

Full Council 1st December 2021

Report Title	Corporate Plan 2021-2025
Report Author	Guy Holloway, Assistant Chief Executive guy.holloway@northnorthants.gov.uk

List of Appendices

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

Appendix B – Public Consultation Results

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To present the draft Corporate Plan 2021-25 for formal adoption by Full Council, following endorsement by the Executive at their meeting on 18th November 2021.
- 1.2. To set out additional information such as how progress in the delivery of the Corporate Plan will be monitored.

2. Executive Summary

- 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. References to further background information has been provided at Section 7 of this report.
- 2.2 A draft Corporate Plan for the Council has been developed and was presented for approval by the Executive as **Appendix A**. The Executive endorsed the draft plan at its meeting on 18th November 2021; the Corporate Plan requires formal adoption by Full Council in accordance with the Council's 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 position.

- 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 and action 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

- 3.1 It is recommended that Full Council:
- a) Adopt the Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025, as set out in Appendix A; and
 - b) 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 that sets out the overarching future policy direction of the Council. The adopted Corporate Plan will provide a framework that can be used to provide strategic leadership to the authority and help the Executive make decisions. It is important therefore that Full Council adopts the Corporate Plan so that strategic direction can be provided.

4. Background Information

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 and choices 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 reported 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 will ensure that the Council's priorities remain synchronised with the annual budget and service planning arrangements. This can 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 that the Council remains 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.

Look and feel of the Corporate Plan

- 4.8 The design of the Corporate Plan provided as Appendix A will be improved once adopted. The objective at this stage is to focus on what the plan says rather than how it looks. The Council will use its own in-house resources to shape the look of the adopted plan. Opportunities exist to engage staff in services and local communities with photography for the various sections of the Corporate Plan.

5. Issues and Choices

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 the plan is too ambitious, failure to achieve targets could be demotivating and again, result in less than optimum 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 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)

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 setting 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.

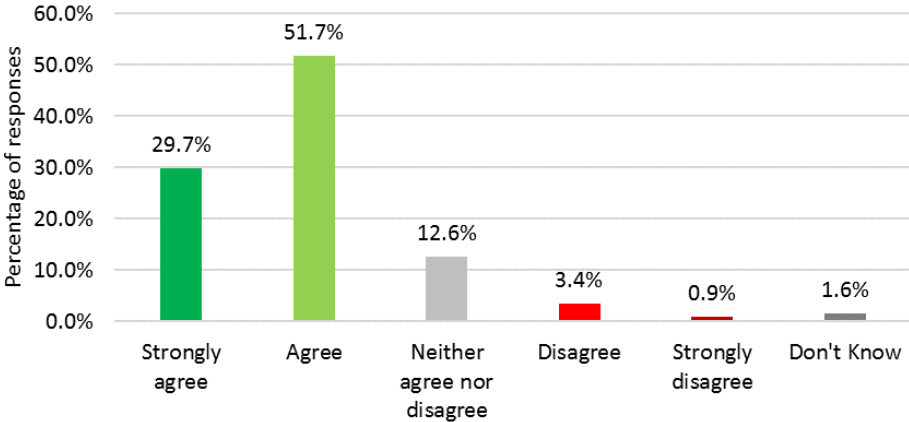
- c. Failure to monitor progress of the plan and refresh it to ensure that the Council remains responsive to change would result in the Council's strategies not effectively reflecting the needs of the local area.
- d. Service plans need to be linked to the Corporate Plan, ensuring that detailed action plans are in place to deliver the Council's priorities. Failure to do this properly can lead to failure in the delivery of the Council's priorities.
- 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

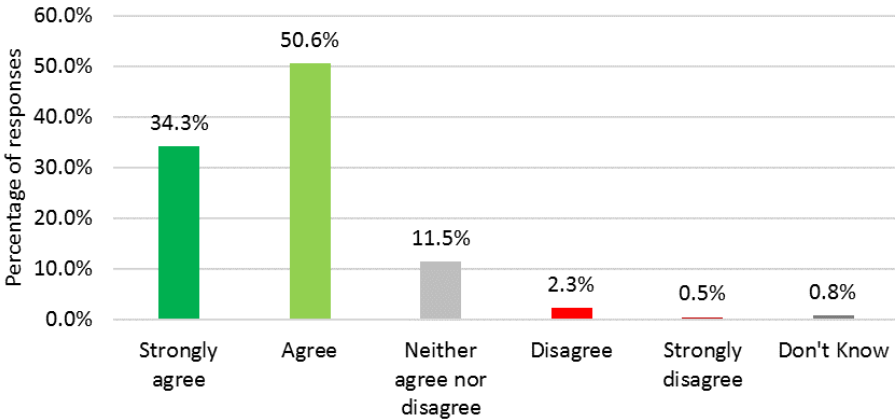
- 6.4.1 The development of the draft Corporate Plan has been informed by feedback from a range of consultation activities. The results of a public consultation on a draft summary Corporate Plan have been provided as Appendix B. The consultation feedback has shown strong support for the vision, values, 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 help promote the consultation within their local area 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 and North Northamptonshire's Consultation Register.
- 6.4.3 The Draft Corporate Plan consultation ran from 6th September to 3rd 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 a 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. 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. 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.

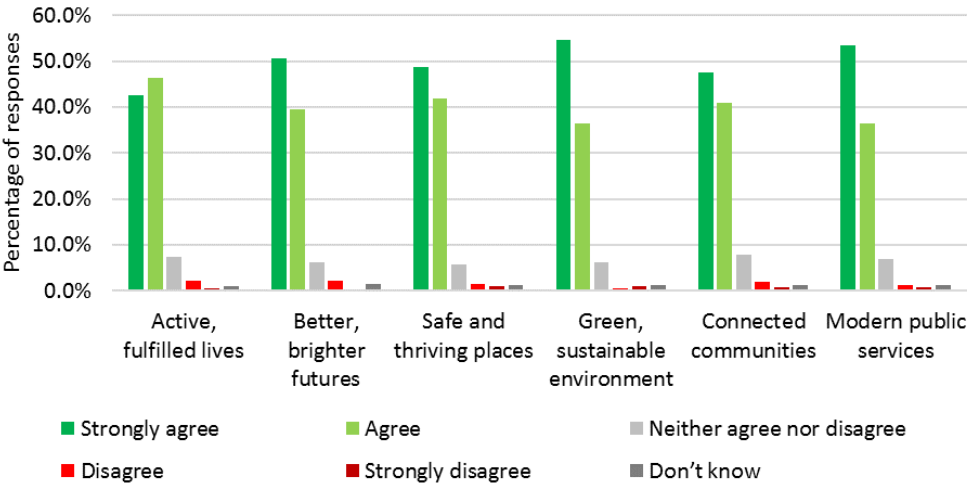
To what extent do you agree or disagree with our Vision?



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 are in development.
- 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 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 its 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

- 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](#) (Item 7 refers)