may include:

- Additional costs to the Council to deliver on specific aspects of the action plan
- Failure to deliver on the action plan due to capacity constraints
- Diverting attention away from North Northamptonshire Council's core business to deliver on the action plan.

7.4.3. This will need to be carefully managed and considered, although it is expected the action plan is likely to compliment and re-enforce wider strategic activities the Council wishes to undertake as part of its own corporate strategy.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. Engagement with a range of partners, community representatives, elected members and staff has been held, to set out this first proposal of what the best life in North Northamptonshire in 2050 could look like. Detail of the early part of this engagement activity is outlined in the May report on the future vision considered at Executive.

7.5.2. The Big50 conference that was held in July this year allowed the vision to be further socialised and tested on a broader cohort of participants. Wider engagement with partners and residents now needs to be considered and this will form part of the Steering Group led Big50 Action Plan.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. This report has not been considered by any of the Executive Advisory Panels but could be part of the Forward Plan over the next few months as the work evolves.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. This report has not been considered by the Scrutiny Commission at this stage but could form part of its future work programme.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. An Equality Screening Assessment (ESA) has been completed and is available on request. As the work on the development of the North Northamptonshire Vision is evolving it is difficult to predict at this stage what impacts the outcomes of this work will have on protected groups, and therefore there are no positive or negative impacts highlighted within the assessment.

7.8.2. It is proposed that a further ESA is completed following the development of the action plan.

7.9. Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1. The North Northamptonshire Vision has the climate and the environment heavily referenced throughout. It is recognised that one of the key drivers that have helped shaped the vision thus far is centred on protecting the environment.

7.9.2. The Big50 Vision document references our wonderful countryside and waterways that need to be protected, a focus on reducing our carbon emissions as well as attracting green growth and harnessing the wide range of environmental plans and strategies held by organisations, businesses and groups working to protect our local environment and the planet.

7.9.3. The three priorities that will drive action also have a strong focus on sustainability and the wider environment, and especially in Prosperous Place and the areas of Green Growth, Tourism, Transport and Housing.

7.9.4. Climate and environmental considerations were raised at the Big50 Conference and are evident in the detailed feedback appended to this report. This will likely form one part of the focus of the action plan.

7.9.5. It is anticipated that specific actions will evolve from the Big50 conference and will allow the Council's own Climate Management Plan to feed into this area of focus.

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. The North Northamptonshire Vision recognises that not everyone has the best chance in life yet and that there are areas of deprivation across North Northamptonshire both in urban and rural areas. The three vision priorities reflect this and there are some clear priority goals identified across all areas including Civic Leadership, A stake in society, Community Empowerment, Route Causes and Prevention, and Giving Children the best start in life.

7.10.2. As with the climate and environment, the action plan that evolves over the coming weeks will reflect the Council's own work in this environment, such as the Left Behind Communities Scrutiny Review and Action Plan and the evolving Local Area Partnerships, as well as bringing further partner

engagement and resource to accelerate the work across North Northamptonshire.

7.11. **Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.11.1. The North Northamptonshire Vision highlights, under one of its three priorities of a Proud Place, that it will be renowned for being an inspiring, safe place for all. It also highlights a specific priority goal to be developed under Safety, and specifically that people feel safe in their neighbourhoods, on the roads, using our facilities. Where issues of crime or disorder are identified we use preventative approaches and education to reduce them.

8. Background Papers

8.1. A North Northamptonshire Vision report was considered at the May meeting of Executive. This set out the draft vision and the rationale for a Big50 Conference that was held in July this year.