



# DRAFT FOR ADOPTION

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## Corporate Plan

2021 - 2025

Your Council - Here for you!

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# Foreword by the Leader of the Council



**Cllr Jason Smithers**  
Leader of the Council

*“We want to protect and enhance the beautiful rural countryside, but at the same time, help promote vibrant towns and villages, respecting their distinctive characteristics.*

*We want a successful local economy that brings with it more skilled jobs, access to better quality housing and improved local resources such as schools and leisure facilities.”*

I am delighted to be able to introduce our first ever Corporate Plan: [Your Council – Here for you!](#)

This plan sets out what we aim to achieve as a council, working with our local communities and partner organisations over the next four years and beyond.

North Northamptonshire Council is committed to making the area a better place to live, work and relax.

I strongly believe that by putting residents and local communities at the heart of everything we do, we will be better placed to make the right decisions for North Northamptonshire.

We want to protect and enhance the beautiful rural countryside, but at the same time, help promote vibrant towns and villages, respecting their distinctive characteristics.

We want a successful local economy that brings with it more skilled jobs, access to better quality housing and improved local resources such as schools and leisure facilities.

Importantly, we want to provide greater access to better quality, integrated care for those who need our help.

Working with partners, we want to provide equal access to high-quality education and training for our young people. We want to improve the skills and job prospects for those who are able to work.

We will strive to tackle the causes of difficult issues such as poverty, homelessness and knife-crime. We want to improve the standard of housing and ensure supply meets growing demand, whilst at the same time, protect the local environment and countryside.

To achieve all of this, we are going to need to be a council that is efficient and effective. A council that uses its assets wisely. We will need to be the employer of choice; one that provides quality services that are valued locally.

We know our aspirations are high, but we are committed to achieving them. We will strive to make North Northamptonshire a place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life.

# Introduction



**North Northamptonshire Council** was born in April 2021. The history is well documented, but four districts and half of one county council came together to form one of the largest unitary councils in the country.<sup>1</sup> The Council is united in its desire to improve public services and this plan helps set out its focus for the future.

Local government in North Northamptonshire has been reforming, fast. This journey has not been easy and is far from complete.

A restructure of the top tiers of management was carried out and then North Northamptonshire Council was launched successfully in April 2021. A new Council was elected in May with a new governance structure and Executive.

The Council is now working to further unify and transform its services across North Northamptonshire, whilst at the same time, focusing on maintaining a balanced budget.

Despite the challenges of moving to a unitary council, and doing so during a pandemic, the new Council has got off to a positive start.

Services have remained safe and legal and some accolades have been achieved along the way. Our new website for example, was rated amongst the top in the country in terms of accessibility.<sup>2</sup>

The Council is continuing on its journey of improvement and learning lessons along the way. It is working to develop the right culture to help make the Council a future provider of high quality services and one of the region's key employers of choice. This will naturally take time, but our ambition for the future is clear.

1. As measured by population size in the area served

2. SITEMORSE, Q3, 2021 UK Local Government INDEX Results

# Our Vision, Values and Key Commitments

*This plan will continue to develop. It will adapt to reflect the progress the Council makes and the changing environment within which it operates*

## Developing a new vision for a new Council

Our vision for North Northamptonshire is:

***“A place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life.”***

Our vision is an aspiration. It is our long term ambition. It is something that we have set our sights on, a vision that we will strive to achieve.

Work started on our vision back in 2020. A series of focus groups were held with key stakeholders including residents, schools, businesses, customers, town and parish councils and key partner organisations. The result was a draft vision which, as a new Council, we have further refined.

A public consultation was carried out in September 2021. This sought views on the new vision, along with a proposed set of values, key commitments and priorities for North Northamptonshire.

Over 600 people responded to the public consultation, the results of which showed that over 80% of consultees agreed with the Council’s proposed vision for North Northamptonshire. Similar levels of support were shown for the proposed values, key commitments and future priorities.

## Developing a new set of values

Our vision sets out, at the highest level, what we are aiming to achieve. Our values on the other hand, are like a set of guiding principles. They help guide us in the way we provide services and how we will achieve our vision and deliver our priorities for the future.

At North Northamptonshire Council, we felt it was vitally important that our staff had the opportunity to help shape the organisation’s values, as well as ask the public and stakeholders for their feedback.

A staff focus group and survey was carried out. The survey received over 800 responses and staff identified a clear set of values which they felt were most important for the new Council.

The opportunity for staff to participate in the development of the Council’s future values was seen as an essential first step. North Northamptonshire Council’s values, as chosen by its staff, state that the Council and its staff will be:

- Customer-focused
- Respectful
- Efficient
- Supportive; and
- Trustworthy

## Our key commitments

In addition to our vision and values, we are making six key commitments to everyone in North Northamptonshire. Our key commitments are:

1. **Active, fulfilled lives:** We will help people live healthier, more active, independent and fulfilled lives.
2. **Better, brighter futures:** We will care for our young people, providing them with a high quality education and opportunities to help them flourish.
3. **Safe and thriving places:** We will enable a thriving and successful economy that shapes great places to live, learn, work and visit.
4. **Green, sustainable environment:** We will take a lead on improving the green environment, making the area more sustainable for generations to come.
5. **Connected communities:** We will ensure our communities are connected with one another so they are able to shape their lives and the areas where they live.
6. **Modern public services:** We will provide efficient, effective and affordable services that make a real difference to all our local communities.

Our key commitments help ensure that the priorities we make, now and in the future, maintain the necessary breadth of focus in those areas that we believe matter most.

# Our priorities for the future



## Our priorities for North Northamptonshire

### 1. Active, fulfilled lives:

- Greater access to better quality adult social care
- Value and support our carers and volunteers
- Improve the accessibility and use of leisure, culture, art and sport
- Provide enhanced support to improve mental health and wellbeing
- Tackle the causes of complex problems such as poverty and homelessness

### 2. Better, brighter futures:

- Ensure every child has equal access to a high standard of education
- Support partners and the Children’s Trust to provide higher standards of support
- Promote better training, further education and employment opportunities for young people

### 3. Safe and thriving places:

- Strengthen the cultural identity of towns, villages and rural communities
- Help town centres and villages respond to changing trends
- Attract tourism, visitors and inward investment
- Working with local businesses and partners to support the creation of high-quality, better-skilled jobs
- Improve the standard of new and existing homes and ensure housing supply meets demand
- Tackle the causes of difficult issues leading to nuisance, crime and anti-social behaviour
- Maintain our highways infrastructure to keep people moving safely around North Northamptonshire
- Enable people to travel across North Northamptonshire and beyond

### 4. Green, sustainable environment:

- Demonstrate clear leadership on tackling environmental sustainability
- Work with communities and businesses to tackle climate change and improve air quality
- Promote sustainable, active travel
- Embed low carbon technology, sustained and improved green infrastructure, and sustainable forms of transport fit for the future
- Educate, encourage re-use, harmonise our approaches and enforce to keep our environment free from litter
- Protect the countryside and open spaces, and enhance the natural environment and ecology

### 5. Connected communities:

- Inform and listen to our communities, giving them a greater say in their future
- Respect and engage our local diverse communities and town and parish councils
- Empower a thriving voluntary and community sector

### 6. Modern public services:

- Provide good quality and efficient services valued by our customers
- Enhance the services provided at our Community Hubs
- Invest in and value our staff to become an employer of choice
- Use our assets, skills, knowledge and technology most effectively
- Ensure very robust financial and performance management

## 1

# Active, fulfilled lives

## Key commitment:

*Helping people live healthier, more active, independent and fulfilled lives*

## Introduction

We want North Northamptonshire to be a place where everybody lives active and fulfilled lives from childhood through to older age. For this to happen, we are going to need to ensure the right advice and services are available at the right time and place, and in a way that is accessible for those in need.

Working in partnership with others, we will build a shared understanding of what high-quality care means. We will work together with others to deliver high standards of care and to safeguard vulnerable adults.

We will focus on prevention and early intervention to help people remain independent for longer. We will enable residents to live more fulfilled lives through the use of adaptive equipment and technology to enable independence and greater social interaction.

Valuing and supporting our carers and volunteers will be vital to meet tomorrow's challenges. We will engage meaningfully to mobilise and develop the voluntary community and social enterprise sector to its full potential.

Providing a range of accessible leisure, sports and play facilities and attractive open spaces to encourage healthy lifestyles will be important. As well as physical wellbeing, we will prioritise mental health and wellbeing and work across partner agencies and systems to provide support when and where it is needed and at the earliest opportunity.

Working closely with local communities, we will help them determine their own solutions through collaborative partnerships. We will target the root causes that lead to issues that are difficult to tackle such as homelessness, drug addiction, anti-social behaviour and knife-crime.

## Our priorities

- **Greater access to better quality Adult Social Care**
- **Value and support our carers and volunteers**
- **Improve the accessibility and use of leisure, culture, art and sport**
- **Provide enhanced support to improve mental health and wellbeing**
- **Tackle the causes of complex problems such as poverty and homelessness**

## How will we monitor progress:

- **Performance indicators and outcomes for:**
  - **Adult Social Care**
  - **Public Health**
  - **Housing and Communities (including libraries and leisure services)**
  - **Levelling-up targets**
- **Deprivation indices**
- **Progress in the delivery of our Service Plans**
- **Budget Performance of services**

## 1

# Active, fulfilled lives

## Key commitment:

*Helping people live healthier, more active, independent and fulfilled lives*

## Greater access to better quality Adult Social Care

We will:

- Promote a shared understanding of what high-quality care is and what needs to be done to achieve it amongst people who use services, key partners and staff.
- Take joined-up action to encourage improvement and champion high-quality care that makes a real difference to the lives of people who use services, their families and carers.
- Develop the 'Three Conversations Model', focusing on what people can do, encouraging people to live independently by joining together solutions and engaging in timely and appropriate conversations.
- Have the right buildings, facilities, infrastructure and resources in place to give good access to social care and support services.
- Work with providers and the voluntary sector, supporting them to work alongside the Council using a progressive, strength-based model.
- Work with colleagues across agencies to safeguard adults at risk of being abused.
- Promote integration across systems to improve population health and reduce inequality between different groups. For example, we will work with partners from health, housing, the criminal justice system and benefits to support accessible, affordable and effective social care.
- Reduce bureaucracy to enable simple pathways to support and allow more time to be spent with people.
- Address the skill shortages and gaps in the care workforce. We will do this through effective recruitment, retention and management of a sustainable workforce.
- Support people with a range of needs such as those with learning difficulties, autism, ADHD, mental health needs and people who have experienced abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Tackle the stigma attached to disabled people, changing minds and proactively addressing discrimination.
- Use creative and flexible contracting approaches to secure the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

## Value and support our carers and volunteers

We will:

- Mobilise and develop the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) to its maximum potential.
- Create an area where an enterprising voluntary sector is valued and encouraged, and additional capacity is created to deliver social care and health activities.
- Work with Northamptonshire Carers to deliver carers needs assessments, a carers forum, and other support such as a sitting service and respite care.
- Work with carers to establish the support that is needed and determine how this support can be best delivered.
- Train carers in using complex aids and equipment.
- Support volunteers helping vulnerable people, those who are shielding and others who are in need of help.
- Identify children who are carers and ensure support is in place to allow them to live their lives.
- Provide and support a wide variety of volunteering opportunities across our cultural, leisure and library facilities which enhance the wellbeing of our residents and improve skills and employability.
- Ensure support for volunteering is a key part of our review and refresh of our Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) infrastructure arrangements.
- Deliver the Carers Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which includes the exploration of the needs of older carers.
- Support adult carers who report that they have not had as much social contact as they would like through social prescribing.
- Support individuals within the community to develop a wide range of volunteer support skills and create links with the Adult Learning Service. Volunteer roles range widely from specific ones in health and social care to befriending and other forms of peer support.
- Ensure those in a management role within the Council are enabled to support working carers.



## 1

# Active, fulfilled lives

## Key commitment:

*Helping people live healthier, more active, independent and fulfilled lives*

## Improve the accessibility and use of leisure, culture, art and sport

We will:

- Co-produce a Healthy Active Lives Strategy and delivery framework with our leisure providers, Northamptonshire Sport, sports clubs and our wider communities.
- Develop and promote a concessionary scheme in leisure centres to ensure equality of access.
- Co-produce with key stakeholders a Cultural Strategy for North Northamptonshire to maximise the cultural and arts offer and improve accessibility to all.
- Review, refresh and harmonise our Playing Pitch, Sports Facilities and Open Space Strategies to enable us to understand future demand and make effective capital investment decisions in future facilities.
- Promote the accessibility of green open spaces, leisure, sports facilities and clubs, including addressing issues of healthier weight and obesity.
- Restore all facilities with enhanced measures to ensure safety and customer confidence in a post-Covid world.
- Ensure that our public buildings are dementia and autism friendly to ensure facilities are welcoming and accessible to all.
- Continue to enhance our 24/7 electronic e-library offer.
- Expand the use of Progression Workers to enable people to use community facilities to support and develop physical and mental wellbeing.
- Continue to support the Active Parks team which is a partnership with country parks, Northamptonshire Sport and the Public Health team.
- Deliver public health services in public spaces such as libraries and leisure facilities in order to increase their reach into local communities.
- Deliver Social Prescribing at scale.

## Provide enhanced support to improve mental health and wellbeing

We will:

- Reduce the number of people who experience mental ill health by improving the effectiveness of prevention services for mental wellbeing.
- Engage with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), Public Health, Healthwatch and other key partners and service users to develop a shared understanding of the needs of the mental health population. We will work together to design services that meet local need.
- Ensure the Council's care provision is accessible to people with mental health issues.
- Promote mental health awareness and accountability in the workplace and educate colleagues across the Council about mental health and how best to support people we work with.
- We are committed to attendance and engagement with the Mental Health Prevention Concordat.
- Support third sector services who are preventing the impact of social stressors on mental health and wellbeing, for example: CAB, Welfare Rights, Community Law.
- Expand our Health and Housing Project to assist with timely discharges from hospital.
- Provide a housing allocation scheme facilitating moves to safe and appropriate housing to suit people's needs.
- Provide an effective Disabled Facilities and Adaptions programme, by reducing the backlog of referrals, to increase residents' independence and wellbeing.
- Develop a strategy that supports the delivery of housing for care which will enable older and vulnerable residents to retain independence for longer in their own homes.
- Deliver effective tenancy outreach to support vulnerable people to live independently.
- Deliver the Public Health Community Approaches Programme to address health inequalities.
- Provide physical and digital resources in libraries to support mental health and wellbeing.
- Work closely with partners to develop health and wellbeing programmes in leisure facilities addressing the needs of the local community.
- Work in partnership to support local organisations to provide wellbeing services and activities.

## 1

# Active, fulfilled lives

## Key commitment:

*Helping people live healthier, more active, independent and fulfilled lives*

## Tackle the causes of complex problems such as poverty and homelessness

We will:

- Expand our Transitions and Lettings Plus Scheme for offenders leaving prison, housing 40 homeless offenders in the next 12 months and working with them towards independent living.
- Provide housing and related support to vulnerable, entrenched rough sleepers and a new dual needs (mental health and drug/alcohol) navigator for rough sleepers.
- Undertake a review of homelessness and rough sleeping strategy to ensure a consistent service across North Northamptonshire.
- Refresh the Domestic Abuse Strategy and delivery plans to ensure we meet our statutory duties to provide safe accommodation and support for victims of abuse and their children.
- Focus on tackling the causes of poverty. We will provide support to the voluntary and community sector and other organisations who give advice on debt management to our most vulnerable residents.
- Ensure our housing policies provide appropriate offers for our varied current and future communities.
- Work closely with our housing services to develop appropriate housing stock for people with complex needs.
- Investigate new and innovative solutions to housing and housing related issues with private and public sector partners.
- Work closely with organisations who support veterans to allow them to live better lives.
- Work closely with colleagues in Public Health to increase suicide awareness and awareness of suicide prevention.
- Offer innovative and intensive support to vulnerable people who are not in priority need under the homelessness legislation, but have a range of support needs and other difficulties. These make it hard to successfully accommodate them in supported accommodation.
- Take an integrated approach to addressing issues such as mental health, drug and alcohol dependencies, street culture activities and institutional experiences, such as prison and the care system. These are often closely linked with the more extreme experiences of homelessness.
- Continue to deliver annual vaccinations and health screening services for homeless and other 'at risk' individuals.
- Work with partners to provide life-long learning opportunities such as learning in prison with continued course provision on release.

## 2

# Better, brighter futures

## Key commitment:

*Caring for our young people, providing them with a high quality education and opportunities to help them flourish*

## Introduction

We want North Northamptonshire to be a place where our children and young people are cared for. We want them to be provided with a high-quality education, training and other learning opportunities so that they can flourish and reach their full potential.

We will focus on building early resilience by supporting families, children and young people to be ready for school. We will help them to grow up in safe and secure homes in communities that value them and see their potential.

Working closely with our partners, such as the Children's Trust, and other education providers, we will ensure that children have the best opportunities to learn and fulfil their ambitions.

We will support disadvantaged and vulnerable children to help them grow their skills, confidence and abilities.

We realise that children, young people and their families may need help at different stages in their lives. We will aim to provide help as early as possible and provide the right support, at the right time in the right way to ensure that children are safeguarded and get the best start in life.

## Our priorities

- Ensure every child has equal access to a high standard of education
- Support partners and the Children's Trust to provide better early support to families and better standards of care
- Promote better training, further education and employment opportunities for young people

## How will we monitor progress:

- Performance indicators and outcomes for:
  - Children's Services
  - The Children's Trust
  - Public Health
  - Training and further education provision
- Progress in the delivery of our Service Plans
- Budget Performance of services

## 2

## Better, brighter futures

### **Key commitment:**

*Caring for our young people, providing them with a high quality education and opportunities to help them flourish*

### Ensure every child has equal access to a high standard of education

We will:

- Support schools to provide good and outstanding educational provision.
- Ensure there are enough school placements in the right places.
- Increase the percentage of children offered their first choice of school.
- Support schools to provide physical activity programmes through our Healthier Schools Programme.
- Support children in low-income families and reduce the impact of deprivation and inequalities that adversely affect school readiness or performance. For example, the Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF).
- Increase the uptake of vaccinations in school age children to reduce the impact of ill-health on school absence.

### Support partners and the Children's Trust to provide better early support to families and better standards of care

We will:

- Work with the Trust and partners to develop early help services to provide early support to families.
- Work with partners in the Safeguarding Partnership to promote and develop safeguarding activities for children and families.
- To work with the Trust to develop quality services for children and their families.
- Monitor commissioning through our partnership with Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to deliver Tier 1 and 2 level interventions. These include: supporting healthier pregnancies and reducing infant mortality rates, providing support to reduce smoking during pregnancy and ensure breastfeeding initiation is encouraged where possible by maternity nurses, midwives, health visitors and primary care.
- Ensure physical health strategies address the needs of children classified as obese.
- Work with Children First and Mental Health teams to identify ways to prevent traumatic childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect and homelessness which often adversely impacts into adulthood.

### Promote better training, further education and employment opportunities for young people

We will:

- Develop an opportunities pathway into apprenticeships.
- Identify training and employment opportunities across the Council.
- Review the 16-19 training and employment offer to ensure it meets local skills needs.

# 3

## Safe and thriving places

### **Key commitment:**

*Enable a thriving and successful economy that shapes great places to live, learn, work and visit*

### Introduction

North Northamptonshire is an area made up of many unique and distinctive towns and villages. It is a mix of rural and urban landscapes, blessed with picturesque countryside, attractive green space and served by good transport links. Respecting and strengthening the different identities of the towns, villages and rural communities in the area is a key priority.

We want to help town centres and villages respond to changing trends in shopping, leisure and living. We want to support our communities recover from the pandemic and help them level-up.

Finding new ways of bringing inward investment into the area and attracting tourism will be important. Key to improving the area will be supporting the creation of more high-quality jobs and better skills. This in turn will attract more high-quality employment and bring greater investment in the area.

Hand-in-hand with attracting investment, higher-quality employment and developing jobs and skills, will be the need to build more homes. But house building needs to meet better standards and supply needs to be able to meet demand. Road and transport infrastructure will need to be fit for purpose, with good connectivity both within and beyond North Northamptonshire.

For an area to be enjoyable and thriving, it is going to need to be safe. We want North Northamptonshire to be an area where crime and anti-social behaviour continually reduce. We want it to be a place where people feel safe and proud to call it their home.

### Our priorities

- Strengthen the cultural identity of towns, villages and rural communities
- Help town centres and villages respond to changing trends
- Attract tourism, visitors and inward investment
- Working with local businesses and partners to support the creation of high-quality, better-skilled jobs
- Improve the standard of new and existing homes and ensure housing supply meets demand
- Tackle the causes of difficult issues leading to nuisance, crime and anti-social behaviour
- Maintain our highways infrastructure to keep people moving safely around North Northamptonshire.
- Enable people to travel across North Northamptonshire, and beyond

### How will we monitor progress:

- Performance indicators and outcomes for:
  - Growth and Regeneration
  - Highways and Waste
  - Assets and the Environment
  - Regulatory Services
- Deprivation indices
- Crime data
- Progress in the delivery of our Service Plans
- Budget Performance of services

## 3

# Safe and thriving places

## Key commitment:

*Enable a thriving and successful economy that shapes great places to live, learn, work and visit*

### Strengthen the cultural identity of towns, villages and rural communities

We will:

- Support our local communities to shape their localities through Neighbourhood Plans.
- Review, maintain and enhance the quality of conservation areas.
- Drive up the design standards of new developments.
- Work with our partners to attract investment in our heritage assets.
- Diversify and support the wider rural economy.

### Help town centres and villages respond to changing trends

We will:

- Reimagine and redesign our key town centres with developed masterplans.
- Work to enhance the offer and environment, in our town centres and villages.
- Identify opportunities for public realm improvements.
- Seek to secure external funding to enable town centre regeneration projects.
- Review how our town and local centre assets could be utilised to support our communities and businesses to thrive.

### Attract tourism, visitors and inward investment

We will:

- Promote local festivals, events and attractions working with local businesses, communities and other stakeholders.
- Launch and grow Chester House as a major visitor attraction.
- In partnership with the sector, develop a Visitor Economy Strategy for North Northamptonshire.
- Work with our partners to promote the area as a tourism destination.
- Support further investment to improve tourism facilities and assets and broaden the offer for families and other key target groups.

### Working with local businesses and partners to support the creation of high-quality, better-skilled jobs

We will:

- Co-design with key sectors to develop a Skills Strategy for the area.
- Work with education providers to provide a skilled local workforce.
- Foster an environment that successfully attracts business investment and job creation.
- Develop closer links between schools and local employers, including local skills fairs.
- Provide support for digital skills and innovation working with local businesses.
- Support key sectors such as construction and renewable energy.
- As part of the Oxford Cambridge Arc, attract high-quality employers and jobs to the area.

### Improve the standard of new and existing homes and ensure housing supply meets demand

We will:

- Push for all new developments to have full fibre connectivity.
- Actively enforce to ensure new homes are built to consented standard.
- Work with house builders to encourage them to build above minimum standard.
- Actively manage the pipeline of market and affordable housing delivery to ensure the right homes are in the right places.

### Tackle the causes of difficult issues leading to nuisance, crime and anti-social behaviour

We will:

- Ensure we work with developers to design out crime in new developments.
- Raise awareness of local job opportunities and support measures to help people into employment.
- Work towards achieving Purple Flag status across all our towns.
- Work with communities to tackle anti-social behaviour and nuisance.
- Assist businesses in providing safe and healthy working environments for their employees and customers.

## 3

# Safe and thriving places

**Key commitment:**

*Enable a thriving and successful economy that shapes great places to live, learn, work and visit*

**Maintain our highways infrastructure to keep people moving safely around North Northamptonshire.**

We will:

- Put in place a new highways contract focused on delivering value for money in maintaining and improving the highway network.
- Prioritise permanent repairs to roads to reduce repeat visits.
- Invest in our road network to ensure it is safe, and minimises inconvenience for all road users.

**Enable people to travel across North Northamptonshire, and beyond**

We will:

- Implement our Bus Strategy and actively work with bus operators to maintain and enhance the quality of bus services across North Northamptonshire and to neighbouring areas.
- Develop and implement long-term plans for road infrastructure to ensure the network can support sustainable growth.
- Work with partners to improve the connectivity, capacity and quality of rail services across the East Midlands and beyond.

## 4

# Greener, sustainable environment

## **Key commitment:**

*We will take a lead on improving the green environment, making the area more sustainable for generations to come*

## Introduction

As a Council, we declared a climate and environment emergency in July 2021. We understand that this means we need to demonstrate clear leadership on environmental sustainability. We need to set an example for others to follow.

Implementing more environmentally friendly ways of working as a Council will be essential. Ensuring that we use renewable energy, low energy LED lighting, make the move to a lower carbon vehicle fleet and reducing staff work-related travel will all be important steps we will need to take.

Using our resources, our profile and our connections with local communities, we will raise awareness of important environmental issues and help set out what needs to be done to respond to the challenges ahead.

We will look to encourage the re-use of materials to protect resources. We will actively work to protect the local countryside and open spaces, and whilst doing so, enhance and the natural environment and ecology. Where necessary, we will take enforcement action to ensure that individuals and businesses comply with the necessary environmental regulations.

Working with communities and businesses to tackle climate change and help improve air quality will also be a priority for us. Businesses have a significant role to play in this regard. We know that we will need to demonstrate leadership to give us the credibility to work with them and together deliver change.

We also need to take active steps to promote more sustainable, active travel. We will look to ensure low carbon technology such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure is in place.

## Our priorities

- **Demonstrate clear leadership on tackling environmental sustainability**
- **Educate, encourage reuse, harmonise and enforce to keep our environments free from litter**
- **Work with communities and businesses to tackle climate change and improve air quality**
- **Promote sustainable, active travel**
- **Protect the countryside and open spaces, and enhance the natural environment and ecology**
- **Embed low carbon technology, improved green infrastructure and sustainable forms of transport**

## How will we monitor progress:

- **Performance indicators and outcomes for:**
  - **Assets and the Environment**
  - **Growth and Regeneration**
  - **Highways and Waste**
  - **Regulatory Services**
- **Progress in the delivery of our Service Plans**
- **Budget Performance of services**



## 4

# Greener, sustainable environment

## Key commitment:

*We will take a lead on improving the green environment, making the area more sustainable for generations to come*

### Demonstrate clear leadership on tackling environmental sustainability

We will:

- Embed climate change in our policy development and procurement practices.
- Establish a North Northants network to develop and co-design a Climate Strategy and Action Plan.
- Ensure we use green energy for our electricity and low energy lighting at our offices and other assets.
- Reduce the fossil fuel consumption of our vehicle fleet both through the use of more efficient and low carbon vehicles and by reducing avoidable journeys.

### Educate, encourage reuse, harmonise and enforce to keep our environments free from litter

We will:

- Standardise the waste and recycling service so that the same standard and type of service is provided to all residents across North Northamptonshire.
- Provide waste and recycling education and information to residents and businesses.
- Ensure our waste collection and disposal operations are efficient and have the minimum, most economically viable, detrimental impact on the environment.
- Set an example as an organisation by reducing our waste and recycling as much as possible.
- Tackle littering by discouraging people from throwing litter on our streets and roadsides, as well as support volunteers who wish to take part in local litter pick.

### Work with communities and businesses to tackle climate change and improve air quality

We will:

- Work with businesses to measure and improve air quality across our communities, particularly where it is highest.
- Work with key sectors to support renewable energy parks.
- Promote and support initiatives that engage local communities in tackling climate change.
- Increase community participation with local green spaces by supporting and developing 'friends of groups'.
- Provide voluntary placements within our woodland and heritage sector, providing training and development opportunities.
- Continue to deliver sustainability messages via outdoor learning sessions to schools and groups.

### Promote sustainable, active travel

We will:

- Promote sustainable travel and invest in active travel through new Cycling and Walking Investment Plans, by working with schools, businesses and residents to encourage a shift to cycling and walking.
- Reduce carbon emissions and air pollution by making it easier and safer to travel by bike, scooter or on foot.
- Support school street initiatives, walking to school and low traffic neighbourhoods.

### Protect the countryside and open spaces, and enhance the natural environment and ecology

We will:

- Provide inspirational parks and open spaces that are beneficial for all and, in so doing, contribute to people's health and wellbeing.
- Host and deliver a high standard of community events and educational sessions within local parks and open spaces.
- Continue to promote environmental awareness to park visitors through on site information, and public events programmes.
- Maximise opportunities to support our wildlife through both our built environment and green spaces.
- Develop a Tree Strategy to increase coverage and long-term care of our tree stock.
- Work with local communities and other stakeholders to manage the risks associated with flooding.

### Embed low carbon technology, improved green infrastructure and sustainable forms of transport

We will:

- Increase the proportion of total energy used by the Council to that which is generated by renewable sources.
- Seek to ensure all new housing developments and council sites have access to Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points as part of a wider EV Strategy.

## 5

# Connected communities

**Key commitment:**

*Ensuring our communities are connected with one another so they are able to shape their lives and the areas where they live*

## Introduction

In order for the Council to be trusted to shape the local area, and for communities to be empowered to help shape it themselves, we are going to need to listen more carefully and give communities a greater say in their own future.

We want to find more effective ways of connecting with communities. Being visible and talking face-to-face will be vital. Providing information in a way that makes sense will be important too, as will meaningful consultation and engagement that genuinely make a difference.

We are going to need to respect and engage our local and diverse communities. Everyone's view needs to count. We need to find more effective ways of connecting with seldom heard people. Equality of access to services, information and engagement activities will be vital, as will be reaching out to both urban and rural areas across North Northamptonshire.

We also know that we cannot do everything ourselves. To meet the challenges ahead, we are going to need to make stronger connections with the voluntary and community sector, empowering them to do the things they are often better placed to do.

## Our priorities

- **Inform and listen to our communities, giving them a greater say in their future**
- **Respect and engage our local and diverse communities and town and parish councils**
- **Empower a thriving voluntary and community sector**

## How will we monitor progress:

- **Performance indicators and outcomes for:**
  - **Communications and Engagement**
  - **Customer Services**
  - **Democratic and Legal Services**
- **Outcome of place and satisfaction surveys**
- **Progress in the delivery of our Service Plans**
- **Budget Performance of services**

## 5

# Connected communities

## Key commitment:

*Ensuring our communities are connected with one another so they are able to shape their lives and the areas where they live*

## Inform and listen to our communities, giving them a greater say in their future

We will:

- Co-produce and co-deliver Levelling-Up Plans for targeted communities.
- Carry out regular, meaningful consultation and engagement activities that effectively engage local communities and shape local communities and their public services.
- Encourage and promote resident and tenant involvement in decision-making.
- Develop “take action” community teams.
- Use libraries and community hubs to provide an outlet for local consultations and engagement activities.
- Work with developers and planning teams to ensure new housing developments deliver more sustainable communities.
- Develop a Grants Strategy and policies to enable grant funding for small community initiatives.
- Work with residents, communities, and other stakeholders to make the best use of Section 106 funding earmarked for community facilities including libraries, community centres, woodlands, open spaces and play areas.
- Develop effective measures for understanding customer satisfaction and pride in the area as well as with services provided.

## Respect and engage our local and diverse communities and town and parish councils

We will:

- Support the development of a Cultural Forum for North Northamptonshire.
- Through partner organisations ensure there is a wide-ranging programme of activities, events and programming to meet identified community strengths and needs.
- Address marginalised or socially excluded groups, including those from migrant communities or those with poor mental health or substance misuse issues. These groups often do not have a voice in local decisions and are not given as many opportunities to participate in community life as others.
- Develop improved systems, tools and techniques to ensure inequalities are actively addressed in decision-making allowing seldom heard voices to be better understood.
- Develop the Council’s Equalities Strategy, ensuring that it remains fit for purpose and that it is owned by all areas of the Council and at all levels.
- Develop a meaningful dialogue and relationship with town and parish councils, actively engaging with them in future decisions that affect local communities.

## Empower a thriving voluntary and community sector

We will:

- Adopt an agreed definition and approach to co-producing service delivery with the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE), service users and communities.
- Work with communities and partners to provide the services, activities and events that are needed locally from the library.
- Review core and devolved grant funded organisations, aligning grants and agree strategic delivery partners.
- Improve the communication with the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) and build a shared understanding of each other’s objectives and barriers to delivery.
- Put in place arrangements to support and create social networks and volunteering within the community.
- Actively work with and engage communities to identify the skills and resources required to improve health and reduce inequalities.
- Share good practice with communities across North Northamptonshire and seek to provide them with more control and influence over conditions that affect their health.

## 6

# Modern Public Services

## **Key commitment:**

*Providing efficient, effective and affordable services that make a real difference to all our local communities*

## Introduction

Although it will take time and significant effort, at North Northamptonshire Council we are committed to providing good quality, efficient and effective services.

We want to level-up services so that they all meet a good minimum standard, with some exceptional and award-winning services where this is affordable. We want to value our customers and we want our customers to value the services we provide.

To do this, we will develop our community hubs in neighbourhoods, providing a range of services that best suit the communities they serve. We will work closely with our partners, the voluntary sector and social enterprises to better serve our local communities with the services that matter most to them.

We will make more efficient use of our assets, skills, knowledge and technology. We will robustly manage the finances and performance of the Council, ensuring that we do more of the things that work well and importantly, we will learn from our mistakes.

To achieve this, we are going to need to become the employer of choice. An organisation that can attract and retain the best staff. An organisation that invests in its people, supports them, gives them the responsibilities and freedoms to innovate whilst at the same time, operate at the highest standards of trust and accountability.

These are not easy ambitions. We know the bar has rightly been set high, but we are absolutely committed and motivated to achieving them. We want to provide modern public services that help deliver the vision for North Northamptonshire and we are absolutely committed to this aim.

## Our priorities

- **Provide good quality and efficient services valued by our customers**
- **Enhance services provided at our community hubs**
- **Invest in and value our staff to become an employer of choice**
- **Use our assets, skills, knowledge and technology most effectively**
- **Ensure very robust financial and performance management**

## How will we monitor progress:

- **Performance indicators and outcomes for:**
  - **All Council services**
  - **Financial Services**
  - **Customer Services**
  - **Democratic and Legal Services**
  - **Policy and Performance Service**
- **Progress in the delivery of our Service Plans**
- **Budget Performance of services**

## 6

## Modern Public Services

### **Key commitment:**

*Providing efficient, effective and affordable services that make a real difference to all our local communities*

### Provide good quality and efficient services valued by our customers

We will:

- Ensure that we meet our service standards when we respond to customers and that we regularly monitor and publish how well we are meeting our commitments.
- Deliver a consistent level of service across North Northamptonshire, ensuring customers are not disadvantaged by where they live.
- Understand and care about our customers' concerns, demonstrating through our actions, that our customers matter to us.
- Establish processes and practices that ensure that customer queries are dealt with correctly at their first point of contact.
- Develop our systems, processes and practices to ensure that we provide a faster response to customers when they contact us via the telephone.
- Take responsibility for every contact received anywhere within the Council. If we cannot help, we will connect customers to other organisations that can assist where this is possible.
- Work with our customers to develop quality, joined-up services that are accessible to all.
- Enable customers to access more services and information online and in a way that is more accessible and preferable to them.

### Enhance services provided at our community hubs

We will:

- Develop Community Hubs that are responsive to the needs of the local communities that they serve.
- Ensure Community Hubs empower local communities, playing host to a variety of support groups and external community organisations.
- Develop a partnership approach to service delivery and the provision of advice at Community Hubs including frontline staff, partner and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) services where practicable. We will ensure a joined-up approach to meeting the needs of local communities.
- Ensure a common standard of council service is provided by each Community Hub, matching those provided in the Council's customer service centres.
- Explore the feasibility of a mobile Community Hub that is responsive to the needs of smaller and more isolated communities.

### Invest in and value our staff to become an employer of choice

We will:

- Strive to become an employer of choice for the local community and further afield.
- Develop and deliver a 'Future Ways of Working' Strategy that ensures we have the right approach to managing people, technology and our operational premises.
- Value and support our staff, offering them stability and flexibility as well as the opportunities for career development, to learn new skills and to innovate.
- Develop the skills of tomorrow's workforce, increasing the use of apprenticeships, providing employment and training opportunities for young people locally.
- Deliver a strategy that helps embed and develop future working practices, building on the learning of remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Focus on developing a culture that values our staff and places their wellbeing and job satisfaction at the centre of what we do. We will work to retain staff and skills within the organisation.
- Invest in the development of our workforce. We will ensure our managers have the behaviours, skills and tools necessary to effectively manage and support their teams, working locally, remotely and flexibly.

## 6

# Modern Public Services

## Key commitment:

*Providing efficient, effective and affordable services that make a real difference to all our local communities*

## Use our assets, skills, knowledge and technology most effectively

### We will:

- We will develop a 'Future Ways of Working' Strategy that ensures we are making the best, most responsible use of our property, technology and people resources.
- Develop an ICT Strategy that ensures that technology is an affordable enabler of better services, not an expensive barrier to improvement.
- Develop a People Strategy that ensures our staff are equipped with the right knowledge, skills and abilities to provide class leading services of the future.
- Develop a Property Strategy that ensures the Council makes the smartest use of the right property in the right place, in a way that is sustainable for both the environment and the Council's budget and is conducive to the working practices of both today and tomorrow.
- Ensure that our working practices and use of operational premises minimise the negative impact on the environment.
- Use our technology to capture the right information in the right way to help provide better, more targeted services to our customers.
- Reduce the environmental impact of our operations through the smarter use of our buildings, technology and behaviours of staff.
- Support our most vulnerable residents with more responsive and informed services, enabled by the better use of technology. We will use technology responsibly to help us make early interventions and take preventative measures that help the local population.

## Ensure very robust financial management

### We will:

- Ensure the cost of services represent good value for money for local people. We will provide good quality information to local residents and businesses about the resources available and how they are used for the benefit of the local community.
- Ensure we effectively communicate the capital investments that are being made in the local community.
- Place greater emphasis on the importance of procuring through local supply chains in order to better support the local economy.
- Champion social value through our contracts and supply chains to provide demonstrable added-value that supports local priorities.
- Ensure continued financial monitoring by the Executive and Scrutiny Committees, demonstrating that the Council is committed to open and transparent financial performance.
- Ensure our governance processes are robust and support effective decision-making, and that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy reflects the significant challenges being faced and remains responsive to the uncertainties in the economy by continuing to deliver against savings targets.
- Review our Medium-Term Financial Plan as a live model and as a tool in assessing the financial viability of the Council.
- Ensure our savings plans are clearly communicated and linked to specific policy decisions, with the impact on service provision clearly articulated.

- Ensure we have the appropriate levels of reserves and that we closely monitor liquidity to underpin financial resilience.
- Provide support to members and officers responsible for managing budgets.
- Prepare the annual statement of accounts in an accurate and timely manner.

## Ensure very robust performance management

### We will:

- Develop a strong performance culture that develops the performance of our staff, services and systems to ensure the delivery of the right service outcomes at the right time.
- Embed consistent and continuous performance management arrangements that provide timely, accurate and relevant performance information to inform both decision-making and scrutiny.
- Use performance information to develop high-quality, high-performing, award-winning services.
- Use data intelligently to assist with the improvement of services and where possible, deliver early interventions.
- Report performance information publicly, regularly and routinely, ensuring that the Council is open and transparent.

# COVID-19 Recovery Plan

## Economic recovery:

- Set out clearly how we will support the recovery, regrowth and diversification of the local economy over the next decade.
- Support the delivery of COVID-19 business recovery and innovation grants whilst they are available.
- Work with our partners to create and deliver plans to attract inward investment.
- Working with businesses and other stakeholders, build awareness of local tourism attractions and accommodation to take advantage of day-trips and staycation opportunities.
- Ensure the effective use of the Welcome Back Fund.
- Deliver events in the area in line with pre-COVID-19 provision to help stimulate footfall into towns.
- Continue to implement policies that ensure the appropriate support is offered to rough sleepers and continue to work to both prevent and reduce the number of rough sleepers in the future.
- Work with key partners to prevent individuals in financial hardship from becoming homeless through early intervention, advice and support, encouraging people into employment where possible.
- Make safeguarding training available to staff and councillors to improve their understanding of different types of vulnerabilities and the reporting of concerns.

## Community recovery:

- We will work to restore our services provided in the community, ensuring that they are safe and give our community the confidence to use them.
- Identify the challenges and opportunities currently faced by North Northamptonshire's voluntary and community sector and their services and identify how best we can help them.
- Look for opportunities within the Council's community grant scheme to provide help and support to community groups and organisations that focus on initiatives that aid communities recover from the pandemic.
- Support the development and promotion of improved contact information to enable residents, parish and town councils and service providers to search for community groups, organisations and charities local to them and based on their local needs.
- Work with our leisure providers to ensure their recovery plan is robust and increases the usage of leisure centres to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- Engage with communities, town and parish councils and key partners to identify any key recovery issues and adapt our COVID-19 recovery plan in the light of any issues that emerge.

## Organisational recovery

- Develop and implement a 'Future Ways of Working' Strategy that is informed by the learning from the remote working implemented during the pandemic and builds-in the strengths into our future approach.
- Continue to develop a responsive, collaborative and innovative working culture.
- Develop the Council's ICT strategy to ensure that it is more agile and responsive to changing business need.

- Invest in technology to support more effective hybrid meetings (where some people attend in person, and some attend remotely). We will also invest in our Council Chambers, to ensure that they can be accessed and viewed remotely and effectively, opening up access to our meetings to local communities.
- Improve the Council's intranet to ensure more effective delivery of information to staff to help them do their job and support the development of their wellbeing.
- We will review our office accommodation requirements to encourage and promote more flexible and collaborative working.
- We will continue to develop our organisation's culture, developing ownership of our values and behaviours with our staff.
- Develop our people strategy, investing in our staff's skills, capabilities and wellbeing.
- Continue to develop and implement our staff wellbeing approach in light of learning from the pandemic, anticipated longer term health impacts and staff needs/expectations.
- Identify lessons learnt from the experience of the pandemic, impacts on services, performance and resilience, and any forthcoming challenges. We will feed the findings into the Council's transformation programme.
- Review our Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Planning arrangements to make sure we have the correct resources and contingencies to meet future emergencies.

## Glossary of terms

**Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)** – A condition that affects people's behaviour. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse. (Source: NHS)

**Adult Learning Service** – The Northamptonshire Adult Learning Service delivers courses to residents across the area. The service is funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

**Agile** - Ability to move quickly and easily.

**Annual Statement of Accounts** - The purpose of the Annual Statement of Accounts is to give clear information on the income and expenditure of the council and to demonstrate the council's stewardship of public money for the year.

**Citizens Advice (CAB)** - Citizens Advice is an operating name of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.

**Carer's forum** – Meeting between North Northamptonshire Council and Northamptonshire Carers to exchange ideas and views.

**Carer's needs assessments** - If you care for someone, you can have an assessment to see what might help make your life easier. (Source: NHS)

**Co-produce** – Produce jointly. In the context of this plan, usually the Council working together with its partners and local community to produce a plan.

**Community Hub** - A building or space that is open and accessible to the local community.

**Core and devolved grant funded organisations** - In supporting community-led initiatives a council may provide grant funding to organisations to buy facilities or services to benefit and meet the demands of the community. Core organisations are voluntary or community-based not-for-profit groups. Devolved organisations are local community associations that receive grant funding to cover the subsidy required in running council community or sports facilities for their local communities.

**Customer Service Centre** – A centre where customers can visit and access a range of council and partner services.

**Delivery framework** - A mechanism for local authorities as employers, service providers and procurers of goods and services to play their part in delivery of the strategic goals for health, wellbeing and safety.

**Dual needs navigator (mental health and drug /alcohol)** - A single point of contact to provide help.

**Early interventions** - Identifying and providing effective early support to children and young people who are at risk of poor outcomes.

**E-library** – Electronic library where digital content can be accessed online.

**Employer of Choice** - An employer whom workers choose to work for when presented with other employment choices.

**Entrenched rough sleepers** – Someone who may be living a rough sleeping lifestyle, or who has a history of long-term hostel living and repeated periods of rough sleeping.

**Financial management** - The strategic planning, organising, directing, and controlling of financial undertakings in an organisation.

**Future Ways of Working Strategy** – A strategy that looks at how the organisation will work in the future. In the context of this plan, it is being heavily informed by the learning from the remote working implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Governance processes** – A framework of authority and accountability that defines and controls outputs and activities.

# Glossary of terms



# Glossary of terms

**Healthy Active Lives Strategy** – A strategy to promote healthy lifestyles.

**ICT Strategy** – A strategy to ensure that technology can provide affordable and better services. (ICT stands for information and communications technology)

**Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)** - A process by which local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups assess the current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of the local community to inform local decision-making.

**Levelling-up** – A Government programme to that supports communities across the UK to thrive, making them great places to live and work. (Source: GOV.UK)

**Liquidity** – In terms of finance, it is the ease at which an asset or security can be converted into ready cash that can be used for other things.

**Medium Term Financial Plan** - A plan that sets out how we will manage the income and expenditure of the council over several years.

**Mental Health Prevention Concordat** – A Government programme that aims to facilitate local and national action around preventing mental health problems and promoting good mental health. (Source: GOV.UK)

**Northamptonshire Sport** - A local charity dedicated to helping the people of Northamptonshire to ‘become more active, more often’.

**People Strategy** – A strategy that ensures our staff are equipped with the right knowledge, skills and abilities to provide class leading services of the future.

**Performance Culture** – A culture that develops the performance of staff, services and systems to ensure the delivery of the right service outcomes at the right time.

**Performance Management** - Arrangements that provide timely, accurate and relevant performance information to inform both decision-making and scrutiny.

**Progression Workers** – People who work with individuals to help them grow their confidence and recognise their potential.

**Property Strategy** – A strategy that ensures the Council makes the smartest use of the right property in the right place, in a way that is sustainable for both the environment and the Council’s budget and is conducive to the working practices of both today and tomorrow.

**Public realm** - External urban spaces that are publicly accessible.

**Reserves** - The money an organisation keeps on hand to meet short-term and emergency funding needs.

**Respite care** - Respite care means taking a break from caring, while the person you care for is looked after by someone else. (Source: NHS).

**Rough sleeper** - Someone who sleeps or lives outside because they have no home.

**Sitting service** - A sitting or befriending service where a trained person stays with the person you care for while you go out.

**Social Prescribing** - Social prescribing is a way of helping people to manage their own mental and physical health by referring them to local community-run services like leisure activities, social groups and healthy lifestyle advice.

# Glossary of terms

**Social stressors** – Social stress can be broadly defined as a situation which threatens one's relationships, esteem, or sense of belonging within a group, or larger social context.

**Strengths-based model** – An approach that focuses on individuals' strengths (including personal strengths and social and community networks).

**Supply chains** - A network between an organisation, its suppliers and the resources that it needs to produce and distribute a specific service to the public.

**Third sector services** – Third sector organisations belong neither to the public sector nor the private sector. They include organisations such as charities.

**Three conversations model** – An innovative approach to needs assessment and care planning. It focuses primarily on people's strengths and community assets. It supports frontline professionals to have three distinct and specific conversations around: (1) Initial contact (2) If people are at risk and (3) If long-term support is needed. There are specific questions to consider for each of these three areas, such as, if people are at risk: What needs to change to make you safe and regain control?

**Transitions and Lettings Plus Scheme** – A scheme that offers a package of incentives to local landlords who let their properties to customers who are looking for somewhere to live.

**Value-added** – Providing a benefit greater than the one that is expected but not at an additional cost or price.

**Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE)** – This is a 'catch-all' term referring to any organisation working to achieve social purposes. These may range from small community based groups to registered charities which may be local, regional, national or global.