

## EXECUTIVE 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Corporate Plan 2021-2025</b>
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<b>Executive Member</b>	Cllr Jason Smithers, Leader of the Council

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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>	Not applicable

### List of Appendices

**Appendix A** – Draft Corporate Plan 2021-25 (for approval)

**Appendix B** – Public Consultation Results

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

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- 1.1. To present the draft Corporate Plan 2021-25 for endorsement by the Executive and to recommend it to Council for formal adoption.
- 1.2. To set out additional information such as how progress in the delivery of the Corporate Plan will be monitored.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 A report was considered by the Executive at its meeting in July this year that set out the purpose of the Corporate Plan, the indicative timeline for its development along with other important background information. A link to the report and appendices has been provided here for ease of reference: [Executive Reports 15th July, 2021](#)

- 2.2 A draft Corporate Plan for the Council has been developed and is presented for approval by the Executive as **Appendix A**. Once endorsed by the Executive, the Corporate Plan will need to be formally adopted by Council in accordance with the Constitution.
- 2.3 A set of performance indicators and targets to accompany the Corporate Plan are being developed. It is anticipated that these will be in place, along with a set of targets, prior to April 2022. These will be regularly reported to Executive and will be important in gauging the success of the delivery of the plan. The targets will be further developed as the Council better understands its baseline and comparative performance.
- 2.4 Feedback from a public consultation has been provided as **Appendix B**. The consultation has shown strong support for the vision, values, key commitments, and priorities set out in the draft Corporate Plan.
- 2.5 The draft Corporate Plan was considered by the Executive Advisory Panels whilst in development. The cross-party Executive Advisory Panels played a valuable role in the development of the draft Corporate Plan. Much of the feedback has been taken on board. Some of the feedback will be more relevant when more detailed service plans are developed.
- 2.6 This is the Council's first Corporate Plan. Events of the last two years have shown the need to be flexible and responsive to change. It is envisaged that the Corporate Plan will further develop to help both the Council and North Northamptonshire face the challenges of the future.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:
- a) Endorse the Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025, as set out in Appendix A.
  - b) Recommend that Council adopt the Corporate Plan 2021 - 2025; as set out in Appendix A.
  - c) Note that progress in the delivery of the Corporate Plan, subject to Council adoption, will be regularly reported to the Executive and the Plan will remain responsive to change.

#### **3.2 Reasons for Recommendations**

A Corporate Plan is a key document which sets out the overarching future policy direction of the Council. The Executive provide strategic leadership to the authority, and they will lead the organisation using the approved Corporate Plan as a framework. It is important therefore that they endorse the Plan and recommend its approval to the decision-making body which is Council.

## **4. Background Information**

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### **The Corporate Plan 2021-2025**

- 4.1 The Executive received important background information relating to the Corporate Plan in July 2021, which it noted and endorsed. This report reflects the work to develop the plan in accordance with the previous decision of the Executive.

### **Vision, values, key commitments and priorities**

- 4.2 The draft Corporate Plan, included as Appendix A, sets out a long-term vision for the Council. This long-term vision is an ambitious aspiration which may take many years to achieve. The Plan also sets out the Council's values and key commitments. These describe how the Council will work and the focus it will adopt in the future.
- 4.3 The Council's priorities are set out within the Plan and clarify those areas that are considered most important at the current time. These are the activities that the Council will focus on in the short, medium and long-term. Priorities will be monitored, reviewed and updated regularly. Whilst some priorities will be achieved in the short term, others will be longstanding and take time and significant effort to progress. Some will likely remain priorities for the Council for several years.
- 4.4 The Council's priorities play an important role in helping focus its use of resources. Other strategies and plans, service plans for example, will link back to the Council's key commitments and priorities. Some organisations refer to this as 'The Golden Thread'. These linkages can be used to help inform decision-making and shape the focus of scrutiny. Activities that are not deemed corporate priorities are still important. Priorities do however help when making judgements about the relative importance of activities, particularly when difficult decisions need to be made.

### **Monitoring Delivery of the Corporate Plan**

- 4.5 Monitoring progress in the delivery of the Corporate Plan will be vitally important. This will be facilitated by regular public performance reports to the Executive and Scrutiny Committees. A set of Corporate Plan Indicators (CPI) and targets are in development. These will be brought back to Executive in due course. Progress against these indicators and targets, along with the actions set out within the plan, will form an important reference point on which to gauge the success of the Council.
- 4.6 It is not a requirement of the Council's Constitution to refresh the Corporate Plan annually. However, adopting this approach would ensure that the Council's priorities remain synchronised with the annual budget and service planning arrangements. This will also help inform the activity of both Executive Advisory Panels and the Council's scrutiny function, ensuring an annual refresh links in with their respective workplans.

## **Remaining responsive to change**

- 4.7 This is the Council's first Corporate Plan. The organisation's approach to service delivery is developing. These factors, coupled with the dynamic environment within which the Council operates, means it is important for the Council to remain responsive to change. For this reason, the priorities within the Plan may be subject to change. Any changes will be managed in an open and transparent way through the correct constitutional process. Rather than being viewed as a document that is set in stone, the Corporate Plan should be seen as a living document which remains work in progress.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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### **A focus on priorities**

- 5.1 The Corporate Plan is more than a plan for the future. It is part of the budget and policy framework and can be used to help the Council make difficult choices about where to allocate its finite resources. The corporate priorities set out in the Plan help define those areas that are most important to the Council. They aim to provide clarity of focus on which to help inform future decision-making

### **Getting the balance right**

- 5.2 The Corporate Plan aims to strike a balance between being ambitious and achievable. If the plan is not ambitious enough, there is a danger that the Council will not be stretched and thus will not achieve optimal performance. If its plans are too ambitious, failure to achieve targets could be demotivating and again, result in sub-optimal performance.

### **Planning versus delivery**

- 5.3 The most important part of any document is probably the first two letters: Do! The Council will be judged not by its plans, but by its outcomes. Clear plans do however play a vital role in focussing an organisation's resources. The Council will need to embrace its Corporate Plan and focus on delivering its strategic vision for the area. In doing so, it will need to have regard for its available resources and the affordability of its aspirations.

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

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 The Corporate Plan forms a central part of the Budget and Policy Framework. Approving the Plan provides a framework on which to help the Council make future choices and demonstrate more clearly the reasons for its decisions.

### **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 Having a formally adopted Corporate Plan is a key requirement of the Council's Governance Framework and provides evidence within the Code of Corporate

Governance which is the public document which sets out how the authority upholds good governance.

### 6.3 Risks

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. Once adopted, there is a risk that the Council operates outside of the parameters of the Corporate Plan.
- c. Failure to monitor progress of the plan and refresh it to ensure that the Council remains responsive to change.
- d. Service plans need to be linked to the Corporate Plan, ensuring that detailed action plans are in place to deliver the Council's priorities. Failure to do this properly leads to issues with the delivery of the higher-level plan.
- e. There is a risk that the Council does not provide sufficient information on the delivery of the Corporate Plan to inform the scrutiny function.
- f. Failing to adopt the Corporate Plan before the budget consultation process is a risk. This could reduce the ability of the Council to explore a wider set of budget options through the lens of its key commitments and corporate priorities.

### 6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 The development of the draft Corporate Plan has been informed by feedback from a range of consultation activities. Feedback from the public consultation on a draft summary Corporate Plan has been provided as Appendix B. The consultation feedback has shown strong support for the vision, values, key commitments and priorities set out in the draft Plan. The public consultation was hosted on North Northamptonshire Council's [Consultation Hub](#) website. The consultation was widely promoted.

6.4.2 A wide range of participants were invited to give their views and asked to promote the consultation to their members, or within their local area where appropriate including: Councillors, local MPs, parish and town councils, partner organisations, voluntary and community sector organisations, representatives of protected characteristic groups, local business groups including Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses, North Northamptonshire Council staff and elected members, North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel (circa 600 members) and North Northamptonshire's Consultation Register.

6.4.3 The Draft Corporate Plan consultation ran from 6<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021. During the consultation period, using the various means available to consultees, local people and organisations contributed to the consultation 609 times. Nearly all of the feedback received was via the questionnaire, with 581 respondents participating via this mechanism. There were also four completed

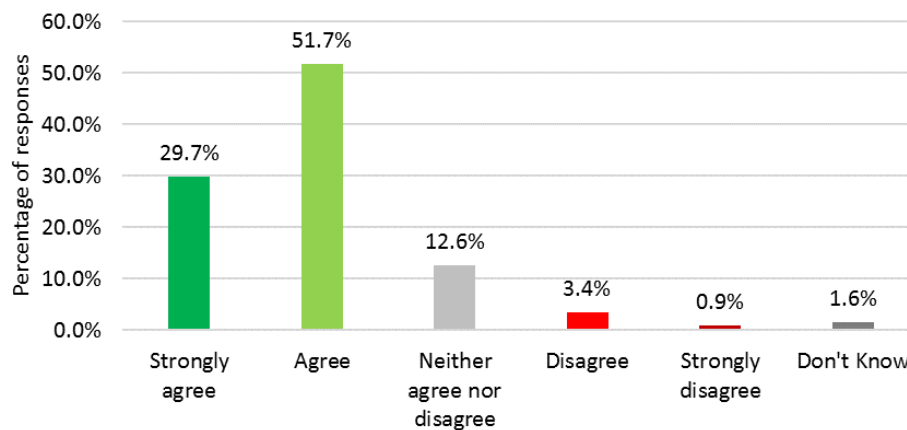
Group Facilitator Feedback forms and four submitted written responses, 19 responses via social media, and one response from a local business forum.

6.4.4 Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the Council's vision. There were 437 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (81.5%) said they strongly agree or agree with the Vision, while 4.3% said they strongly disagree or disagree.

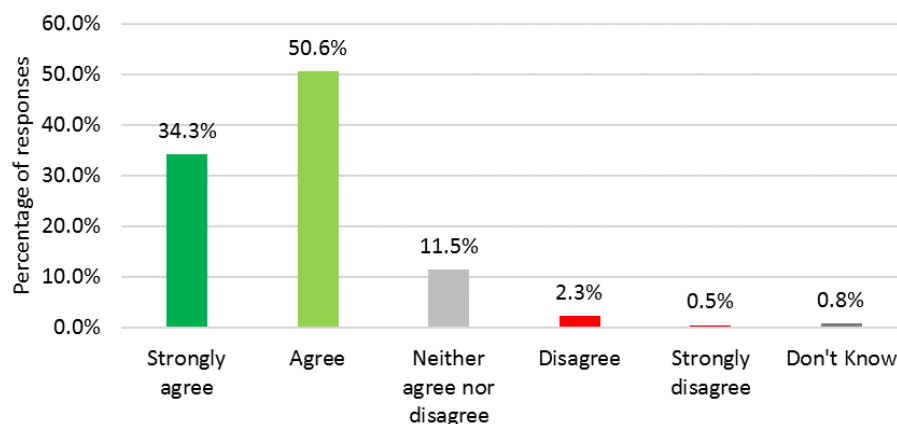
6.4.5 Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the Council's draft values. There were 391 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (84.9%) said they strongly agree or agree with the draft Values, while 2.8% said they strongly disagree or disagree.

6.4.6 The following graphs show a summary of the support for the Council's draft vision, values and all of the six commitments and their associated priorities. More detail is provided as Appendix B.

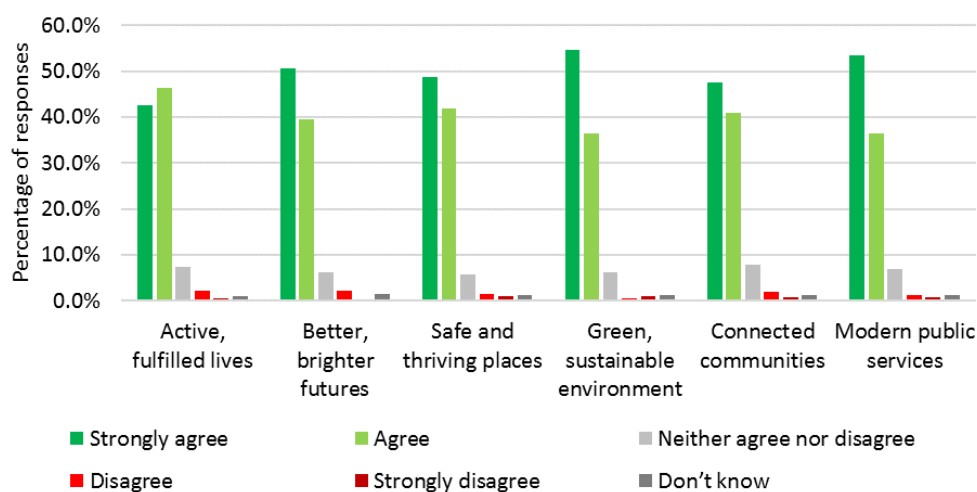
### To what extent do you agree or disagree with our Vision?



### To what extent do you agree or disagree with our draft Values?



## Summary graph showing level of support for all six commitments and their associated priorities



### 6.5 Consideration by Scrutiny

6.5.1 The Council's Executive Advisory Panels played an important role in shaping the draft Corporate Plan. The Panels considered the draft plan that was in development during August and September. Much of the feedback from the Panels has been integrated into the Plan. However, some of the feedback will be used to shape the Council's service plans that will soon be developed.

6.5.2 The Council's Scrutiny function will play a vital role in the scrutiny of the delivery of the Corporate Plan once adopted. Regular performance reports against the Corporate Plan Indicators to the Executive will assist the scrutiny function in this process.

### 6.6 Climate Impact

6.6.1 The Corporate Plan has provided an excellent opportunity for the Council to set out its response to the climate and environment emergency. The Council has dedicated one of its six key commitments to taking a lead on this, with the aim of making North Northamptonshire more sustainable for generations to come. The Council has set out a number of priority actions to help deliver against its 'Green, sustainable environment' commitment.

### 6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 The Council's Corporate Plan has the potential to make a significant positive impact on all communities within North Northamptonshire. The Corporate Plan makes reference to the impact it aims to achieve throughout the various sections (Set out in Appendix A).

## 6.8 Equalities Impact

- 6.8.1 The Council's equality commitments are expressed within the Corporate Plan. Individual equality impact assessments will support all new projects and action plans set out in the Council's service plans that support its delivery. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for the Corporate Plan at an overarching level and was also completed for the public consultation process.

## 7. Background Papers

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- 7.1 The July 2021 Executive Report sets out more background information about the Corporate Plan and the process for its development: [Executive Reports 15th July, 2021](#)
- 7.2 Executive Advisory Panels held in August and September 2021 considered the draft Corporate Plan, making comments and suggestions.
- 7.3 The North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority established a Culture and Vision Task and Finish Group to look at the development of a draft vision and values for the new Council. The Task and Finish Group carried out a consultation with a range of stakeholders which has been used to help develop the draft Corporate Plan. [North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive 10th February, 2021 - North Northamptonshire Council](#) (Item 7 refers)