



# Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held at the Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Tuesday 16 April 2024 at 6.00 pm

## Agenda

Public Session	
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.
3.	<b>Minutes</b> (Pages 5 - 10) To approve the minutes from the 12 <sup>th</sup> March Cabinet meeting.
4.	<b>Chair's Announcements</b> To receive communications from the Chair.
5.	<b>Urgent Business</b> The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.
6.	<b>Carer Strategy</b> (Pages 11 - 52)
7.	<b>Proposed Drainage Byelaws for Flood Risk Management</b> (Pages 53 - 74)
8.	<b>Consultation draft Parks Development Strategy</b> (Pages 75 - 126)

9.	<b>Director of Public Health Report 2023</b> (Pages 127 - 166)
<b>Private Session</b>	

Catherine Whitehead  
Proper Officer  
8 April 2024

**Cabinet Members:**

Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Chair)	Councillor Adam Brown (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiona Baker	Councillor Rebecca Breese
Councillor Matt Golby	Councillor Mike Hallam
Councillor Phil Larratt	Councillor Daniel Lister
Councillor Malcolm Longley	Councillor David Smith

**Information about this Agenda**

**Apologies for Absence**

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**Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item

**Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates**

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare that fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

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Or by writing to:

West Northamptonshire Council  
The Guildhall  
St Giles Street  
Northampton  
NN1 1DE

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## Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Tuesday 12 March 2024 at 6.00 pm.

### Present:

Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Chair)  
 Councillor Adam Brown (Vice-Chair)  
 Councillor Fiona Baker  
 Councillor Matt Golby  
 Councillor Mike Hallam  
 Councillor Phil Larratt  
 Councillor Daniel Lister  
 Councillor Malcolm Longley  
 Councillor David Smith

### Also Present:

Councillor Sally Beardsworth  
 Councillor Cecile Irving-Swift  
 Councillor Bob Purser  
 Councillor Carl Squires  
 Councillor Wendy Randall

### Officers:

Anna Earnshaw, Chief Executive  
 Martin Henry, Executive Director - Finance (Section 151 Officer)  
 Catherine Whitehead, Director of Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)  
 Paul Hanson, Head of Democratic & Elections  
 Sofia Neal-Gonzalez  
 Jane Carr, Director of Communities & Opportunities  
 Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director - People Services & Deputy Chief Executive  
 Sarah Reed, Executive Director - Corporate Services  
 Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director - Place, Economy and Environment  
 Becky Hutson, Head of Communications  
 Adrian Ward  
 Josh West, Political Assistant to the Labour Group

### 130. Apologies

Apologies received from Councillor Rebecca Breese

### 131. Declarations of Interest

None

132. **Minutes**

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

133. **Chair's Announcements**

None

134. **Urgent Business**

None

135. **Report of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Review of the VOI E-Scooter Trial**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Andre Gonzalez de Savage and Councillor Alison Eastwood as Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chair of the Task and Finish group respectively, presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Cabinet were made aware of the various recommendations put forward by the committee. The committee had been impressed by the response from VOI and their willingness to work with WNC on the concerns raised.

Councillors made the following comments.

- There had been concerns raised by members of the public with regards the safety of pedestrians, especially the elderly.
- It was acknowledged that they were useful tool for some residents.
- Restrictions imposed needed to be monitored closely.
- Would the findings of the scrutiny committee make any real difference to how the scooters are used?
- It was important to take all of the issues raised into account before the contract is renewed.

Councillor Phil Larratt noted that VOI were aware of the concerns raised in the report and were working to address them but had requested a timeline from WNC.

RESOLVED: Cabinet noted the report and considered the recommendations proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the VOI E-Scooter Trial scrutiny review and associated actions as set out within paragraph 5.1 of this report.

136. **Corporate Plan – Quarterly Performance Report**

The Chair presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were then invited to give an update on their various portfolios.

Councillors made the following comments.

- It was queried whether the scrutiny committee could be used to look at more complex issues.
- The museums exhibits were a credit to the county, it was important to make residents more aware of them.
- Could there be another indicator added in relation to waste to landfill?
- Littering fixed penalty notices had increased this quarter, could the town centre figures be provided separately.

Councillor Adam Brown advised that the Museum consultation was still open and that providing residents with good value for money was important.

Councillor Phil Larratt advised that a member event would be scheduled, its aim would be to inform councillors of the diverse ways in which road repairs are dealt with. It was hoped this would help answer any future questions.

RESOLVED: Cabinet noted the content of the appendix detailing performance against the metrics covering the second quarter of 2023-24.

137. **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-27**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Adam Brown presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were advised that this was a statutory obligation. Four key themes were mentioned in the report each one underpinned by an objective with further information due to be provided by the plan due in May.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Maintaining affordable rents for people was important.
- The elevated levels of people in temporary accommodation were noted.
- Homelessness is dynamic, it was important for WNC to be able notice trends.
- Would there be a monitoring or review of the strategy?

Councillor Adam Brown made the following comments.

- Every theme mentioned in the report also had a 'what we will do' section.
- The council had a legal obligation to house people
- It was advised that there was a 12-month delivery plan in place, this information could be found in the appendix.

RESOLVED: Cabinet.

a) Approved the West Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024- 2027)

b) Noted that a robust Delivery Action Plan, aligned to the objectives and priorities set out in the strategy, will be produced with partners and will be presented to Cabinet in May 2024.

138. **WNC Communications & Engagement Strategy 2024-27**

The Chair presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated. Members were advised that this strategy had been developed over the last 3 years and had also been sold to external partners. There had already been various engagement strategies, most recently 'never bin batteries'.

A Councillor asked whether committee meeting dates could be promoted more to ensure continued public engagement.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy 2024-27 and supports its implementation across the organisation.

139. **The Establishment of West Northamptonshire Local Access Forum**

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Phil Larratt presented the report, copies of which had been previously circulated.

Councillors made the following comments

- Correct and up to date signposts would be welcomed.
- Well managed footpaths and cycle paths would help with trespassing issues.
- This could help with improvement of relationships with local voluntary groups.

Councillor Phil Larratt agreed on the importance of correct signposting.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- a) Agreed that West Northamptonshire should withdraw from Northamptonshire Local Access Forum - the previous joint arrangement with North Northamptonshire.
- b) Agreed to establish the West Northamptonshire Local Access Forum.
- c) Agreed the proposed Terms of Reference for the West Northamptonshire Local Access Forum

140. **Risk Management Strategy and Strategic Risk Register**

At the Chair's invitation the Councillor Cecile Irving-Swift the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the main points of the report. Members were advised that the committee had wanted an agile and dynamic risk register which would inform both the internal and external auditors. The committee felt that it would be productive for the Chief Internal Auditor to attend EPB meetings.

Councillors made the following comments.

- Could climate change be added as a risk?
- Financial sustainability was an issue, how would WNC manage extra demands on its resources.
- It was acknowledged that many mitigations were out of the council's control.
- It was queried what the worst-case scenario would be should the inter authority agreement not be reached.

Councillor Malcolm Longley advised that this was a living document and is reviewed on a regular basis.

RESOLVED: Cabinet;

- a) Approved the updated Risk Management Strategy (Appendix A).
- b) Endorsed the updated Strategic Risk Register (Appendix B).
- c) Noted that the Audit & Governance Committee will monitor the Strategic Risk Register and the mitigating actions contained within it on an ongoing basis and report any significant concerns back to Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 8.07 pm

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

16 APRIL 2024

## CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE, WELLBEING AND HEALTH INTEGRATION – COUNCILLOR MATT GOLBY

Report Title	Carer Strategy
Report Author	Michael Hurt – Better Care Fund Service Manager michael.hurt@westnorthants.gov.uk

### List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	20/03/2024
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	20/03/2024
Other Director	Stuart Lackenby	20/03/2024
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	20/03/2024

### List of Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Carer Strategy v0.9 (separate PDF)

Appendix B - Engagement Feedback (at the end of this document)

Appendix C – Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) (at the end of this document)

### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. To advise Cabinet of the engagement activity undertaken to understand the needs of our unpaid carers.
- 1.2. To seek approval for a 30-working day public consultation on the carer strategy before final publication.

## **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) have jointly commissioned carer support services from Northamptonshire Carers. The contract is led by NNC and both councils delegate Care Act (2014) statutory duties for carers, to this provider.
- 2.2 The contract is due to end at the end of September 2024 and NNC have requested a 6-month waiver. This is to allow time for both councils to develop a new service specification and will commission their own carer support services going forwards. Cabinet will be informed our intended commissioning approach during 2024.  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Do%20I%20need%20to%20consult.pdf>
- 2.3 To support the respective strategic direction each council will undertake, both councils have developed their own carer strategy. The WNC strategy has been coproduced with West Northamptonshire carer experts by experience (EBEs). This report is seeking approval for public consultation on this draft carer strategy before final publication of the strategy. This is a very positive step for WNC and supports the assurance work for CQC inspections of local authorities.
- 2.4 A carers strategy will allow us to set out the direction of travel for the council over the next five years. The strategy sets priorities for the council with associated actions, written to tackle those issues identified in the engagement and self-assessment. It sets out the council's ambition to deliver the best services it can for the people of West Northamptonshire and fulfil its statutory duties for unpaid carers.

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet approve the 30-day carer strategy consultation.

## **4. Reason for Recommendations**

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- 4.1 Engagement sessions were carried out in all 9 LAPS before the strategy was written with WNC carers as part of a coproduction team. We held two online events and produced an online questionnaire.
- 4.2 Commissioners carried out a locally designed Care Act self-assessment. The results of the self-assessment and engagement feedback were used by the coproduction team to write the priorities and actions for this strategy.
- 4.3 The next and final step is to take the strategy for 30 days to public consultation. Feedback from consultation will be considered before the issuing of the final strategy.

## **5. Report Background**

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- 5.1 Carer numbers:
- The 2021 Census showed 31,723 people identifying themselves as carers in West Northamptonshire (based on averages of all the custom carer dataset queries).
  - The percentage of the population in a caring role in West Northamptonshire = 7.5%
  - The potential 2024 carer population of West Northamptonshire = 33,007



- Number of carers on the Northamptonshire Carers list - 10,984 (adults and child carers, December 2023)
  - Shortfall in known carers (January 2024) = approximately 22,000
- 5.2 Headlines from the national carer survey 2024 (West Northamptonshire):
- Carers who accessed services were generally happy with them
  - Only 1 in 5 carers said they had as much control as they needed
  - 7 out of 10 carers said that the information/advice they received was helpful
  - Overall carers reported feeling tired, depressed, and stressed
- 5.3 Carer finance:
- With the current cost of living crisis, carers are facing unprecedented pressure on their finances (Carers UK data).
- A quarter of carers are cutting back on essentials like food or heating.
  - 63% are extremely worried about managing their monthly costs.
  - 44% of working-age adults who are caring for 35 hours or more a week are in poverty.
  - Carer's Allowance is the main carer's benefit and is £76.75 per week (2023/24) for a minimum of 35 hours. It is the lowest benefit of its kind. In the UK, 977,506 carers were in receipt of Carer's Allowance in 2022.
- 5.4 Work and caring in West Northamptonshire:
- 36% of carers also work full-time.
  - 19% of carers also work part-time.
- 5.5 Disability and caring in West Northamptonshire:
- 18% of carers are disabled under the Equality Act and their day-to-day activities are limited a little
  - 10% of carers are not disabled under the Equality Act: but has a long-term physical or mental health condition but their day-to-day activities are not limited.
  - 8% of carers are disabled under the Equality Act and their day-to-day activities are limited a lot.
- 5.6 The carer strategy supports the aim of the council's anti-poverty strategy for a fairer and more inclusive West Northamptonshire, where everyone can live their best life, prosperous and fulfilling, free from poverty and inequality.
- 5.7 The strategy aims to support people who wish to work but who also have a carer role by providing support, information, signposting, and a support plan personalised to the needs of the carer.
- 5.8 Carers can access advice on benefits such as Carer's Allowance, Attendance Allowance for the cared for person and advice on council tax exemption for severe mental impairment for example, so the carer effectively has a 25% discount on their council tax bill.
- 5.9 Two priorities support this: the development of a guide for carers in West Northamptonshire and a one-stop shop that will visit the respective LAPS as a peripatetic support service. This will be a source of expert advice.

- 5.10 Supporting the carer reduces carer burden and improves quality of life, reducing the risk of carer crisis. Carers are encouraged to plan for a potential crisis and appropriate support can significantly reduce this risk. Carer crisis can lead to hospital and care home admissions.
- 5.11 Our EBEs wanted an outcomes framework to prove the strategy will have an effect on carer burden and quality of life, as well as those measures commissioners may usually record, such as an increased number of carers being supported. Evidence based tools were explored and the following selected:
- Carer burden: Zarit Burden Interview
  - Care Quality of life: Adult Carer Quality of Life Questionnaire (AC-QoL)
- A baseline score will be recorded at the beginning of an intervention and then after a period of time has lapsed, depending on the circumstances.
- 5.12 The Care Act (2014) and Children and Families Act (2014) set out statutory responsibilities for carers. Our EBEs wanted people to understand their rights and so the main duties are listed in the carer strategy. These duties include a right to a carer assessment, a support plan, review of that support plan and information and advice. They set out how the market should be developed to support people and how carers should be safeguarded and provided with advocacy when they need it.
- 5.13 The Health and Care Act 2022 gave CQC new powers that allow them to provide a meaningful and independent assessment of care at a local authority and integrated care system level. They enable CQC to start to understand the quality of care in a local area or system and provide independent assurance to the public of the quality of care in their area.
- 5.14 CQC has set out a framework for inspection and that includes reviewing strategies a local authority produces to understand if these strategies support the local authority in fulfilling its duties under the Care Act (2014). Northamptonshire Carers were leading a countywide approach to developing a carer strategy but the statutory duty for carers lies with the local authority. Both NNC and WNC took the decision to develop their own carer strategy. Northamptonshire Carers have supported this by providing information to each council on the work they had carried out up until that point in time.

## **6. Issues and Choices**

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- 6.1 The strategy will be a framework for developing support for carers. Not just as a one-off but as a progressive process of positive change over the next 5 years. It recognises the increasingly important role that carers play in West Northamptonshire, alongside the wide variety of caring roles and the diversity of those within these roles and it acknowledges that carers need more help and support than has been available in the past.
- 6.2 The Care Act (2014) and Children and Families Act (2014) set out what support local authorities must provide for carers, as well as the cared for person. West Northamptonshire Council delegated these responsibilities when it commissioned with NNC Northamptonshire Carers to deliver these services for its residents. The current contract led by NNC is due to end at the end of September 2024. A 6-month waiver will be requested to allow time for the strategy to be published and separate models for NNC and WNC to be developed. The priorities set out

strategy will guide the development of a new carer support service specification, specifically aimed to meet the needs of the carers in West Northamptonshire.

- 6.3 The strategy has been developed with current carers of people in West Northamptonshire. People with lived experience of caring, referred to as experts by experience (EBEs) were recruited during the engagement events for this strategy and formed a coproduction group with officers of WNC.
- 6.4 Engagement events were held in all nine Local Area Partnership (LAP) areas with a mixture of morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. Commissioners held two online engagement events and comms' colleagues developed an online questionnaire. The feedback was used by the coproduction group.
- 6.5 The Senior Leadership Team requested commissioners assess WNC adherence to our statutory duties to carers under the Care Act (2014). Commissioners contacted ADASS and the LGA to ask if an assessment tool had been developed for this purpose. When commissioners were advised that they were not aware of a tool, one was developed in WNC. The tool was highlighted as good practice by the LGA and is now used by numerous other local authorities.
- 6.6 The results of the self-assessment led to recommendations resulting in WNC task and finish groups. These are to explore the interface between assessments of the cared for person and assessment of the carer and the direct payment model for carers. The results of the engagement events and self-assessment were shared with the EBEs, and they used this and their own experiences to develop the strategy.
- 6.7 There is no current national carer strategy to consider, and national carer voluntary groups have been campaigning for the government to put one in place. The last national carer strategy was, *'Carers at the heart of 21st-century families; (2008-2018)* and the Carers Action Plan 2018 – 2020.
- 6.8 The NHS Long Term Plan published in 2019 set out some priorities for carers and the main themes are detailed in the carer strategy.
- 6.9 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) carer guidance published in 2020 is included in the strategy. Nice carer guidance covers support for adults (aged 18 and over) who provide unpaid care for anyone aged 16 or over with health or social care needs. It aims to improve the lives of carers by helping health and social care practitioners identify people who are caring for someone and give them the right information and support. It covers carers' assessments, practical, emotional, and social support and training, and support for carers providing end of life care.
- 6.10 Although the EBEs were not aware of the NHS Long Term Plan or NICE guidance, the local priorities align very well with these national themes.

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

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

7.1.1 There are no new resources or financial implications arising from the strategy.

7.1.2 The strategy is a strategic direction for improved information, support and signposting for carers. It will include upstream interventions aimed at prevention. The new service specification for carers will take the priorities into account and be developed within the current financial envelope for the carer support model, currently being provided by Northamptonshire Carers. EBEs will be involved in the process from the start.

7.1.3 Northamptonshire Integrated Care System (ICS), led by WNC officers, submitted an expression of interest for the DHSC Accelerated Reform Fund (ARF). The expression of interest was a grant for three projects from a list of 12 national priorities. Five of these were for carers. The ICS chose two projects for carers (and another for shared lives) and these are areas identified for improvement in the self-assessment. Furthermore, they are priorities in the carer strategy. The projects are:

- Supporting carers to identify themselves as carers
- Identifying more carers for support.

This is a statutory duty under the Care Act (2014). Based on the 2021 national Census data, in 2024 there are approximately, 33,007 who identify themselves as a carer and many more that do not currently identify themselves as a carer. As of December 2023, Northamptonshire Carers had 10,984 people on their books – made up of adults and child carers. There is a significant shortfall of people yet to be offered support.

### **7.2 Legal**

7.2.1 The Care Act 2014 makes provision for the responsibility and statutory duty on a local authority to assess a carer's need for support, to include any possible future support, what those needs may be and how those identified needs will be met having been evaluated and if they meet the eligibility criteria. The strategy aims to improve the council's adherence to those statutory duties.

### **7.3 Risk**

7.3.1 By not having a carer strategy in place, the council risks criticism in the council's CQC inspection.

7.3.2 Not having a carer strategy increases the risk to the council of not meeting its statutory duties towards carers. The strategy aims to address areas identified for improvement and will address gaps in support and reduce the risk of carer crisis.

7.3.3 If carers are not adequately supported, the risk of carer crisis increases. Care crisis leads to the cared for person being admitted to long term care or hospital admission and has a negative effect on the carer's wellbeing.

#### 7.4 **Consultation and Communications**

7.4.1 Engagement events were held in all nine Local Area Partnership (LAP) areas with a mixture of morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. Commissioners held two online engagement events and comms' colleagues developed an online questionnaire.

7.4.2 To prompt engagement and input into the events / online questionnaire, a range of communication channels were used to share the messaging which include:

- Text and flyer included distributed to Town & Parish Councils
- Members briefing
- Community newsletter
- Community forums distribution lists
- Members of the WNC Consultation Register
- Members of the WNC Residents' Panel
- Regular social media messaging shared on all channels
- Cllr Golby Interview on NLive radio station
- Uploaded article to website
- Press release issued to all media outlets
- Issued via e-resident newsletters
- Article shared via Northants Carers newsletter and social media
- Internal mid-week update and news centre
- Shared via internal WNC Staff carers network
- Commissioners shared directly to providers / contacts / LAP leads

7.4.3 To support feedback and prompt responses to the public consultation, a comprehensive communications plan will accompany the public consultation launch using a variety of different channels.

#### 7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 The strategy is not considered necessary for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, there is a scrutiny sub-group currently taking place on carers and the group have requested to comment on this strategy during the consultation period.

#### 7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 No impact on climate.

#### 7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 The carer strategy is aimed at significantly improving the carer support offer in communities. For example, one of the priorities is for a one-stop shop peripatetic service to move around the

LAPs. Some of the feedback from the engagement events was about what is perceived as a 'postcode lottery' for support where there is plenty in the towns and less so in the very rural villages. This strategy addresses those issues.

## 8. Background Papers

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### 8.1 The carer strategy v0.9 (separate PDF)

#### Appendix B Feedback from engagement

Age band	Good/Works well for carers
65-74	MK run an Art for Heath group which my husband attends. That is good.
55-64	Good support and understanding from Local authorities and other associated bodies.
55-64	Adult social services easily accessible 24/ 7
95+	The service to supply home equipment was very responsive and delivered items needed quickly when mum came home from a care home.
18-24	Northants Carers Groups
18-24	Carers Assessments.
85-94	Generally, I think the support for Carers is fantastic around the county as the range of information support and services.
35-44	Group sessions on a regular basis for the person I care for
45-54	I have seen nothing other than the help given to my children.
55-64	specific organizations which advocate and support me such as Dementia UK and Alzheimer's society
45-54	Support from Social Care, and support from Cransley Hospice
75-84	Support from other agencies and people
25-34	I feel that having the flexibility of a direct payment to arrange the day-to-day activities for my son helps with being able to arrange times when I can have time to rest and restore from my caring role.
25-34	Being able to have a care package for my son enables me to work
Under 18	Local groups such as Spectrum, A.C.E., Sports 4 Fitness, Em-power, Northampton Down Syndrome and SENDs 4 Dad
18-24	Support from (CALM) Northants Carers
85-94	Adult social care do their best but there's not enough
Under 18	Networking with others
25-34	Council departments are very good at providing services which each department specialises in. Support is often provided when requested.
85-94	We get support and guidance from the Good Neighbours scheme. We have a WhatsApp group for each of the elderly people that I support. This is very helpful for dealing with emergencies and keeping everyone updated on the wellbeing of the person from whom we are caring. For each person that I support there are a small group of us, all 'organised' by good neighbours so that responsibility is shared.

75-84	I am appreciative that I work for WNC and there is a carers policy and I have been able to engage with my senior about flexible working. Also, I had a conversation with a member of your adult social care team who was brilliant. She showed empathy and set out information clearly. I was very impressed.
18-24	Had great experience with young carers in the past
Age band	Not Good/Does not work well for carers
65-74	My husband doesn't feel he needs care following his stroke so doesn't see me as helping him at all despite him really needing to be with someone 24/7 and him not attempting to do anything for himself. I tried getting him to go to some carer events, but he wouldn't go.
55-64	Being handed over to another case worker or duty case worker
55-64	Being left to find care home or care supplier because you have enough savings to fund this type of care
95+	Services are also disjointed- a one-stop service for carers to use to bring together all services would really help.
95+	records aren't passed from one to another and so it means that I need to go through everything every time to make sure mum is getting the best care
95+	It is not easy to find the right care at home and particularly time consuming and difficult to do when working
95+	My mum pays for her care and will likely never need state support beyond attendance allowance. So yes, she can pay, but she is disproportionately disadvantaged as a result as everything had to be arranged personally
18-24	Communication between Education / Medical / Social / Council regarding services for the cared for person.
18-24	Social Care funding
18-24	Not enough support for Carers physically who need extra help
18-24	No support financially when struggling with paying bills / buying food and necessary things like clothes
18-24	No respite if needed to go into hospital or unable to care for carer person.
85-94	As someone who works and does not live with the people I care for, many services such as sitting is not accessible to us.
35-44	I don't receive any benefit e.g. carers allowance because I am on a state pension. I have raised energy bills etc e.g. tv has to be on all night to soothe carer
45-54	Although support is growing it is not available for men with families particularly those working
45-54	sympathetic people but no real solution
55-64	Lack of transport
55-64	sitting services and befriending for my relations due to dementia
75-84	It is not acceptable to be forced to step in to provide care in the absence of adequate and appropriate care from social and health services

75-84	It can be very lonely and frightening being a carer as you can feel very out of your depth and without the support of other agencies it can be debilitating and risk the health of the carer.
25-34	It's Isolating, no one is in your position where you have someone dependant on you
25-34	No support, full time job, constantly let down by services that are supposed to provide but routinely don't, so you give up and go it alone.
25-34	No consideration of carers own health or other needs, left until breaking point and even when carers tell professionals they aren't managing there often isn't any practical plan put in place. Very low-level support like support lines and groups don't help at times like this. Working carers don't get any financial support like carers allowance even though they are still doing the care and saving thousands. Very little funding for carers association to offer decent support
85-94	Not having someone to sit with the cared for person.
85-94	Not having someone to talk to who understands the problems.
25-34	Virtually no information published about respite providers for young adults with learning disability. The information from the Northants Care Choices Directory filters down to 4 providers for LD/autism and shows 2 photos of older women so possibly not representative of the service user.
Under 18	The area I work has no support at all. Most of the support only available if you have a car and you drive.
	Nothing works well. I didn't know there was any support for carers out there nor that a payment (benefit) could be claimed for doing so. Caring has blighted my life, affected my career, damaged my relationship with friends and other family members as I can't always be there for them and can't always join in and go places due to caring responsibilities.
75-84	I've cared for over 20 years and only found help 3 years ago when I made a trip to the doctor about increased falls/frailty, and they finally referred me and the person I care for a home visit (think it was Occupational therapy). From that, I found out about the lifeline through the council (but didn't realise it was part of the council as it had a different name Olympus?). They did a home visit and put in a few rails, steps etc but were unable to suggest some fixes to issues i.e. being able to get into and out of the bath independently as the stock items that are available are not bespoke enough to everyone's needs and also, they require a ridiculous amount of strength for the disabled person to use.
75-84	The occupational team eventually referred me to Age UK to see what benefits I or the person I care for might be eligible for but the very, very lengthy form was left for me to complete. It was long and time consuming but eventually the person I care for was give attendance allowance.
Under 18	Very limited parent carer support services provided. It will be good if there could be a way in which the smaller local groups were supported to be able to expand and grow what they are currently providing.
18-24	No carer assessment or support for working carers No overnight respite No transport for day centre which is 8 miles away and is the closest one



	No health and wellbeing support for carers in rural areas
85-94	The hospitals people are sent to like Isebrooke for rehabilitation care are not on the same system as the Northampton social services. So, my Uncle for example has been sent to the other side of the county. He's lived in Kingsthorpe all his life, but is placed out in Higham Ferrers and has been stuck in a discharge to assess placement for 7 months
85-94	Social services and intermediary care teams and temporary care homes should all be in communication they double up, or in my uncle's case he fell through the gaps and had none. Even with us contacting people. There's no respite for elderly carers, no one stop shop that can ensure all is well with elderly carers and the one they're caring for
85-94	One department assuming the others know
25-34	Over the years I have discovered groups, newsletters, and information by accident despite trying to source such items via browsing the internet.
85-94	We are not able to speak to the medics/social services to organise support or to seek advice
85-94	There seems to be no way to upscale the support that a person receives - there don't seem to be any contacts that we can talk to arrange a meeting with the elderly person
18-24	I am a carer by default due to lack of services suitable to support a person with ADHD and autism. Services seem to be missing for this particular age group which results in family members having to prioritise the person they care for
18-24	Support offered is for my mental health, but I would not be depressed if the person I care for was provided with some consistency from social care provision or education setting
45-54	A life of loneliness, isolation, and exclusion. We are the forgotten about, taken for granted section of society. Our own physical and mental health comes second place.
Age band	What would you do to improve support for carers
65-74	Provide some respite
55-64	Regular support from organisations for the carer
95+	A one stop shop/online hub for everything care related
95+	Joined up services ideally (a big ask but done in stages)
95+	Equal 'support' for carers of those that pay for their care - at the moment we are disadvantaged as we have a lot more work to do to sort services out.
95+	Voluntary care services also providing support/networking for people who are carers but work. At the moment everything takes place in the daytime
18-24	More emotional support
18-24	More emergency care / respite services.
18-24	More understanding of the medical / social care needs of the individual cared for person.
18-24	More flexibility at work / school for the carer.

85-94	More services or an expansion of current services for working carers and those who do not live with the cared for person.
85-94	Services such as the Needs & Aspirations, they are all in East Northants and again not accessible to many across the county.
45-54	Individual support for carers that works for the person and the carer they look after.
45-54	Tailor the package makes it less about what you can't do but what you can, time at the gym for physical and mental preparation and fitness.
45-54	Membership passes that don't make you feel like the kid with free school meals but instead the time out the deserve and need.
55-64	More respite without guilt or high costs please, I shouldn't be on my knees
55-64	More day centres that enable carers to breathe in safety and peace of mind - Affinity is amazing
75-84	Funding public health programmes to ensure that people can maximise their health outcomes and put less strain on the NHS and social services
75-84	I would ensure that all carers know that they can also access support to keep themselves well whilst carrying out this essential work.
18-24	Have consistency across the county, have services that provide; that don't just signpost you and leave you to find out things yourself.
25-34	Have carer health and well-being checks because we often put our needs last but if we become, I'll what will you do
25-34	Carer vouchers to use as we see fit massage, paying for gas, food, or a lunch with a friend
25-34	More understanding of disabled carers who struggle to access groups or what's on offer
25-34	Better awareness and understanding from social workers or professionals in general
75-84	More thought needs to be put into this by providing easily obtained support for families to allow the person to remain at home
blank	The Fire and Rescue Service would like to offer support to carers around safety in the home.
75-84	Ensure that occasionally there was a carer to sit with the person who needs care to relieve the permeant carer
75-84	Ensure that there was someone for the carer to talk to about the person who they are caring for.
25-34	Could Northamptonshire Carers publish a newsletter? <i>(They do)</i>
Under 18	Kings Sutton has no direct connection to any town or nearby village, but everything is offered is in Northamptonshire, Brackley, Towcester etc.
Under 18	I feel many times we are discriminated because we rely on public transport.
75-84	Make it easier for carers to find out about what help is out there for them.
75-84	Make employers be more flexible with working patterns to enable carers to work around their caring responsibilities.

75-84	Make sign posting and referral networks easier in the first place and make them easier to access.
75-84	Many of those that need caring for are not internet or mobile savvy so need communicating via different methods.
Under 18	Support the smaller groups that are more targeted on the local residents. There is additional strain on families with a SEND child. There needs to be better support for mental health and family support.
18-24	Health and wellbeing support which is accessible to carers in rural areas
18-24	More support for carers who work
85-94	It would be really helpful to have someone maybe attached to social services who could meet with the elderly person and the carer to discuss ways forward
18-24	A local drop-in centre similar to a crisis café ( <i>mental health model</i> )
85-94	If the carers had a chance to choose assistance from people directly employed by the council, there wouldn't be a withdrawal of care packages as we are seeing.
85-94	When a carer is on duty locally, they will end up going to the same families building up a rapport. Care shouldn't be making a profit from people or local councils it should be a service first and foremost.
85-94	Having a mental health team to help people handle the stress of palliative care and the need for respite for family is important too.
85-94	Carers who are elderly themselves end up needing hospitals due to extreme fatigue and feeling like they are on call 24/7
85-94	Avoiding gaps in care assistance is therefore imperative for young disabled too anyone who needs it. It would save money and improve lives if the cost of paying lots of different private care in the community companies was cut out.
85-94	At the moment it's a mishmash of different levels of quality care. Northampton could lead the way to integrating all the aspects of care. Outsourcing has failed
85-94	A new set of council run care homes small but with modern layouts is needed urgently
85-94	someone attached to social services, perhaps, who can advise/counsel elderly people who have no relatives, in planning their future.
85-94	Someone, perhaps attached to the local medical centre, who could visit elderly person to organise medication, check-ups, immunisation, toenail cutting, eye testing etc
45-54	Financial support for carers needs a total overhaul. We need to be paid properly for what we do considering most give up their own careers and live in poverty to do the right thing by their loved one. ( <i>several of these</i> )

## **Appendix C Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs)**

## CAREGIVER BURDEN SCALE

Zarit et al. (1980), *Gerontologist*, 20(6), 649-55

**Instructions:** Read each statement and rate it on a scale from 0 (never) to 4 (nearly always)

In general, how often do you feel:	Never	1	2	3	4 Nearly Always
There is not enough time for yourself	0	1	2	3	4
Overtaxed with responsibilities	0	1	2	3	4
Like you've lost control over your life	0	1	2	3	4
In regard to the relative for whom you are caring, how often do you feel:					
Uncertain about what to do for your relative	0	1	2	3	4
Like you should do more for your relative	0	1	2	3	4
Like you could do a better job of caring	0	1	2	3	4
When you are with the relative for whom you are caring, how often do you feel:					
A sense of strain	0	1	2	3	4
Anger	0	1	2	3	4
Embarrassment	0	1	2	3	4
Uncomfortable about having friends over	0	1	2	3	4
How often do you feel that your relationship with the relative for whom you're caring negatively impacts:					
Your social life	0	1	2	3	4
Other relationships with family and friends	0	1	2	3	4
Your health	0	1	2	3	4
Your privacy	0	1	2	3	4
How often do you:					
Feel you receive excessive help requests	0	1	2	3	4
Feel all the responsibility falls on one caregiver	0	1	2	3	4
Fear the future regarding your relative	0	1	2	3	4
Fear not having enough money to care for your relative	0	1	2	3	4
Fear not being able to continue caring for your relative	0	1	2	3	4
Wish to leave the care of your relative to someone else	0	1	2	3	4
How much does your spouse/loved one depend on you as the caregiver?	0	1	2	3	4

Please rate your overall level of burden in caring for your spouse/relative:

(0) No burden at all (1) Mild Burden (2) Moderate Burden (3) Severe Burden (4) Extreme Burden

**Interpretation:**

- a. No or minimal burden: 0 to 20
- b. Mild to moderate burden: 21 to 40
- c. Moderate to severe burden: 41-60
- d. Severe burden: 61 to 88

### The Adult Carer Quality of Life Questionnaire (AC-QoL) How to Fill in the Questionnaire

This questionnaire asks you about different aspects of your life as a carer. Please think about your experience as a carer within the last two weeks and please tick the box that applies next to each statement. There are no right or wrong answers; we are just interested in what life is like for you as a carer. The questionnaire shouldn't take more than 10 minutes. Please answer all questions as honestly as you can.

	Never	Some of the time	A lot of the time	Always
<b>Support for Caring</b>				
01. I have a good level of emotional support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
02. My needs as a carer are considered by professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
03. I am happy with the professional support that is provided to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
04. I feel able to get the help and information I need	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
05. I have all the practical support I need	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Caring Choice</b>				
06. I feel that my life is on hold because of caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
07. My social life has suffered because of caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
08. I feel I have less choice about my future due to caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
09. I feel I have no control over my own life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Caring stops me doing what I want to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Caring Stress</b>				
11. I feel depressed due to caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I feel worn out as a result of caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I am mentally exhausted by caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I am physically exhausted by caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I feel stressed as a result of caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



	Never	Some of the time	A lot of the time	Always
<b>Money Matters</b>				
16. I worry about going into debt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I feel satisfied with my financial situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I am able to save for a rainy day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I worry about money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. There is enough money in our house to pay for the things we need	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Personal Growth</b>				
21. I have become a more tolerant person through my caring role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Because of caring, I have learnt a lot about myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Because of caring, I feel that I have grown as a person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. I have experienced many positive things through caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. I feel that I have become a better person by caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sense of Value</b>				
26. I feel valued by the person I am looking after	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. The person I look after respects me for what I do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. The person I look after makes me feel good about myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. I get a lot from the person I am looking after	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. I have a good relationship with the person I am caring for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ability to Care</b>				
31. I am satisfied with my performance as a carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. I can take care of the needs of the person I am caring for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. I feel I am able to make the life of the person I am looking after better	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. I can manage most situations with the person I care for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. I am able to deal with a difficult situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Carer Satisfaction</b>				
36. Caring is important to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. I resent having to be a carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. I feel frustrated with the person I am caring for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. I enjoy being a carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. I am satisfied with my life as a carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# Carer Strategy

2024 - 2029

Draft v0.9

# Foreword

Many people become carers for someone that they know and love at some point in their lives– it may be a relative, friend or neighbour. For many, this will be a natural role that is taken on and is done without knowing how it may impact them. Many do not even consider themselves as a carer.

Information from the 2021 Census, shows us that there were 31,000 carers in West Northamptonshire that identify themselves in a caring role. This is 7.5% of the local population and includes people from a variety of ethnicities and ages, including children. However, only approximately a third of these carers are currently known to our services, therefore may not be benefitting from information, signposting and support that is available to them. This is something we are committed to improving, to ensure we continue to work closely and support our local carers.

Being a carer is a truly selfless role, often putting the needs of a loved one before their own, however it is not easy and does not go unnoticed. Today, the demands both on our carers themselves and care system are greater than ever before – and they are set to continue to grow. Carers are vital in supporting people to stay as healthy as they can be and live fulfilling lives, but carers need looking after too.

Here at West Northants Council, this new carer strategy puts a spotlight on our carers and how we will provide the vital support and information for you. Over the next five years we will focus on a series of priorities chosen by local carers following a detailed self-assessment against our statutory duties and engagement with the people of West Northamptonshire.



Councillor Matt Golby  
Chair of the  
Health and Wellbeing Board

This strategy has been developed together with local carers living in West Northants, and recognises the increasingly important role that carers play in our society and how together with partners, we must improve the help and support available to them. This includes localised support where possible, within strong, inclusive communities, delivered in a way that helps carers to be happy and healthy.

We know we cannot achieve this alone. It is only by working together with our partners such as; health and voluntary sector organisations, as well as continuing to work closely with our carers themselves that we can effectively implement actions that support our carer priorities, with the right measurements in place to ensure our actions are making a difference.

There is a journey ahead of us and I am passionate that together we will make a difference to our carers and give the right support to help them continue to provide such a tremendous contribution to their families, communities, workplace and society.



## Carer foreword

Being defined by one word is a big responsibility that can either make or break our universe but it is one that is taken for granted, carer. Most of us have been defined from a young age never knowing that it was a choice that we could challenge. The new strategy that we are embarking on hopes to help clarify what that role is, how to attain the help needed and challenge the stigma and stereotyping of what a carer knows and understands about the person in their care. The biggest gain to this document is how to be kind to ourselves as carers.

To my mind, this role acts as the gateway, glue and fixer for the service, staff, patients and pretty much anyone who needs us. It is the ambassador who connects, listens, and advises, mostly in the background ensuring the person being cared for is well versed and emotionally ready for the challenge of each day and situation.

Our healthcare system is so important as it is something everyone will have to access at some point in their life, from the time we come into this world and until we leave it. We are part of the privileged few that can work to make it better and in doing so, have an obligation to do it well through values of compassion and culturally aware environments.



Pat Marshall  
Carer expert by experience,  
& co-producer of this strategy

The world around us is changing and our healthcare processes, training, and access to services, needs to change with it. We need to work together to change attitudes one step at a time in our diverse community and with this, show generations to come that community spirit and understanding, leads to happy minds and bodies within our county.

Nothing great is ever easy to attain, but the right attitude and understanding of when to use skills and knowledge developed from strategic awareness, in-depth operational and inter-personal expertise, will help our partnership translate into a successful venture for all.



# Introduction

This strategy is for all unpaid carers that live in, or care for someone that lives in, West Northamptonshire.

## Who is a carer?

*A person that provides unpaid support to a partner, family member, friend or neighbour who is ill, struggling or disabled and could not manage without this help. This is distinct from a care worker, that is paid to support people.*

Think Local, Act Personal definition (TLAP)

The strategy sets out what we will do to improve the health and wellbeing of carers. We will ensure carers are respected and that we understand more about what it means to be a carer. We will develop high quality support services for carers that meet their needs and improves their lives as carers. We will recognise carers and value them as partners in delivering services.

This strategy has been written with carers that are experts by experience (EBEs). EBEs are local people that are carers themselves. They have been part of a co-production group to write this strategy from a West Northamptonshire carer viewpoint.



## What is co-production?

*When you as an individual are involved as an equal partner in designing the support and services you receive. Co-production recognises that people who use social care services (and their families) have knowledge and experience that can be used to help make services better, not only for themselves but for other people who need social care.*

TLAP definition



## The vision

For this strategy, we worked together with carers to create a vision for the future so all carers can:

- Recognise they are performing a caring role
- Know where to go to ask for support
- Carry on in the caring role if they choose to
- Have access to timely, good quality information and advice when they need it
- Receive training in the condition for the person they care for, if they want it
- Live their best life alongside being a carer
- Be able to work, take part in education and activities alongside their caring role
- Take a break from caring when they need it
- Receive help and support to remain physically and mentally well
- Receive support to plan for the future, both in the caring role and afterwards

## For every hundred carers in West Northamptonshire...

### Number of carers per household

**78 homes have 1 carer**  
**19 homes have 2 carers**  
**2 homes have 3 carers**  
**1 home has 4 or more carers**

### Unpaid care hours

**52 provide 19 hours or less a week**  
**20 provide 20 - 49 hours a week**  
**28 provide 50 or more hours a week**

### Male and female carers

**49 are men**  
**51 are women**

### Carers by age

**2 are aged 15 and under**  
**5 are aged 16 - 24**  
**9 are aged 25 - 34**  
**24 are aged 35 - 49**  
**37 are aged 50 - 64**  
**14 are aged 65 - 74**  
**7 are aged 75 - 84**  
**2 are aged 85 or older**

## For every hundred carers in West Northamptonshire...

### Carers that also work

**36 carers also work full-time**  
**19 carers also work part-time**  
**45 carers do not work outside of caring**

### Main carer language

**95 speak English or Welsh**  
**2 speak other European languages**  
**2 speak Asian languages**  
**1 speaks an African language**

### Ethnicity of carer

**89 are white**  
**4 are Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African**  
**4 are Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh**  
**2 are Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups**  
**1 is from another ethnic group**

### Carers and disability

**64 are not disabled under the Equality Act: No long-term physical or mental health conditions**  
**18 are disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little**  
**10 are not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long-term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited**  
**8 are disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot**

## Increase in carers

The 2021 census showed that the population of West Northamptonshire had increased by 13.5% since the previous census. This was the second highest increase in population in the East Midlands.

If that percentage increase was applied to carers, by 2031 there could be 36,006 carers in West Northamptonshire. This represents:

- 428 more carers per year and is over and above those that cease to be carers
- The total number of carers increases by 36 new carers every month and will continue to rise as the population increases.

# Engagement

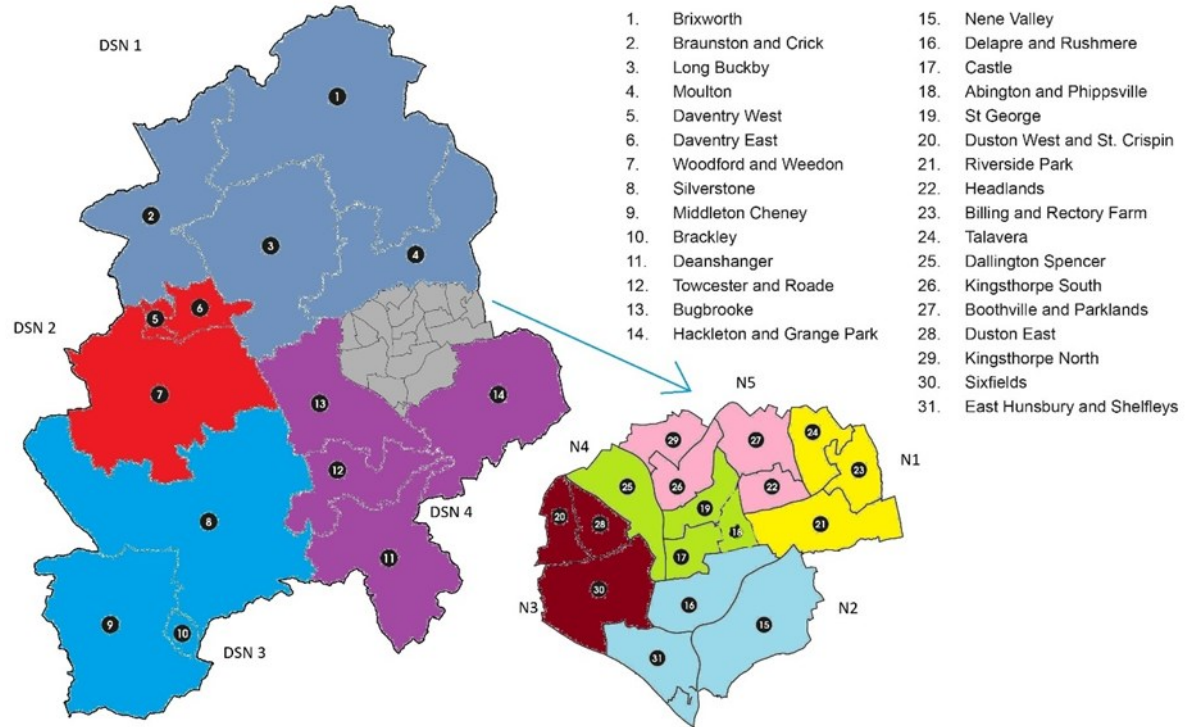
Before we could write this strategy, we wanted to seek the views of carers in West Northamptonshire.

We held face-to-face engagement events in each of West Northamptonshire's Local Area Partnerships.

We held these events at different times of the day to give carers the best opportunity to attend one of the sessions if they wished to. These included mornings, afternoons and evenings. We held two online events and offered an online written questionnaire. The results of the engagement were shared with the EBEs and helped them to decide on a list of priorities to support carers. These priorities are the main themes of this strategy.



## West Northamptonshire Unitary | Electoral Wards

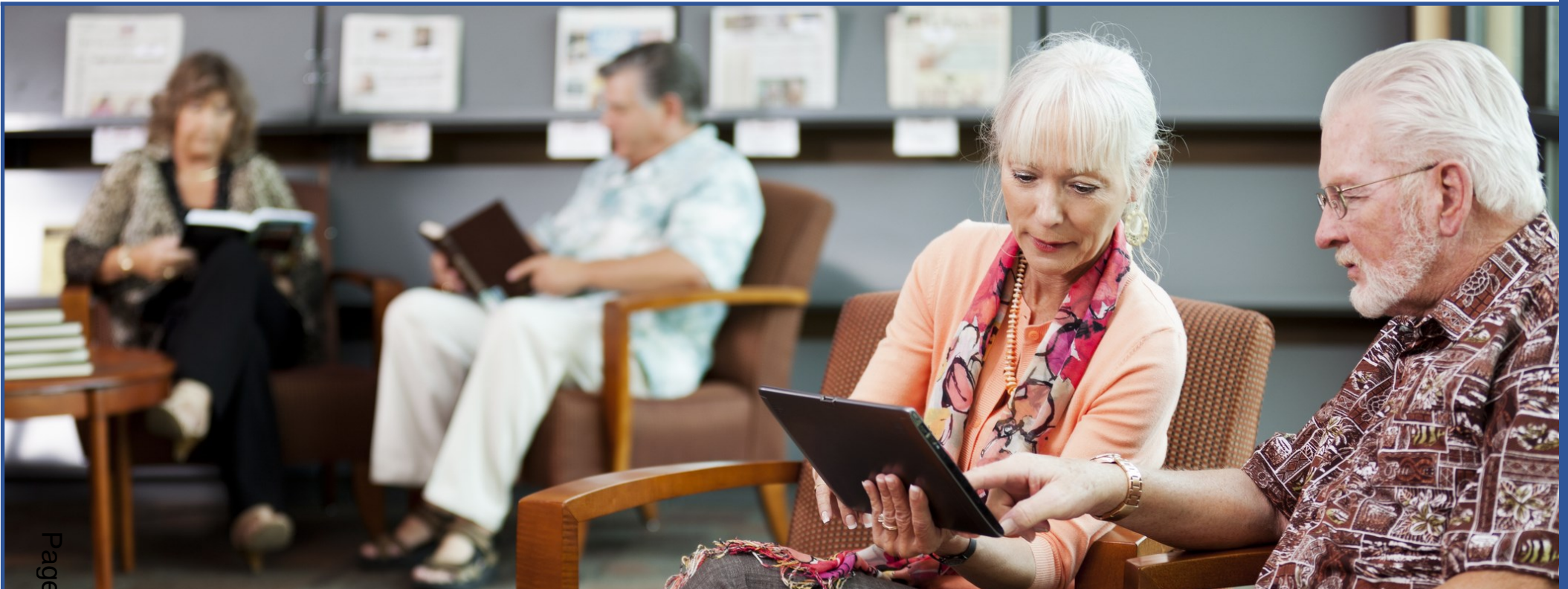




## Why a strategy?

The strategy will be a framework for developing support for carers. Not just as a one-off but as a progressive process of positive change over the next 5 years. It recognises the increasingly important role that carers play in West Northamptonshire, alongside the wide variety of caring roles and the diversity of those within these roles, and it acknowledges that carers need more help and support than has been available in the past. Furthermore, this support should be joined up, particularly when accessing services across both health and social care.

The Care Act (2014) and Children and Families Act (2014) set out what support local authorities must provide for carers, as well as the cared for person. West Northamptonshire Council delegated these responsibilities when it commissioned Northamptonshire Carers to deliver these services for its residents.





## Where are we now?

Unpaid carers contribute the equivalent of 4 million paid care workers to the social care system. Without the unpaid carer, the system would collapse, so it is vitally important that we continue to support and aim to improve support where we can. Northamptonshire Carers have been commissioned to provide services on behalf of the council for a number of years. However, what professionals are aiming to deliver and unpaid carers' experiences of support and services they receive might be different. To better support unpaid carers in West Northamptonshire, commissioners and services need to maintain a good understanding of their populations. To understand how unpaid carers feel as we start this new strategy, we looked at the recently completed national carer survey. This found in West Northamptonshire:

- Carers who accessed services were generally happy with them
- Only 1 in 5 carers said they had as much control as they needed
- 7 out of 10 carers said that the information/advice they received was helpful
- Overall carers reported feeling tired, depressed and stressed

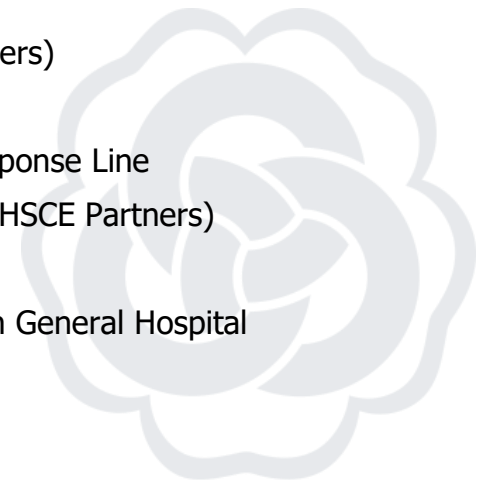
What support can carers currently access in West Northamptonshire?

Carer support services are provided by Northamptonshire Carers. Northamptonshire Carers are commissioned by to provide these services as well as carer assessment and reviews.

Their website has lots of useful information and can be accessed on the following link: [www.northamptonshire-carers.org/](http://www.northamptonshire-carers.org/)

Examples of services currently offered for carers across West Northamptonshire:

- > Statutory Carers Assessments and Support Services
- > Universal Carers Support Programme including general advice and guidance, helplines etc, Emergency Respite Care and Sitting Services.
- > Targeted Carers Support Programmes for Mental Health & Learning Disabilities, Children and Young Carers, Bereaved Persons and Dementia
- > GP Accreditation Schemes
- > Breathing Space and Long Covid Support
- > Primary Care Network Age Well Team Members
- > New Long Term Condition Groups – Dementia/COPD/Diabetes/Sickle Cell/Fibromyalgia
- > Befriending (through VHSCE Partners)
- > Test and Learn Schemes
- > Dementia Proactive and Crisis Response Line
- > Community Responder (through VHSCE Partners)
- > Overnight Sitting Service
- > Discharge support at Northampton General Hospital
- > Social Prescribing delivery partner



## Carer self-assessment

To check the council was satisfying its statutory duties under the Care Act (2014), we carried out a carer self-assessment at the end of 2023. The self-assessment identified ways in which the council could improve its offer to carers. They are:

### Help support people to recognise themselves as carers

People may not recognise themselves as a carer as they support someone they may do in a natural caring role e.g. their child. However, the difference is providing support to someone that might be ill or have a disability.

### Identify more carers for support

Northamptonshire Carers keep a record of people that receive services. There are currently 10,984 (Dec 23) known to the service. According to census records (2021), as many as 33,007 could be a carer in 2024 over the age of 5, so there is a shortfall of as many as 22,000 carers in those known to services. These carers may not be receiving any support at all or not all of the support they could be accessing. Indeed, they may not yet recognise themselves as carers.

### Personal budget

Improve the assessment of a carer and in particular the calculation of a personal budget. A personal budget is money that is allocated by a local council to pay for care or support to meet eligible, assessed needs. The money comes solely from adult social care. An individual can take a personal budget as a direct payment, or choose to leave the council to arrange services (sometimes known as a managed budget) - or a combination of the two. Many of the services carers receive are through Northamptonshire Carers and would be classed as a managed budget. Some carers choose to receive a Carers Support Payment as a Direct Payment but there are inconsistencies in this process. People may attend several of the support groups offered but the cost of this is not included in a carer's personal budget. The support a carer receives is developed with the assessing person and written into a Support Plan.

### Carer and the cared for person assessments

Currently, council staff assess a cared for person and Northamptonshire Carers assess the carer. The Care Act (2014) states that with consent, the cared for person should be consulted as part of the carer assessment and vice versa. However, there are inconsistencies with how this is delivered.

### Reviews of carer support plans

The self-assessment highlighted that not enough carer reviews had taken place. This is where a carer's support plan is reviewed to see if the support has met the assessed need or if the plan needs to be changed. These should be after six months when a Direct Payment is given and yearly for the support plan.



# National strategy

There is no current government national strategy for carers. The last strategy was, Carers at the heart of 21st-century families (2008-2018) and the, Carers Action Plan 2018 – 2020



The NHS Long Term Plan published in 2019 set out some priorities for carers:

- More options for phone or screen-based consultations at home, rather than hospital out-patient appointments – which can be difficult to attend.
- Consultants going out to GP surgeries, rather than expecting patients to come to them.
- The roll out of 'top tips' for GPs, which have been developed by young carers, which include access to preventive health and social prescribing, and timely referral to local support services.
- Improving the recognition of carers and the support they receive. This includes a plan to introduce quality markers for primary care that can highlight best practice in carer identification and support. It will also include the adoption of carers' passports in health settings.
- New commitments to helping carers when things go wrong. For example, the plan suggests that more carers will understand their 'out of hours' options.
- More carers will have "contingency conversations" so carers have appropriate back up support in place, if and when they need it.
- An ambition to 'bring down waiting times for autism assessments' and the aim to 'improve its understanding of the needs of people with learning disabilities and autism, and work together to improve their health and wellbeing', plus to ensure that the NHS is 'working more effectively with people with autism and their families'.
- The plan states that the NHS wants to 'provide the right care for children with a learning disability'.
- Mental health support available to a wider range of children and young people through community services and schools in England.
- A new approach to young adult mental health services for people aged 18-25 with an aim to support the transition to adulthood.
- Increased early detection of cancer through better testing and giving every child diagnosed with cancer, a comprehensive DNA test to determine the best way to target treatment.

## The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) carer guidance

NICE guideline [NG150] Published: 22 January 2020

Nice carer guidance covers support for adults (aged 18 and over) who provide unpaid care for anyone aged 16 or over with health or social care needs. It aims to improve the lives of carers by helping health and social care practitioners identify people who are caring for someone and give them the right information and support. It covers carers' assessments, practical, emotional and social support and training, and support for carers providing end of life care.

The guidance includes two quality standards and covers the following topics:

- Information and support for carers
- Identifying carers
- Carers' assessments
- Helping carers stay in, enter or return to work, education and training
- Social and community support for carers
- Training to provide care and support
- Psychological and emotional support for carers
- Support during changes to the caring role and during end of life care



# Care Act (2014)

The Care Act (2014) introduced a series of duties for councils specifically aimed at carers. The following is a summary published by Partners in Care in December 2023:

- Carers have parity of esteem (placed on an equal footing) with those they care for. They have entitlements to care and support in their own right and can be eligible for support, even if the person they care for has refused support or is not eligible.
- Councils can meet a carer's needs for support by providing this to the person being cared for, even where the carer is not eligible (subject to their consent).
- Councils must provide and maintain an information and advice service for all carers about what can be done to help them (and those they care for) prevent, reduce or delay the development of longer-term needs for care and support, and to help them look after their own wellbeing.
- A carer's eligibility for an assessment is based solely on them having the 'appearance of need' for care and support. Councils must offer an assessment on this basis.
- Councils have a duty to conduct a 'transition assessment' when a child, young carer or parent-carer is likely to have needs for support when they, or the person they care for, transitions to the adult care system.
- Eligibility for support is based solely on whether the carer's role has (or is likely to have) a significant impact on their wellbeing and as a result they are unable to achieve one or more of the wellbeing outcomes described in the Care Act; this is a lower threshold than the person being cared for, whose eligibility is based on being unable to achieve two or more of these outcomes.

- There are no requirements for carers to be providing substantial and regular amounts of care, or for a set number of hours, to be eligible for an assessment or support. This is important where carers may be providing care that fluctuates over time.
- Councils must arrange an independent advocate for any carer who would find it difficult to participate in their assessment and support planning where there is no-one else to help.
- Councils need a process in place for carers which effectively mirrors the requirements of assessment and care planning for people who draw on services - including offering carers who are "able, willing and [have] capacity to undertake it" what is called in Chapter 6.44 of the guidance a 'supported self-assessment.' Where a carer does not wish to self-assess, then councils must undertake another type of assessment.
- Carers must be given a written copy of a council's decision about their eligibility for support.
- Carers eligible for support must get a support plan, including a personal budget "sufficient to meet their care and support needs" that can be spent in a number of ways. Carers must always be offered the option of taking some, or all, of their personal budget as a direct payment.



# Children and Families Act (2014)

The following are from a Local Government Association (LGA) guide.

Local authorities must:

- Assess whether young carers in their area have support needs and, if so, what those needs are.
- Ask the young carer and their parent for their views during the assessment.
- Take reasonable steps to identify young carers in their area who have support needs.
- Ask anyone else the young carer or their parent wants them to ask about their needs as part of the assessment (e.g. a young carer's support worker, or the parent of a friend of a young carer).
- The assessment must be appropriate and proportionate to the needs and circumstances of the young carer.
- The council must consider the young carer's: age, understanding and family circumstances; wishes, feelings and preferences; what the young carer is looking for from the assessment ("outcomes"); any differences of opinion between the young carer, the young carer's parents and the person cared for (in relation to the care).
- Before the assessment the council needs to give information about the assessment that mean the young carer, their parent, the cared for person, or anyone else the young carer or parent wants involved in the assessment can take part in the assessment.
- The assessor must be appropriately trained; have enough knowledge and skills to carry out that assessment.

- The LA must consider any other assessment that's been carried out either for the young carer or the person who is cared for (where relevant).
- The local authority must assess: the amount, nature and type of care the young carer provides; the extent to which this care is relied upon by the family, including the wider family, to maintain the well-being of the person cared for; whether the care which the young carer provides impacts on the young carer's well-being; whether any of the tasks which the young carer is performing when providing care are excessive or inappropriate for the young carer to perform having regard to all the circumstances, and in particular the carer's age, sex, wishes and feelings.
- After the assessment the council must: give a written copy of the assessment to the young carer and their parent (and anyone else the young carer or their parent asks them to), decide whether the young carer has support needs, if services the Council provides could meet those needs, and whether to provide services. This could involve giving help to the person that the young carer looks after, so that the young carer does not have to do so much caring.
- After the assessment the council must decide: If any of the young carer's needs for support could be prevented by providing services to: the person cared for, or another member of the young carer's family; what the young carer's needs for support would be likely to be if the young carer didn't have to do any / all of the caring; any actions to be taken as a result of the assessment; and the arrangements for a future review.
- The council must also identify the young carer's friends and family and consider how they can help to meet the young carer's outcomes.



A young boy with dark hair, wearing a grey hoodie and a black harness, is seated in a wheelchair. He is smiling and looking towards a young woman with long blonde hair. The woman is also smiling and looking down at an open book she is holding. The book has a yellow cover. They are in a brightly lit room, possibly a library or a community center, with shelves and books visible in the background.

## Strategic priorities

After reviewing the self-assessment and engagement feedback, the co-production group decided on a series of priorities for this strategy.

Those priorities are listed in the following pages, along with some actions needed to support their implementation.



# Priorities

Reduce the waiting time for a carer assessment

Supporting carers to recognise themselves as carers

Identifying carers for support

Carers and cared for person more joined up assessment

Actions to implement these priorities: we statements... We will...

1. Introduce a triage system for carer referrals (carer crisis will be a priority)
2. Launch a campaign for the right to an assessment
3. Provide information for carers at the time of the cared for person's diagnosis

1. Initiate a raising awareness campaign using social media and target hard to reach groups
2. Tell carer stories so people identify with their own life
3. Produce podcasts for carers

1. Provide a one-stop information shop for carers that will move around the LAPs
2. Use plain, non-jargon language (and in other than English)
3. Use existing resources and learn from others

1. Review assessments (WNC and Northamptonshire Carers)
2. Scale assessments according to need, circumstances, choice and in a sensitive way
3. Carry out a joint assessment with consent

# Priorities

A one stop shop for carers to go to for advice, support and signposting

A directory of support for carers that's easy to follow

Increase the respite choice and availability

Support when carers are at crisis point in a timely manner with agreed timescales

Actions to implement these priorities: we statements... We will...

1. Provide a One-stop information shop for carers - move around the LAPs
2. Provide information, support, signposting and social opportunities
3. Work with NHS colleagues to support understanding more about conditions

1. Produce a WNC carer guide
2. List forms of support, benefits, legal (PoA, mental capacity), DVLA guidance, advocacy, debt management, rights, Blue Badge
3. Include a glossary of terms and FAQs.

1. Understand what respite means to different people and support them to obtain respite
2. Ask you what it means to have your own time as a carer
3. Commission respite services with carers using co-production

1. Support carers in a timely manner
2. Triage and provide response times depending on need
3. Explore alternatives to attending hospital such as using paid crisis workers at short notice

# Priorities

Carers voices and views heard and respected by professionals as an EBE

Keeping carers healthy: physically and mentally

Carer training, specifically in the condition that the cared for person has

Future planning, particularly for degenerative and terminal conditions

Actions to implement these priorities: we statements... We will...

1. Use the experience of carers in training professionals
2. Use advocacy groups or develop a carer support worker to represent carers
3. Improve transparency, use language that is easy to understand and we will be more caring

1. Ask what the carer wants
2. Improve the quality of our assessments and be more in-keeping with the Care Act
3. Review the carer support plan not longer than annually

1. Provide free carer training and inform carers that it is available
2. Work with health colleagues for specialist condition-specific training
3. Link to training that is already out there and provided by others

1. Incorporate this into the guide - knowledge of advance care plans etc
2. Support carers to plan early
3. Provide information on Advanced Decisions to Refuse Treatment, wills, who pays for what, NHS Continuing Healthcare etc

# Priorities

Carers help shape the market with commissioners

End of life support for carers

Address the postcode lottery for services and support, particularly in rural areas

Address the transport limitations

Actions to implement these priorities: we statements... We will...

1. Ask carers what the gaps are for them and involve carers in provider forums so they can influence others
2. Use co-production to develop services that are fit for purpose
3. Use carers for scoring tenders

1. Support carers with dying well
2. Teach carers the signs of end of life in carer training, so they are prepared
3. Work with NHS colleagues to improve support for carers when the cared for person is in hospital

1. Ensure there is consistency in services provided across WNC
2. Assess for gaps in services based on location
3. Identify additional sources of funding (or re-direct) where there are gaps in services resulting in a post-code lottery

1. Include what transport is available in a carer guide for WNC
2. Explore a volunteer driver scheme
3. Deliver more services locally, so that carers do not have to travel

## Overarching Priority

Work towards health and social care being more joined up to avoid multiple conversations. This includes commissioning carer services.

Actions to implement the priority.  
We will...

1. Work more closely with the NHS to reduce multiple conversations
2. Explore further knowledge sharing between WNC and the NHS
3. Work towards commissioning carer services jointly

An action plan will be developed for this strategy with input from a variety of groups and services, including Young Carers and people from communities that are underrepresented in services.





Our experts by experience have included a set of I statements. The I statements can be used to hold the council to account on successful delivery of the strategy:

- I recognise myself as a carer
- I feel that what I do as a carer is recognised, understood and valued
- I feel the communities around me understand my situation and support me to have a choice which is meaningful and appropriate
- I feel that I am supported to look after my own health and wellbeing
- I have access to good quality information and advice which is relevant to me in my caring role
- I have access to training on the condition the person I care for lives with
- I am signposted to support which enables me to maintain my caring role
- I get to have a break and some time for myself which will give me an opportunity for a life outside of caring
- I am able to balance caring with my education, paid work, volunteering, and / or personal interests
- I am listened to and feel part of the team, planning and delivering care for the person I care-for, and developing service models with commissioners as an equal
- I know where to get help from when I need it including when things go wrong, challenging decisions, and getting my voice heard as an equal
- I feel supported when I am no longer able or willing to be a carer or my caring role ends
- I can make plans for the future



# Outcomes Framework

We will measure progress against the priorities in this strategy and strengthen transparency and accountability. Importantly, we will measure how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people. Our EBEs felt we should do this after the strategy has been in place for two of the five years it runs. This would then give us the opportunity to change focus, if this is required.

There are several ways we can check the progress of the strategy. From a purely numbers point of view, we can look at:

- How many more people are identified as carers
- How many people receive a carer assessment and have their support plan reviewed at least yearly
- How many people are given advice on benefits and services
- How many people are signposted to access services designed to support carers
- How many people take part in training
- How many people take part in hobbies or courses
- How many people access respite services
- How many people are supported to produce crisis plans
- A reduction in the number of people experiencing carer crisis
- How many people are supported to plan for the future

These are useful measures for the council. However, what matters to individual carers are the effects on them of being in a carer role, when they might have a job, other people and themselves to care for. This affects their quality of life and both physical and mental

health. Our carer experts by experience wanted us to look at measuring this, so we will introduce some tools, collectively known as patient reported outcome measures. These are specifically designed for carers around their quality of life and what is known as carer burden; how hard caring is for them and how it affects their wellbeing. By using these tools when first working with carers and then at intervals thereafter, we can show that the support they are receiving is helping and for the carer to see that they are benefitting from these interventions.

We will also use a health inequality impact tool. There is considerable evidence of significant inequalities in health. Health inequalities are systematic, avoidable and unjust differences in health and wellbeing between different groups of people. There is clear evidence that reducing health inequalities improves life expectancy and reduces disability across society. Tackling health inequalities is therefore a core part of improving access to services, quality of services, and health outcomes for the whole population.

Health inequalities may be brought about by:

- Different experiences of the wider determinants of health, such as the environment, income or housing.
- Differences in health behaviours or other risk factors, such as smoking, diet and physical activity levels.
- Psychosocial factors, such as social networks and self-esteem.
- Unequal access to or experience of health services.

These conditions influence our opportunities for good health and how we think, feel and act, and this shapes our mental health, physical health and wellbeing.





West  
Northamptonshire  
Council

## Feedback

Please send any feedback you have on this strategy to:  
[carerstrategyfeedback@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:carerstrategyfeedback@westnorthants.gov.uk)





# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

16 APRIL 2024

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS & WASTE  
– COUNCILLOR PHIL LARRATT**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Proposed Drainage Byelaws for Flood Risk Management</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	Colin Barrett, Head of Works <a href="mailto:Colin.Barrett@westnorthants.gov.uk">Colin.Barrett@westnorthants.gov.uk</a>

## List of Approvers

<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	Catherine Whitehead	20/03/2024
<b>Chief Finance Officer (S.151)</b>	Martin Henry	20/03/2024
<b>Other Director</b>	Simon Bowers, Assistant Director Assets & Environment	5/04/2024
<b>Head of Communications</b>	Becky Hutson	20/03/2024

## List of Appendices

**Appendix A – Proposed Land Drainage Byelaws**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 To agree to make byelaws in connection with drainage matters to assist the Council in meeting its statutory duties and in its role to help reduce the risk of flooding for local communities.

## **2. Executive Summary**

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- 1.2 It is proposed that the Council uses its powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to put in place local drainage byelaws to help it execute its powers and duties effectively and in doing so assist in reducing flood risk for local communities.
- 1.3 The making of byelaws is a policy matter reserved by law to full Council. This report seeks authorisation to begin the process of byelaw making by carrying out a consultation exercise. Following a formal consultation period, the Council will take the decision whether or not to make the byelaws.
- 1.4 The primary purpose of these byelaws is to ensure efficient drainage within the Council's area. The associated benefits of making the proposed byelaws are outlined throughout this report but can be summarised as follows:
- Managing and reducing flood risk.
  - Improving water quality.
  - Improving biodiversity.
  - Ensuring drainage infrastructure will be maintained and adapted over time.
  - Improving the quality of life for people by improving the quality of public spaces and the water environment.
- 1.5 The proposed byelaws relate to ordinary watercourses, these are watercourses which do not come within the category of 'main river'. Main rivers remain the responsibility of the Environment Agency and are subject to separate byelaws.

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 That the Cabinet approves the principle of making the land drainage byelaws as set out in Appendix A.

## **4. Reason for Recommendations**

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- 4.1 To support the ability of the Council to manage adverse effects of flood risk on people, businesses, and the environment.
- 4.2 To enable more efficient and effective discharge of the Council's duties and powers as lead local flood authority (LLFA) and land drainage authority.

## 5. Report Background

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- 5.1 Under the Flood and Water Management Act in 2010, the Council is designated as a lead local flood authority (LLFA) and given statutory duties to manage the risk of flooding from surface water runoff, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses (all watercourses which are not designated by the Environment Agency as 'main river'). The Land Drainage Act 1991 gives the Council responsibility for regulating (consenting and enforcing) works that could directly affect the flow of water in ordinary watercourses. Consequently, riparian owners (owners of land adjacent to watercourses) and developers must obtain a land drainage consent from the Council before any such work is undertaken. However, this provision only accommodates works within the watercourse, and alone therefore does not fully enable the Council to adequately regulate works which could cause a risk of flooding, such as installation of obstructions within the floodplain of a watercourse.
- 5.2 The Council has the power to make land drainage byelaws for the purpose of preventing flooding, remedying, or mitigating any damage caused by flooding. These byelaws create criminal offences that can be prosecuted in the magistrates' courts if contravened. The introduction of byelaws would allow the Council to control all activities within nine metres of ordinary watercourses.
- 5.3 At present, the Bedford Group of Drainage Boards carries out the land drainage consent process on behalf of the Council under a Service Level Agreement. Bedford Group of Drainage Boards has its own set of land drainage byelaws which it applies to the consenting process. The current agreement with Bedford Group of Drainage Boards expires on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Upon successful recruitment of the Council's Flood & Water Team it is intended that this service will then be brought in-house.
- 5.4 The making of byelaws is not mandatory, but it is seen as a key element at a tactical level to deliver flood risk management and also improve understanding and transparency of the Council's requirements and expectations concerning drainage on new development.

## 6. Issues and Choices

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### The Proposed Byelaws

- 6.1 The proposed byelaws for West Northamptonshire Council are based on the 'Model Land Drainage Byelaws for Local Authorities' produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
- 6.2 The model byelaws cover matters such as flows in watercourses, obstructions, vegetation control, damage to the bed or bank of a watercourse, access for maintenance and other issues that are considered a detriment to the environment. The majority of other local authorities across the country have already adopted these for flood management purposes.
- 6.3 It is proposed that the byelaws for West Northamptonshire mirror those already in use by the Bedford Group of Drainage Boards, for the purpose of continuity. For example, it is proposed that byelaw 10 states an easement distance of nine metres from the banks of the watercourse.

is in order to control the erection of any building or structure within this distance from a watercourse and ensure there is adequate access to the watercourse for future maintenance (see byelaw 10 in Appendix A). Additionally, the Bedford Group of Drainage Boards created Byelaw 18 'Protection of the Flood Plain' which is not included in the model land drainage byelaws. It is proposed this byelaw is included in West Northamptonshire Council's Land Drainage Byelaws to allow the Council to protect the flood plain extending past nine metres from the bank.

### **Enforcement of the Proposed Byelaws**

Due to current resource and budgetary constraints, there are no plans at present to undertake routine regular inspections of ordinary watercourses within West Northamptonshire. Byelaw contraventions will therefore come to light as a result of problems arising, third party reports or from other routine inspections or surveys.

- 6.4 Where breach of a byelaw is discovered or suspected the Council, the officers may conduct an investigation. If there is evidence of a breach, then enforcement action may be taken.
- 6.5 Enforcement powers are permissive, and therefore discretionary. It is expected that the Council would not pursue legal action unless there is evidence of a significant drainage problem and enforcement was necessary to secure a remedy. However, where a person was repeatedly or seriously placing others at risk by their action prosecution might also be appropriate. It is proposed that a proportionate, risk-based approach to the enforcement of the byelaws is taken by the Council, considering the location and nature of any breach. This will ensure drainage issues can be rectified without the need for formal action and in order to use the Council's resources efficiently.
- 6.6 This approach compliments the Council's existing powers as the LLFA under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to pursue enforcement for those instances where the proper flow of an ordinary watercourse is being impeded.
- 6.7 Where enforcement action is pursued, the Council as the LLFA may enforce under Section 66(6) of the Land Drainage Act 1991. Alternatively or as well, , the Council could use Section 66(7) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 to undertake the necessary works and recharge the costs of such works to the offender.
- 6.8 For activities specified by byelaws, consent would be required, and the activity cannot be undertaken until the consent has been issued. However, an authority can set out in a byelaw how an activity should be undertaken meaning that the public is free to undertake the activity when they like as long as they comply with the details prescribed in the byelaw.
- 6.9 The adoption of the proposed byelaws will directly contribute towards the Council's strategic priority area 'Thriving villages and towns' by supporting 'sustainable planning for growth' in its Corporate Plan. Specifically, it would aid the Council to identify and manage flood risk and would facilitate stronger and more resilient communities.

## Conclusions and next steps

- 6.10 The proposed byelaws are based on the DEFRA model byelaws and mirror those currently in use by the Bedford Group of Drainage Boards. The byelaws would enable the Council to monitor and enforce the efficiency of flood defences and drainage systems, and will provide scope for the Council to work with developers and local communities to reduce flood risk now and in the future.
- 6.11 Not making the byelaws would make it more difficult for the Council to take action to reduce flood risk in some circumstances.
- 6.12 Byelaws cannot come into operation until they have been confirmed by the Secretary of State.
- 6.13 To achieve the aims set out in this report, there are a number of stages that must be completed when making the byelaws. These are prescribed by DEFRA and are set out in Table 1.

**Table 1: Stages which must be completed when making byelaws**

Stage	Description
Councillor approval	Seek approval from Cabinet for the creation of land drainage byelaws before completing stages below.
Committee approval	Cabinet considers and makes recommendations for the byelaw process to be started.
Informal check by DEFRA	The proposed draft byelaws are forwarded to DEFRA for informal checking.
Formal consultation with stakeholders	Formal consultation takes place with Natural England and local navigational authorities (in West Northamptonshire this is the Canal and River Trust and, for the River Nene, the Environment Agency), Environment Agency, Bedford Group of Drainage Boards and water companies to make sure that the proposed byelaws do not conflict with or interfere with the operation of their byelaws.
Council decides whether to make byelaws	The Council undertakes the decision whether or not to make the byelaws. Under the Council's constitution, this decision is reserved to full Council. A final report would be presented to full Council which will consider any responses received during consultation.
Byelaws made and public consultation takes place	If the Council decides to make the byelaws, a formal (statutory) consultation takes place where the byelaws are made, sealed, and deposited for one month. As part of this process the Council would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertise in one or more newspapers circulating in the area affected the Council's intention to apply to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation of the byelaws. Use may be made of the Council's own website, as well as on-line advertising, but should not be used instead of the local press.</li> <li>• Deposit a copy of the byelaws at the offices of the Council for public inspection, for a period of at least one month, and supply a copy to any person on application.</li> </ul>

Stage	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible, resolve any objections that are received.</li> </ul>
Byelaws and feedback sent to Secretary of State	<p>The byelaws cannot come into operation until they are confirmed by the Secretary of State. The Council would make an application for confirmation accompanied by the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two sealed and signed copies of the byelaws.</li> <li>A statement setting out where the byelaws were deposited, where advertised, dates and times, copy of the newspaper page(s) and (if used) website pages where advertised, together with a statement that the Council was satisfied that it had made appropriate efforts to reach all affected parties.</li> <li>Copies of any objections that may have been sent to the Council together with the Council's response; or if no objections are received, a statement to that effect.</li> <li>Statement that local and other public authorities (naming them) were notified and when.</li> </ul>
Byelaws become effective	Unless otherwise decided, the byelaws would come into operation at the expiration of one month from the day on which they are confirmed by the Secretary of State.

6.14 Should any objections be received during the consultation period the Council would be expected, where possible, to resolve these before forwarding any unresolved issues with the final proposed byelaws to the Secretary of State for confirmation. Otherwise, the Minister may take into account relevant objections that have not been withdrawn when determining whether or not to confirm a byelaw. In some cases, the Council may consider that it is appropriate to meet the objectors' concerns by amending the byelaw in question. If such modifications would lead to significant and substantive change, the Council should then re-advertise the amended byelaws, or at least give all affected parties the opportunity to comment upon any proposed changes.

6.15 It is proposed that the Council would develop and publish a series of advice notes that will accompany the byelaws to aid with their future delivery and compliance.

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

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

7.1.1 It is not anticipated that there will be any immediate or significant financial implications arising from the making of the byelaws. The costs associated with the implementation of local land drainage byelaws are principally administrative, comprising officer time in managing the process (e.g. consultation and liaison, reporting, making, advertising, and dealing with objections etc.) and sundry costs (printing, postage, newspaper advertising etc.).

7.1.2 Between 2021 and 2023, the Bedford Group of Drainage Boards issued 483 consents on behalf of the Council. The creation of Council byelaws is not likely to have an impact on the number of consents issued due to the Council using the same byelaws as those currently used by the Bedford Group of Internal Drainage Board.

7.1.3 Where enforcement of the byelaws would require the construction or remediation of drainage infrastructure, the financial burden of this should be with the responsible party/landowner and not the Council.

## 7.2 **Legal**

7.2.1 A byelaw is a local law which is made by a statutory body, such as a local authority, under an enabling power established by an Act of Parliament and operates to control or regulate activities in certain places. The enforcement of the proposed land drainage byelaws would be undertaken for the purpose of securing appropriate management of flood risk in West Northamptonshire. The byelaws would be made under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Local Government Act 1972 and confirmed by the Secretary of State.

7.2.2 Section 236 of the Local Government Act 1972 sets out the legal requirements for making byelaws and DEFRA has published guidance for local authorities on making byelaws under Section 66 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. The byelaws would create criminal offences that can be prosecuted in the magistrates' courts. Any person who acts in contravention, or fails to comply with the proposed byelaws, will be guilty of a criminal offence punishable in the magistrate's court by way of a fine. The new byelaws would assist the Council in meeting its obligations under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Land Drainage Act 1991 and Highways Act 1980 and any other relevant legislation concerned with land and highway drainage.

## 7.3 **Risk**

7.3.1 As set out above, byelaws enable the Council to regulate works near watercourses in order to ensure that flood risk is not increased. Not making the byelaws could make it difficult for the Council to take action to reduce flood risk in some circumstances.

## 7.4 **Consultation and Communications**

7.4.1 The Bedford Group of Drainage Boards have expressed support to the proposed implementation of byelaws.

7.4.2 Should Cabinet approve this report, then formal consultation will take place with Natural England, the Canal and River Trust, the Environment Agency and water companies to make sure that the proposed byelaws do not conflict with or interfere with the operation of their byelaws. Later stages of consultation are detailed in Table 1.

## 7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 None.

## 7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 The drainage byelaws will help conserve and enhance the area's local character, biodiversity, and habitats, by contributing to a healthier environment with reduced pollution and contamination.

7.6.2 Extreme weather events are forecast to become more frequent and severe in the UK due to the effects of climate change. We are already seeing increasing numbers of heavy rainfall events, and expect this increase to continue, with greater risk of river and flash flooding. The introduction of the proposed byelaws will help to manage flood risk for local communities and assist the Council in being better prepared for the impacts of a changing climate. In doing so, they would contribute to the delivery of the Council's vision and strategic aims to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

## 7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 The proposed drainage byelaws would potentially reduce flood risk for some properties within communities with watercourses, which would have benefits for those residents.

## 8. **Background Papers**

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8.1 None.



# APPENDIX A

## WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL LAND DRAINAGE BYELAWS

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# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL LAND DRAINAGE BYELAWS

West Northamptonshire Council under and by virtue of the powers and authority vested in them by section 66 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, do hereby make the following Byelaws which are considered necessary for one or more of the following purposes:

- a) securing the efficient working of a drainage system in the Council's area,
- b) regulating the effects on the environment in the Council's area of a drainage system,
- c) securing the effectiveness of flood risk management work within the meaning of section 14A of that Act, or
- d) securing the effectiveness of works done in reliance on section 38 or 39 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (incidental flooding or coastal erosion),

together, "the Purposes"

## 1. Commencement of Byelaws

These Byelaws shall come into operation at the expiration of one month beginning with the day on which they are confirmed by the Secretary of State.

## 2. Application of Byelaws

- (a) These Byelaws shall have effect within the Area.
- (b) The watercourses referred to in these Byelaws are watercourses which are for the time being vested in or under the control of the Council.

## 3. Control of Introduction of Water and Increase in Flow or Volume of Water

No person shall as a result of development (within the meaning of section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended ("the 1990 Act")) (whether or not such development is authorised by the 1990 Act or any regulation or order whatsoever or none of them) for any purpose by means of any channel, siphon, pipeline or sluice or by any other means whatsoever introduce any water into any watercourse in the Area so as to directly or indirectly increase the flow or volume of water in any watercourse in the Area (without the previous consent of the Council).

## 4. Control of Sluices etc.

Any person having control of any sluice, water control structure or appliance for introducing water into any watercourse in the Area or for controlling or regulating or affecting the flow of water in, into or out of any watercourse shall use and maintain such sluice, water control structure or appliance in accordance with such reasonable directions as may from time to time be given by the Council with a view to securing or furthering one or more of the Purposes.

## 5. Fishing Nets and Angling

No person shall angle or set any nets or engines for the catching or keeping of fish in any watercourse in such a manner as to cause damage to or endanger the stability of the bank of the watercourse or to affect or impede the flow of water.

In this Byelaw “nets” includes -

- (a) a stake net, bag net or keep net;
- (b) any net secured by anchors and any net, or other implement for taking fish, fixed to the soil or made stationary in any other way;
- (c) any net placed or suspended in any inland or tidal waters unattended by the owner or a person duly authorised by the owner to use it for fish, and any engine, device, machine or contrivance, whether floating or otherwise, for placing or suspending such a net or maintaining it in working order or making it stationary.

## 6. Diversion or Stopping up of Watercourses

No person shall, without the previous consent of the Council, take any action, or knowingly permit or aid or abet any person to take any action to stop up any watercourse or divert or impede or alter the level of or direction of the flow of water in, into or out of any watercourse.

## 7. Detrimental Substances not to be Put into Watercourses

No person shall, so as directly or indirectly to obstruct, impede or interfere with the flow of water in, into or out of any watercourse or so as to damage the bank -

- (a) discharge or put or cause or permit to be discharged or put or negligently or wilfully cause or permit to fall into any watercourse any object or matter of any kind whatsoever whether solid or liquid;
- (b) allow any such object or matter as is referred to in sub-paragraph (a) of this Byelaw to remain in proximity to any watercourse in such manner as to render the same liable to drift or fall or be carried into any watercourse.

Provided that nothing in this Byelaw shall be deemed to render unlawful the growing or harvesting of crops in accordance with normal agricultural practice.

## 8. Lighting of Fires

No person shall light or cause or permit to be lighted or commit any action liable to cause to be lighted any fire on any land adjoining the watercourse where such action is liable to set on fire the peat land forming the banks of the watercourse or any vegetation including trees growing on land forming the banks of the watercourse.

## 9. Notice to Cut Vegetation

Any person having control of any watercourse shall, upon the receipt of a notice served on him by the Council requiring him so to do, cut down and keep cut down all vegetation, including trees, growing in or on the bank of a watercourse, within such reasonable time as may be specified in the notice, and shall remove such vegetation, including trees, from the watercourse immediately after the cutting thereof.

Provided that, where a hedge is growing on the bank of a watercourse, nothing in this Byelaw shall require more than the pruning of the hedge so as to prevent it from growing over or into the watercourse, and the removal of the resultant cuttings.

## 10. No Obstructions within 9 Metres of the Edge of the Watercourse

No person without the previous consent of the Council shall erect any building or structure, whether temporary or permanent, or plant any tree, shrub, willow or other similar growth within 9 metres of the landward toe of the bank where there is an embankment or wall or within 9 metres of the top of the batter where there is no embankment or wall, or where the watercourse is enclosed within 9 metres of the enclosing structure.

## 11. Repairs to Buildings

The owner of any building or structure in or over a watercourse or on the banks thereof shall, upon receipt of a notice from the Council that because of its state of disrepair -

- (a) the building or structure is causing or is in imminent danger of causing an obstruction to the flow of the watercourse;
- (b) the building or structure is causing or is in imminent danger of causing damage to the bank of the watercourse,

carry out such reasonable and practicable works as are specified in the notice for the purpose of remedying or preventing the obstruction or damage as the case may be within such reasonable time as is specified in the notice.

## 12. Control of Vermin

The occupier of any bank of a watercourse or any part thereof shall, upon being required by the Council by notice, within such reasonable time as may therein be specified, take such steps as are specified in the notice, being such steps as the Council consider necessary and practicable for preventing the bank from becoming infested by rabbits, rats, coypu, foxes and moles or any other wild mammal not being an animal listed in Schedule 5 or Schedule 6 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, but excluding the water vole from such control.

## 13. Damage by Animals to Banks

All persons using or causing or permitting to be used any bank of any watercourse for the purpose of grazing or keeping any animal thereon shall take such steps including fencing as are necessary and reasonably practicable and shall comply with such reasonable directions as may from time to time be given by the Council to prevent the bank or the channel of the watercourse from being damaged by such use.

Provided that nothing in this Byelaw shall be deemed to affect or prevent the use of, for the purpose of enabling animals to drink at it, any place made or to be made or constructed as approved by the Council.

## 14. Vehicles not to be Driven on Banks

No person shall use or drive or permit or cause to be used or driven any cart, vehicle or implement of any kind whatsoever on, over or along any bank of a watercourse in such manner as to cause damage to such bank.

## 15. Banks not to be Used for Storage

No person shall use or cause or permit to be used any bank of any watercourse for the purpose of depositing or stacking or storing or keeping any rubbish or goods or any material or things thereon in such a manner as by reason of the weight, volume or nature of such rubbish, goods, material or things causes or is likely to cause damage to or endanger the stability of the bank or channel of the watercourse or interfere with the operations or access of the Council or the right of the Council to deposit spoil on the bank of the watercourse.

## 16. Not to Dredge or Raise Gravel, Sand etc.

No person shall without the previous consent of the Council dredge or raise or take or cause or permit to be dredged or raised or taken any gravel, sand, ballast, clay or other material from the bed or bank of any watercourse.

## 17. Fences, Excavations, Pipes etc.

No person shall without the previous consent of the Council -

- (a) place or affix or cause or permit to be placed or affixed any gas or water main or any pipe or appliance whatsoever or any electrical main or cable or wire in, under or over any watercourse or in, over or through any bank of any watercourse;
- (b) cut, pare, damage or remove or cause or permit to be cut, pared, damaged or removed any turf forming part of any bank of any watercourse, or dig for or remove or cause or permit to be dug for or removed any stone, gravel, clay, earth, timber or other material whatsoever forming part of any bank of any watercourse or do or cause or permit to be done anything in, to or upon such bank or any land adjoining such bank of such a nature as to cause damage to or endanger the stability of the bank;
- (c) make or cut or cause or permit to be made or cut any excavation or any tunnel or any drain, culvert or other passage for water in, into or out of any watercourse or in or through any bank of any watercourse;
- (d) erect or construct or cause or permit to be erected or constructed any fence, post, pylon, wall, wharf, jetty, pier, quay, bridge, loading stage, piling, groyne, revetment or any other building or structure whatsoever in, over or across any watercourse or in or on any bank thereof;
- (e) place or fix or cause or permit to be placed or fixed any engine or mechanical contrivance whatsoever in, under or over any watercourse or in, over or on any bank of any watercourse in such a manner or for such length of time as to cause damage to the watercourse or banks thereof or obstruct the flow of water in, into or out of such watercourse.

Provided that this Byelaw shall not apply to any temporary work executed in an emergency but a person executing any work so excepted shall, as soon as practicable, inform the Council in writing of the execution and of the circumstances in which it was executed and comply with any reasonable directions the Council may give with regard thereto.

## 18. Protection of Flood Plain

No person shall, in the flood plain of any watercourse, without the previous consent of the Council, construct, erect or form, or cause to be constructed, erected or formed, any structure or deposit or cause to be deposited any material or form, or cause to be formed any heap of materials, which is or are of such a size or nature or is or are placed in such a position or positions as to be likely to divert or obstruct the flow of water in the flood plain or reduce the effective flood storage volume of a flood plain to the detriment of any land upstream or downstream.

Provided that the foregoing provisions of this Byelaw shall not apply to any temporary works constructed in an emergency (where notice of the existence of such works has been given to the Council) or temporary siting of hay, straw stacks and such similar incidents that occur in the ordinary course of accepted agricultural practice, provided that the works are removed, if so required by and in accordance with the requirements of the Council.

Provided further that this clause is without prejudice to Byelaw 15 and shall not apply in circumstances where planning permission has been granted for such structures, deposits or works by the local planning authority.

## 19. Interference with Sluices

No person shall without lawful authority interfere with any sluice, or other water control structure or appliance for controlling or regulating the flow of water in, into or out of a watercourse.

## 20. Mooring of Vessels

No person shall moor or place any vessel in any watercourse or to or upon the bank of any watercourse in such manner or by such method as to cause or be likely to cause injury to such bank or in such manner as materially to obstruct or impede the free flow of water in, into or out of any watercourse.

## 21. Unattended Vessels

No person shall leave any vessel unattended without taking due care to prevent such vessel from materially obstructing or impeding the free flow of water in, into or out of any watercourse or any sluice in any bank.

## 22. Removal of Sunken Vessels

No person who is the owner of a vessel sunk, stranded, damaged or adrift in a watercourse or, in the case of a sunken vessel which is abandoned, who was the owner immediately before the abandonment shall, after ten days from the day on which the Council serves on him notice in writing that the vessel is causing obstruction, permit the vessel to remain in the watercourse in such a manner as to impede or harmfully divert the flow of water in, into or out of the watercourse.

## 23. Navigation of Vessels

No person shall navigate any vessels in such a manner or at such a speed as to injure the bank of any watercourse and where the Council have by notice erected at any place limited the speed of vessels passing such place no person shall navigate a vessel at a speed over the bed of the watercourse greater than the speed so limited.



Provided that the Council shall not exercise their powers under this Byelaw so as to limit the speed of -

- (a) vessels in any tidal waters except after consultation with the Department for Transport, or
- (b) vessels navigating waterways of the Canal and River Trust for which speed limits are prescribed by the Byelaws of such Trust.

## 24. Damage to Property of the Council

No person shall interfere with or damage any bank, bridge, building, structure, appliance or other property of or under the control of the Council.

## 25. Defacement of Notice Boards

No person shall deface or remove any notice Board, notice or placard put up by the Council.

## 26. Obstruction of the Council and Officers

No person shall obstruct or interfere with any member, officer, agent or servant of the Council exercising any of his functions under the Act or these Byelaws.

## 27. Savings for Other Bodies

Nothing in these Byelaws shall -

- (a) conflict with or interfere with the operation of any Byelaw made by the Environment Agency or an internal drainage board or of any navigation, harbour or conservancy authority but no person shall be liable to more than one penalty or in the case of a continuing offence more than one daily penalty in respect of the same offence;
- (b) restrict, prevent, interfere with or prejudice the exercise of any statutory rights or powers which are now or hereafter may be vested in or exercised by -
  - (i) any public utility undertaking carried on by a local authority under any Act or under any Order having the force of an Act;
  - (ii) the undertakings of the Environment Agency and of any water undertaker or sewerage undertaker;
  - (iii) any public gas transporter within the meaning of part I of the Gas Act 1986;
  - (iv) any navigation, harbour or conservancy authority;
  - (v) any person who acts as the operator of a relevant railway asset, with respect to the construction, use or maintenance and repair of any such asset, or the free, uninterrupted and safe use of any such asset and the traffic (including passengers) thereof;

- (vi) any local authority;
  - (vii) any highway authority for the purposes of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended by any subsequent enactment) in relation to any highway whether or not maintainable at public expense;
  - (viii) any undertaking engaged in the operation of a telecommunications system;
  - (ix) a relevant airport operator within the meaning of Part V of the Airports Act 1986;
  - (x) the Civil Aviation Authority and any subsidiary thereof;
  - (xi) the Canal and River Trust;
  - (xii) the Coal Authority.
- (c) restrict, prevent, interfere with or prejudice any right of a highway authority to introduce into any watercourse surface water from a highway, for which it is the highway authority;
  - (d) restrict, prevent, interfere with or prejudice any right of a licence holder within the meaning of Part I of the Electricity Act 1989 to do anything authorised by that licence or anything reasonably necessary for that purpose;
  - (e) affect any liability arising otherwise than under or by reason of these Byelaws.

## 28. Saving for Crown Lands

Nothing in these Byelaws shall operate to prevent the removal of any substance on, in or under (or the erection of any structure, building or machinery or any cable, wire or pipe on, over or under) lands belonging to Her Majesty in right of the Crown by any person thereunto authorised by the Crown Estate Commissioners.

## 29. Arbitration

- (a) Where by or under any of these Byelaws any person is required by a notice in writing given by the Council to do any work to the satisfaction of the Council or to comply with any directions of the Council, he may within 21 days after the service of such notice on him give to the Council a counter-notice in writing objecting to either the reasonableness of or the necessity for such requirement or directions, and in default of agreement between such person and the Council the dispute shall, when the person upon whom such notice was served is a drainage or local authority be referred to the Secretary of State whose decision shall be final, and in any other case shall be referred to the arbitration of a single arbitrator to be appointed in default of agreement by the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers on the application of either party. Where such a counter-notice has been given to the Council the operation of the notice shall be suspended until either agreement has been reached or the dispute has been determined by arbitration in accordance with the provisions of this Byelaw;

- (b) where by or under these Byelaws any person is required by a notice in writing given by the Council to do any work to the satisfaction of the Council or to comply with any directions of the Council and any dispute subsequently arises as to whether such work has been executed or such directions have been complied with, such dispute if it arises between a drainage authority or local authority and the Council shall be referred to the Secretary of State whose decision shall be final, and in any other case shall be referred to the arbitration of a single arbitrator to be appointed in default of agreement by the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers on the application of either party;
- (c) where by or under Byelaws 3, 6, 10, 16 or 17 any person is required to refrain from doing any act without the consent of the Council such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld and may be either unconditional or subject to such reasonable conditions as the Council may consider appropriate and where any dispute arises as to whether in such a case the consent of the Council is being unreasonably withheld, or as to whether any conditions subject to which consent is granted are unreasonable, such dispute shall if it arises between a drainage authority or local authority and the Council be referred to the Secretary of State whose decision shall be final, and in any other case such dispute shall be referred to the arbitration of a single arbitrator to be appointed in default of agreement by the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers on the application of either party.

### 30. Notices

Notices and any other documents required or authorised to be served or given under or by virtue of these byelaws shall be served or given in the manner prescribed by section 71 of the Act.

### 31. Limitation

- (a) Nothing in these Byelaws shall authorise the Council to require any person to do any act, the doing of which is not necessary for securing or furthering one or more of the Purposes, or to refrain from doing any act, the doing of which does not affect the environment, or adversely affect either (i) the efficient working of the drainage system of the area (ii) the effectiveness of flood risk management work within the meaning of section 14A of the Land Drainage Act 1991, or (iii) the effectiveness of works done in reliance on section 38 or 39 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- (b) If any conflict arises between these Byelaws and
  - (i) sections 61A to E of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (which relates to the Council's duties with respect to the environment), or
  - (ii) the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 20104

the said Act and the said Regulations shall prevail.

## 32. Revocation

The Byelaws made by the Council on the            day of            are hereby revoked.

[It appears none of the predecessor councils made byelaws; this will be confirmed prior to formal making of these byelaws.]

## 33. Interpretation

In these Byelaws, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the meaning hereby respectively assigned to them, that is to say:

“the Act” means the Land Drainage Act 1991;

“Animal” includes any horse, cattle, sheep, deer, goat, swine, goose or poultry;

“Area” means the area under the jurisdiction of the Council;

“Bank” includes any bank, cross bank, wall or embankment adjoining or confining or constructed for the purpose of or in connection with any watercourse and includes all land between the bank and the low water mark or level of the water in the watercourse as the case may be and where there is no such bank, cross bank, wall or embankment includes the top edge of the batter enclosing the watercourse;

“Consent of the Council” means the consent of the Council in writing signed by a proper officer of the Council;

“Council” means West Northamptonshire Council;

“Occupier” means in the case of land not occupied by any tenant or other person the person entitled to the occupation thereof;

“Owner” includes the person defined as such in the Public Health Act 1936;

"Relevant railway asset" means

- (a) a network, operated by an “approved operator” within the meaning of section 25 of the Planning Act 2008,
- (b) a station which is operated in connection with the provision of railway services on such a network, or
- (c) a light maintenance depot.

Expressions used in this definition and in the Railways Act 1993 have the same meaning in this definition as they have in that Act ( “railway” not having its wider meaning), and a network such as is described in (a) above shall not cease to be such a network where it is modified by virtue of having any network added to it or removed from it.

“The Secretary of State” means the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;

“Vegetation” means trees, willows, shrubs, weeds, grasses, reeds, rushes, or other vegetable growths;

“Vessel” includes any ship, hovercraft (as defined by the Hovercraft Act 1968), lighter, keel, barge, tug, launch, houseboat, pleasure or other boat, aircraft, randan, wherry, skiff, dinghy, shallop, punt, yacht, canoe, raft, float of timber or any other craft whatsoever, and howsoever worked, navigated or propelled;

“Water control structure” means a structure or appliance for introducing water into any watercourse and for controlling or regulating or affecting flow, and includes any sluice, slacker, floodgate, lock, weir, dam, pump, or pumping machinery; and other expressions shall have the same meanings as in the Act.

THE COMMON SEAL OF WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL was hereunto affixed on the in the presence of:

Authorised officer

**PENALTY NOTE (not part of the bylaws)**

By section 66(6) of the Act every person who acts in contravention of or fails to comply with any of the foregoing Byelaws is liable on summary conviction in respect of each offence to a fine not exceeding the amount prescribed from time to time for level 5 on the standard scale referred to in section 37 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982 and a further fine not exceeding forty pounds for every day on which the contravention or failure is continued after conviction. By section 66(7) of the Act if any person acts in contravention of or fails to comply with any of these Byelaws the Council may without prejudice to any proceedings under section 66(6) of the Act take such action as may be necessary to remedy the effect of the contravention or failure and may recover the expenses reasonably incurred by it in doing so from the person in default.



# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## CABINET

16 April 2024

### CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT, WASTE & ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR PHILL LARRATT

Report Title	Consultation draft Parks Development Strategy
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#### List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	27/03/2024
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	27/03/2024
Other Director	Stuart Timmiss, Executive Director Place, Economy & Environment	27/03/2024
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	27/03/2024

#### List of Appendices

##### Appendix A – Draft Parks Development Strategy

###### 1. Purpose of Report

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1.1 To seek approval to consult on a draft Parks Development Strategy for West Northamptonshire.

###### 2. Executive Summary

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2.1 The Council owns a large portfolio of parks – urban and country. These are immensely valuable, both to people and nature. However, there are gaps in their coverage, both geographically and

in terms of what they offer. West Northamptonshire would also benefit from there being a clear strategic direction for the parks, to maximise their overall benefits.

- 2.2 To that end, a draft Parks Development Strategy has been prepared. It proposes a series of over-arching actions, a set of new or renewed parks, and enhancement to existing parks. The strategic is intended to give a clear direction of travel for parks, whilst acknowledging that specific initiatives within it will need to have their own business cases.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the draft Strategy be subject to public consultation, seeking to engage park users, prospective users, and stakeholders. The intention would be to then refine the draft taking into account the comments and suggestions received, so that the final document identified and maximised opportunities for the parks to deliver benefits.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the draft Parks Development Strategy for public consultation.

### **4. Reason for Recommendations**

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- 4.1 To seek public and stakeholder views on the draft Parks Development Strategy, seeking thereby to ensure the final Strategy is as well-founded as possible.
- 4.2 To provide a clear approach to delivering parks and securing the maximum benefits from them across West Northamptonshire.

### **5. Report Background**

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- 5.1 The Council inherited a large portfolio of parks – urban and country – from its predecessor authorities. These are an immensely valuable asset for the communities of West Northamptonshire. Their value to urban residents is immediately obvious, reflected in legislation and activities of councils since Victorian times to create parks for residents to enjoy the benefits of nature. However, they are also of value to rural residents, providing for areas of nature-led countryside which can be enjoyed. Parks deliver a series of benefits, including to physical and mental health, broader well-being, and space for social interaction and community development. Both country and urban parks also provide benefits to wildlife and biodiversity.
- 5.2 To make the best of its parks, the Council needs a strategic view of how they should be taken forward. To that end, a draft Strategy has been devised, taking input from across the Council and integrated care system partners. The Strategy seeks to both maximise the benefits of the parks which exist, and also to fill strategic gaps in current provision. These gaps are both geographic and in the range of options parks provide; where possible, measure are proposed to make parks more attractive to a wide range of users.
- 5.3 The draft Strategy sets out a vision for the parks: “West Northamptonshire’s parks are places for people of all backgrounds to thrive through exercise and relaxation in the open air, enjoying



nature and heritage, building communities, and supporting biodiversity.” This is fleshed out in six objectives:

1. Provide a network of safe and accessible parks serving the whole of West Northamptonshire.
2. Create spaces for health and wellbeing to flourish.
3. Preserve and develop the biodiversity, heritage, and landscape values of all sites.
4. Encourage engagement and participation of communities and partners to develop a sense of pride and community cohesion.
5. Secure investment in our parks.
6. Make good use of public money and assets.

5.4 The draft Strategy goes on to outline three types of actions: (a) Overarching interventions, where actions relate to all parks or several of them; (b) Delivery of new or renewed parks, to fill gaps, meet needs, and take advantage of opportunities; and (c) Enhancing our existing parks.

5.5 The overarching interventions include measures to enhance security and attractiveness of parks to those who might otherwise feel less comfortable using them; a wider range of activities (helping to engage a wider range of people including young people and young adults); enhancing other facilities; further developing engagement with residents and partners; and ensuring the parks team is able to support the range of activities.

5.6 The new or renewed parks identified as desirable are:

- a) Battle of Naseby Country Park
- b) Brackley Country (Linear) Park
- c) Houghton Linear Park
- d) Marefair Heritage Park
- e) Eastern Northampton Park
- f) West Northamptonshire productive woodland

5.7 These new or renewed parks are designed to fill geographic gaps in coverage, take advantage of important heritage assets, respond to increased need for parks flowing from development, and address areas of need. The productive woodland proposal flows from the Estate, and Construction and Maintenance, Climate Strategies, but would create a new public park if established. It would have a key role in mitigating the carbon emissions the Council is otherwise unable to remove from its own operations.

5.8 The final group of interventions address opportunities and issues in existing parks. Proposals are wide ranging, including potential new facilities such as boat hire and velorail, lessening the impact of roads dividing parks, and a sandy beach at Brixworth Country Park.

5.9 It should be stressed that whilst the draft Strategy seeks to give a clear strategic direction, towards maximising the benefit the parks bring to people and nature in West Northamptonshire, the individual initiatives will need their own business cases in due course. It is almost inevitable that not everything in the draft Strategy will eventually be delivered; but without it, it is likely few of them would be.

## **6. Issues and Choices**

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- 6.1 The choices for the Council are to:
  - 6.1.1 Option 1: Not proceed with the draft Strategy.
  - 6.1.2 Option 2: Adopt the draft Strategy without consultation.
  - 6.1.3 Option 3: Revise the draft Strategy, prior to consultation or adoption without consultation.
  - 6.1.4 Option 4: Consult on the draft Strategy, with a view to making any suitable amendments after consultation and then adopting.
- 6.2 Not proceeding with the Strategy (Option 1) would leave the Council without a clear direction for its parks. This is likely to result in sub-optimal outcome, with the parks estate delivering less for people and nature than would be the case with a strategy.
- 6.3 Adopting the draft Strategy without consultation (Option 2) would run the risk of missing opportunities and refinements that would come from wider engagement with the community and stakeholders. Whilst the draft is based on knowledge and experience from the parks service and more widely across the Council and taking into account the Council's own strategies and those it shares with partners (notably the Integrated Care Partnership's *Live Your Best Life* strategy), there will be issues and opportunities know to park users, potential users, and stakeholder it would be worth capturing.
- 6.4 Revisions (Option 3) to the draft Strategy prior to either consultation or direct adoption are of course possible. However, at this point nothing has been identified which would materially add to the proposals in the draft.
- 6.5 It is therefore recommended that consultation takes place (Option 4), with a view to refining the document prior to its final adoption. This should maximise the benefits the Strategy is able to bring.

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

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

- 7.1.1 Conducting consultation on the draft Strategy would require only minimal resources, all within existing budgets.
- 7.1.2 The approach taken by the draft Strategy itself is to maximise the use of government grants, developer contributions, private sector investment, commercial income, and other opportunities for funding which avoid the need for use of the Council's general resources. Where use of these general resources would be needed, this would be justified on a case-by-case basis with an appropriate business case, subject to Cabinet and/or Council further consideration as appropriate.

## 7.2 Legal

The Council provides and manages parks, and services and concessions within them, under a range of powers. As specific proposals are taken forward any legal implications will be assessed, and appropriate action taken.

- 7.2.1 Consultation can take place under, among other powers, those listed above taken together with Section 111 of the Local government Act 1972 (power to do things ancillary etc. to other duties and powers). It is also consistent with, for example, the duties in the Local Government Act 1999 to consult in connection with the best value duty.

## 7.3 Risk

- 7.3.1 The risk of consulting on the draft Strategy is relatively minimal. The main risk would be that the consultation draft raises expectations which are ultimately not capable of being delivered, with the result that people are disappointed. The consultation will seek to make clear that whilst the Strategy sets an ambitious strategic direction, the delivery of individual initiatives will rest on the ability to fund them (see 7.1.2).

## 7.4 Consultation and Communications

- 7.4.1 Consultation on the draft Strategy is proposed to take place over at least six weeks, with the final timetable to be set taking into account other consultations taking place and other events (such as elections) which may affect it. The Council would make the draft strategy available and provide for both structured and open responses to it. Responses would where possible be by a web portal, for efficient management, but responses in hard copy would also be accepted, for those who find this an easier means of communication.
- 7.4.2 In addition to directly seeking public comments, stakeholders in the parks, including park management committees, 'friends of' groups, residents' forums, and town and parish councils would be encouraged to provide their views, as well as bring the consultation to the awareness of those they serve. Organisations and businesses with existing or potential interests in the parks would also be encouraged to participate.

## 7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.5.1 None.

## 7.6 Climate Impact

- 7.6.1 The draft Strategy is designed to support the Council's net zero goals, by supporting activities which retain carbon or remove it from the atmosphere, and by providing places in which habitats allow species affected by climate change to thrive.
- 7.6.2 Inevitably, use of parks can also create carbon emissions, notably by people travelling to them in cars, in maintenance and enhancement works, and in the supply chain. Some of these

will be mitigated in accordance with the Council's Estate, and Construction and Maintenance, Climate Strategies, as well as proposals to enhance active and public transport to the parks. Those which remain are considered a necessary feature of the use and enjoyment of parks, to be addressed within the Council's target for net zero for West Northamptonshire as a whole by 2045.

## **7.7 Community Impact**

7.7.1 The impacts of the Strategy on local communities would vary from place to place, with impacts being almost exclusively positive. The consultation should enable positive impacts from proposed actions to be maximised, and also any potential negative impacts to be identified and addressed.

## **8. Background Papers**

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8.1 None.



West  
Northamptonshire  
Council

# Parks Development Strategy 2024 – 2034





**Our Vision** is for West Northamptonshire’s parks to be places for people of all backgrounds to thrive through exercise and relaxation in the open air, enjoying nature and heritage, building communities, and supporting biodiversity.

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**Consultees**

Internal	External
Sport, Leisure & Culture team	University of Northampton
Public Health	Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust
Community Safety & Engagement team	Anglian Water
Sustainability team	Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust (DAPT)
Legal Services	Northampton Society of Model Engineers (NSME)
Property Strategy & Estates team	

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## 2. Foreword

West Northamptonshire Council owns and manages 154 parks and green spaces. Of these, over 140 are less than 10 hectares in size and 75 are less than 1 hectare. Sites include country parks, meadows, recreational parks, play areas, linear parks, memorial gardens, and a war memorial.

Our aim over the coming years is to protect, maintain and enhance our parks ensuring they meet the current and future needs of our communities whilst also delivering the Council's wider aspirations as described in its Corporate Plan and Vision. The Council recognises that parks are a priority for our residents' wellbeing, biodiversity and habitats; they play a role in enabling local people to 'Live Their Best Life'.

All our parks are important, but the major parks have a particular role to play. These receive large numbers of visits from people across West Northamptonshire. The number of visits means it is possible to provide facilities and opportunities which are not viable in those parks which serve more localised communities.

This Strategy represents the framework for the management of the Council's parks. It will help the Council focus its resources on attracting the additional funding needed to provide a variety of features and facilities that will enrich our residents' lives. These resources include staff resource, time, and financial investment.

In setting out our ambition for what we want to achieve, this Strategy describes the approach we will adopt to maximise return on our investment and how over the coming years we will work with partners, communities, and businesses to explore opportunities to support the development of our parks. In order to achieve this, we must continually improve and innovate, building on what makes each park unique and special.

Our parks remain an important asset for local communities, and we aim to ensure that West Northamptonshire parks offer something for everyone.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn  
Leader of West Northamptonshire Council

Councillor Phil Larratt  
Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste

## **3. The Importance of Parks and Green Spaces**

### **3.1 Who we are and what we do**

We are West Northamptonshire Council, a most-purpose council covering Northampton, Daventry, Brackley, Towcester, Brixworth, and many other villages and across rural West Northamptonshire. We manage numerous important parks, including country parks, town parks and other green spaces.

West Northamptonshire has an area of 1,377 square km. Within this our managed parks and green spaces cover approximately estimated 11.2 square km. Individual sites vary from 0.02 up to 80 hectares in size and include war memorials, linear parks and town and country parks. Whilst our parks only cover a little less than 1% of the area of West Northamptonshire, they have an impact much greater than that proportion would suggest.

### **3.2 How our parks positively impact communities**

Our parks provide vital opportunities for our residents' health and wellbeing, and opportunities for volunteering, connecting communities and developing a sense of pride in local places.

These local green spaces are important, in varying degrees, as habitats, supporting biodiversity. Improving biodiversity is one of the most important things we can do to counter the effects of climate change and nature depletion. They can also help mitigate climate change through carbon retention in plants and soils, and help manage its impact by slowing the flow of flood waters.

Living in a greener environment promotes and protect health and wellbeing. Every 10 per cent increase in exposure to green space translates into a reduction of five years in age in terms of expected health problems. People who use parks and open spaces are three times as likely to achieve the recommended level of physical activity than non-users. Increasing access to parks and open spaces can reduce obesity and mental health admissions, resulting in health and social care-related savings<sup>1</sup>.

We can help by providing new, good quality greenspace that is inclusive, improving, maintaining, and protecting existing greenspace, and by providing routes linking areas of greenspace for active travel. Greener environments can also bring communities together, reduce loneliness, and mitigate the negative effects of air pollution, excessive noise, heat and flooding<sup>2</sup>.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the vital role our parks play, as they became a lifeline for many communities whilst lockdown and travel restrictions were in place. We are fortunate to see this increase in use continue, although at a slightly lesser extent, as people can again travel further afield to visit and explore other parks and green spaces.

### **3.3 About our localities**

According to the 2021 Census, 425,725 people lived in West Northamptonshire, with over half<sup>3</sup> living in the Northampton urban area.

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<sup>1</sup> Groundwork 2011, Wheeler et al 2007a, b.

<sup>2</sup> Public Health England 2020.

<sup>3</sup> In the former Northampton Borough, 238,643 (56%). The urban area is somewhat larger than this.



We are projected to see a 7% increase in our population by 2030, with our rural areas growing at a faster rate than that expected for Northampton. The growth rate is almost double the national average. Initial analysis of 2021 census data has identified there are 172,600 households across West Northamptonshire, a total which, by 2030, is projected to increase by 12%. To support this growth, we are planning several large, but sustainable, urban extensions.

Currently 17% of the people who live in West Northamptonshire are aged 65 or over. This total is predicted to grow. Conversely, almost a quarter of our population are under the age of 18 years.

According to Census 2021 data, 64,876 residents – around 15% – reported a disability or long-term health problem that restricts their day-to-day activities 'a little' or 'a lot'.

The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data show that 14% of people (55,852) living in West Northamptonshire were defined as living in income deprivation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, our most deprived communities are less likely to have ready access to green spaces close to home. Whilst this is proportionately lower than the 12.9% recorded national average for England, it still indicates a large group of people in need of good access to green space.

It has also been identified that by school year 6, a third of children are overweight or obese, whilst 69% of our adult population is defined as being overweight or obese. Although 63% of adults living in West Northamptonshire, in 2021/22, were physically active this total is below the corresponding average for England (67%). Our parks and green spaces provide an opportunity for us to work in partnership with our communities to address these challenges<sup>4</sup>.

### **3.4 Our changing environment**

Climate change is affecting the United Kingdom, and we now face an increased risk of flooding, droughts, and heat waves. Meteorological data suggests that our country has warmed at a broadly consistent but slightly higher rate than the change in global mean temperature. Between 2012 and 2021 it has been on average 0.2°C warmer than the 1991 to 2002 average and 1.0°C warmer than the 1961 to 1990 average<sup>5</sup>. Whilst climate change will affect our landscapes and wildlife, with considered management, our range of habitats including grasslands, woodlands and wetlands, can help combat its impact. They also have potential to help reduce net CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The Met Office is predicting that climate change will result in the UK experiencing warmer and wetter winters; hotter and drier summers and more frequent and intense weather extremes. Not only will our weather continue to be variable, but we are also likely to experience more of these extreme types of weather<sup>6</sup>.

### **3.5 Our aspirations**

This strategy sets out our vision for the Council's parks and the actions we will take to deliver them. In developing this approach, we have not only been influenced by the

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<sup>4</sup> West Northants Public Health, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> GOV.UK, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Met Office, 2022.

outcomes of our consultation and engagement but have also ensured our park-specific plans support the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Board's "Live Your Best Life" ambitions.

Fundamental to this strategy is the exploration of increasingly sustainable ways of managing and funding our parks and green spaces so they support the delivery of our broader organisational priorities; continue to meet the evolving needs of our residents and communities, and positively contribute to making West Northamptonshire a great place to live, work and visit.

### **3.6 How we contribute to the Corporate Plan**

To support our organisational vision of making West Northamptonshire a great place to live, work, visit and thrive, our underpinning Strategy prioritises six goals which will deliver wide-ranging improvements across our communities. Our approach to parks and green spaces will actively support many of our Council's anticipated strategic outcomes, including increased wildlife species and more trees; high quality parks; and accessible green spaces for all.

Our parks and green spaces provide local communities and visitors with fantastic opportunities to enjoy our local habitat; preserve and protect our natural environment, including delivering ecological and environmental benefits and support and develop our communities and the local economy.

Equally, we understand the role our parks and green spaces play in enhancing the quality of life and liveability experienced by our residents. This, alongside the wider changes that will occur across West Northamptonshire, will be at the forefront of our thinking during the lifespan of this strategy. It will ensure we influence those areas we need to focus on as we plan, develop, and manage our network of parks.

## 4. Introducing our parks

### 4.1 Overview

We currently own and manage 154 parks and green spaces. These include country parks, meadows, recreational parks, play areas, linear parks, memorial gardens, and a war memorial. Covering approximately 1,098 hectares, our estate varies from major parks covering over 40 hectares to small open spaces covering less than 0.05 hectares. In fact, over 140 locations are less than 10 hectares in size, with 75 of these covering less than one hectare.

We are rightly proud to be the custodians of many and varied parks and green spaces across West Northamptonshire. However, without the significant contribution made by our colleagues in the Environment, Parks and Countryside Team, our partners and our local community stakeholders it would not be possible for us to deliver the varied offer we do. The role and contribution our key stakeholders continue to make is described below.

### 4.2 Introducing our Environment, Parks and Countryside Team

Our parks and country parks are managed by our Environment, Parks, and Countryside Team in the Assets & Environment service. The team includes Rangers, specialist technical staff, and support staff. At the Everdon Outdoor Learning Centre we have a dedicated group of Educational Rangers led by a Centre Manager and supported by Cooks and a Domestic Assistant.

The Outdoor Learning Service, based at the Everdon Centre, located in the west of West Northamptonshire, offers residential and day outdoor learning activities for schools and groups, as well as various forest school courses for leaders. Currently it is largely primary-age children who benefit by attending programmes run by the service. Located in the grounds of the old school, the surrounding countryside provides a variety of contrasting landscapes and habitats, which make it an ideal place to study geography and science, whilst the easy access to woodlands, ponds, rivers, and meadows also enables ecosystems of varying complexity to be studied. The service has since the creation of West Northamptonshire Council extended its offer and delivers some courses in parks across West Northamptonshire. Recently a new outdoor classroom has been added to Everdon, allowing a greater number of children to enjoy time at the Centre.

During the 2021/22 financial year, it cost £792,000 to operate our Parks and Country Parks service. We also generated £530,000<sup>7</sup> income, reducing the net cost of service delivery to £263,000. Through being able to reduce our operating costs to £648,000, alongside income generation of £458,000 we have managed to reduce our costs further, which saw the net cost of delivering this service during 2022/23 financial year fall to £190,000. Additionally, costs under the Council's environmental services arrangements were approximately £68,000 per year for works in the parks<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, the range of benefits delivered by the parks only cost local taxpayers around £250,000 – around 62p per resident per year.

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<sup>7</sup> This included £178,000 generated from car parking charges and £127,000 from property rental income.

<sup>8</sup> These are the Environmental Services Contract in Northampton, West Northamptonshire Norse in Daventry, and an arrangement via Cherwell District Council in Towcester. The costs are not clearly distinguished between parks and other landscaping; therefore, this figure is an estimate.

### 4.3 Introducing our partners and key stakeholders

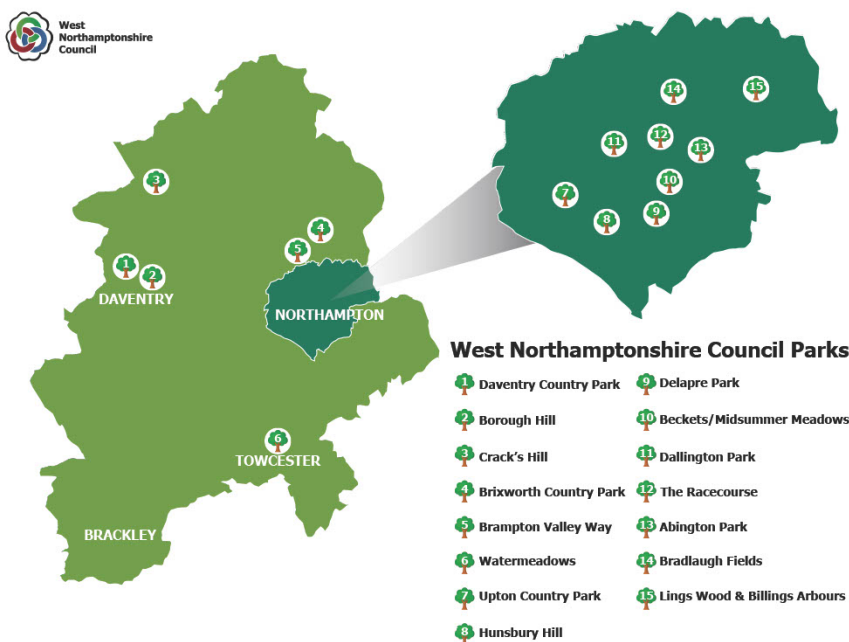
The management and delivery of our parks and green space service represents a team effort. We work closely with a range of partner organisations which includes Idverde, West Northamptonshire Norse and Continental. These partners deliver grounds maintenance and play inspection services on our behalf. Our in-house Park Ranger service complement this offer by delivering wide ranging management, maintenance, and educational functions. These colleagues represent the “glue” which make our parks, but especially our major parks, places our residents want to visit and enjoy.

There are also numerous park management committees and ‘friends of’ groups who help to deliver activities and improvements within our parks. These bring key stakeholders and local representatives, who have an interest in a particular park, together. Working in partnership they manage these parks and plan their future. We work closely with our ‘friends of’ groups to create better parks. Helping to care for these spaces, these partnerships enable the people who actively use them to have a greater say as to what goes on and positively contribute to their local area.

### 4.4 Introducing our major parks

West Northamptonshire is blessed with a range of major parks, which are outlined here, with locations shown on Figure 1.

**Figure 1: West Northamptonshire’s major parks**



#### 4.4.1 Abington Park, Northampton

Abington Park is perhaps Northampton's oldest and most popular park. Covering 47 hectares it contains many features including an aviary, rose garden, mature trees, and lake.

The Abington Museum is based in what used to be the Manor House for the Abington estate. Lady Wantage gifted land and buildings to the Corporation of Northampton in 1892.

It opened as a park in 1897. Following the acquisition of additional land, the park was extended in 1903. The park includes a children's play area, bandstand, and lake.

The division of the park into Eastern and Western sections by Park Avenue South is a particular challenge, making it hard to see the park as a whole. We are currently pursuing plans to improve walking and cycling routes in the Abington Park area to encourage more active ways of travelling.

#### **4.4.2 Becket's Park and Midsummer Meadows, Northampton**

Separated by Nunn Mills Road, these represent two separate but closely linked parks. Located between the town centre and the River Nene, Becket's Park is one of Northampton's classic town centre parks. Extending to around 10 hectares, this park is now also adjacent to the University of Northampton's Waterside Campus. Covering around six hectares, Midsummer Meadow sits north of the River Nene.

Becket's Park provides a children's play area, tennis courts and public art, whilst Midsummer Meadows contains car parking, skate and BMX park, park café and floating restaurant.

#### **4.4.3 Borough Hill County Park, Daventry**

Borough Hill has a history of human use stretching back to at least the Bronze Age, when it was a fortified encampment. More recently the BBC used the site as a transmission station until the 1990's, when the then Daventry District Council acquired the site and opened it as a Country Park.

As Borough Hill is a scheduled ancient monument there are limitations as to the work that can be carried out there, so to protect the ancient structures and remains buried beneath the surface. Alongside being an ancient scheduled monument, there are exceptional views of the local countryside. On-site car parking is also provided.

#### **4.4.4 Brackmills Country Park, Northampton**

Covering 77 hectares, including the tree belt, Brackmills Country Park is located to the east of the Brackmills industrial estate. In close proximity to the disused Bedford to Northampton railway, it provides visitors with an on-site car park and hard-standing paths. Major housing development is proposed around the south of the park; this is both an opportunity and a challenge.

#### **4.4.5 Bradlaugh Fields, Northampton**

Developed from a former golf course, Bradlaugh Fields is a 60-hectare site which opened in 1998. Rich in flora uncommon in Europe, this park is home to one third of British butterfly species and has a protected area for badgers. It includes the following facilities: parking bay, community café, community garden, forest school, and children's play area.

The park has a number of ponds, but as natural water supplies have reduced following development of the surrounding area, these are gradually disappearing. This is causing a loss of ecological value.

#### **4.4.6 Brampton Valley Way Linear Park**

The Brampton Valley Way is a 14-mile trail built on the former Northampton to Market Harborough Railway line. Following the closure of the railway line in 1981, the former Northamptonshire County Council purchased the 13-mile Northamptonshire section, which



was subsequently developed into a Linear Park. Leicestershire County Council owns the 1-mile section north of the county boundary. The two ownerships thus allow a complete off-road cycle route between Northampton and Market Harborough.

This park includes two former railway tunnels, Kelmars Tunnel and Oxendon Tunnel, which are approximately 480 metres and 414 metres long, respectively. The park provides a great opportunity for individual and family experiences, particularly on cycles. The tunnels are both an exciting feature and a significant maintenance obligation.

#### **4.4.7 Brixworth Country Park**

Developed with access for the disabled in mind, the 16 hectare 'Countryside for All' Brixworth Country Park opened in 1997. Its three accessible walks range from 0.5 miles to 1.25 miles. It also has easy access to the cycling friendly 7-mile Pitsford Water walk.

Sharing a common boundary with Anglian Water's Pitsford Reservoir Brixworth Country Park has a car park, café, toilet facilities, cycle hire and children's play area. There are also public facilities at the nearby Pitsford Reservoir.

#### **4.4.8 Cracks Hill Country Park, Crick**

The former Daventry District Council acquired Cracks Hill in 1999. We manage the site in partnership with the Friends of Cracks Hill. Crick Millennium Wood Pocket Park, the Jubilee Wood and the canal towpath are all nearby. Situated between the villages of Crick and Yelvertoft, near bridge 14 of the Leicester Line of the Grand Union Canal, Cracks Hill offers fantastic panoramic views of the surrounding area.

#### **4.4.9 Dallington Park, Northampton**

Gifted to Northampton by Messrs C.E. and T.D. Lewis in 1921, the 23-acre Dallington Park represents a pleasant open space with large trees and shrubberies. It is believed that the history of this park includes acting as an area where cattle grazed due to the evidence of a ha-ha wall on the park's north-eastern boundary with what was once the former Dallington Hospital. This park is home to football and cricket pitches.

#### **4.4.10 Daventry Country Park**

Surrounding the Daventry Reservoir, the 65 hectares Daventry Country Park was designated a Country Park in 1978. Expanded in 1994, following the construction of Northern Way, it was possible to open up areas to the public that had previously been inaccessible. Most of the existing park is both a local nature reserve and the Daventry Reservoir conservation area. The park is being further extended, which will result in it being connected to the Grand Union Canal to its north.

In addition to its three accessible walks, which range from 0.3 miles to 2.5 miles, Daventry Country Park has a car park, café, toilet facilities and children's play area. Development of housing to its east will see it largely enclosed by urban development. As with Brackmills Country Park, this is both an opportunity and a challenge, as the park responds to its new context.

#### **4.4.11 Delapre Park, Northampton**

Delapre is one of the most beautiful public gardens in Northampton and its grounds and the gardens can be enjoyed at all times of the year.

The park comprises gardens of around 3 hectares, with open parkland of about 200 hectares adjoining the gardens. This attractive Park is located in the southern part of the town just off London Road. Delapre Woods can be found at the southern end of the Delapre estate. In addition to being the setting of grade II\* and II listed buildings, the park is the registered battlefield of the 1460 Battle of Northampton, part of the Wars of the Roses, and forms the Delapre Abbey conservation area. This limits the changes and works which are possible on the site.

Delapre Park includes Delapre Abbey and Orangery café, which are hosted by the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust (DAPT), car park, lake, a large walled garden, a miniature railway run by NSME (Northampton Society of Model Engineers), and small arboretum. Fishing and water-skiing take place on the lake. The Council is delivering improved foot and cycle routes in parts of the park, creating better connections between the town centre, University, and other localities.

Challenges for the site include having sufficient parking, particularly for larger events associated with the Abbey. Proposed housing development to the north, off Ransom Road, may bring some challenges but also opportunities. DAPT plans to develop the Victorian Stable Yard, to the north of the park. This should add further attractions to the area, although it is likely to add to parking pressures.

Noise from the A45 Nene Valley Way badly affects the park, particularly in the east. This diminishes the sense of peace and tranquillity. This road is part of the trunk road system managed by National Highways.

#### **4.4.12 Hunsbury Hill Park, Northampton**

Hunsbury Hill Park is a 38 hectares site, a few miles from Northampton town centre. Dominated by the crown of an Iron Age hill fort, which is a scheduled ancient monument, the park is bordered on the west and south by the Ironstone railway system. Facilities include the Ironstone Railway and railway museum, children's play area, café, and car park. However, the Ironstone Railway is in poor condition and has not operated rail trips for some time.

#### **4.4.13 Lings Wood, Swanhaven linear Park & Billing Arbours, Northampton**

The park represents around 50 hectares of open space in eastern Northampton, including Swanhaven linear park and associated artificial lakes; Kingfisher, Cygnet and Dragonfly along Billing Brook. 20 hectares of the Park have been designated as a local nature reserve managed by the Wildlife Trust incorporating woodland, scrub, ponds and acid grassland.

Whilst much valued by the community, the parks are affected by the closeness of development and busy roads, making it difficult to enjoy the space as somewhere away from the business of modern life. There have also been issues with silting of the lakes, which engineering works have sought to address by narrowing the main flow channel.

#### **4.4.14 The Racecourse, Northampton**

The Racecourse is, as its name suggests, a former racecourse. Located in a dense area of central Northampton and extending to 47 hectares, it is a vital green lung for the surrounding communities. It also provides space for community activities such as circuses. The Racecourse is equipped with football pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens, and a

basketball course. A former park depot towards the centre of the site is now a valuable community garden but requires more work to maximise its use.

At the southern edge of the park is a large building, known as the Pavilion, a car park and changing rooms. There are various smaller buildings including former public toilets. The buildings are not, overall, currently well used as public habits and needs have changed.

Historically the Racecourse had issues with crime and anti-social behaviour, but careful landscape work, improved lighting, and CCTV have significantly improved this position. The park is now enjoyed by people of all ages.

#### **4.4.15 Upton Country Park, Northampton**

Upton Country Park is a large park, comprising three areas. The eastern section is 36 hectares between Upton Way and Upton Mill; the central section is around 74 hectares in size running up to Upton Valley Way and the western section is 47 hectares. Totalling around 158 hectares the park includes large reservoirs designed to manage the flood risk to this area of Northampton. Parts of the park are grazed, helping to ensure it retains an open character.

Whilst very large, the park is divided by a major road, Upton Valley Way, between its central and western sections.

#### **4.4.16 Watermeadows, Towcester**

Watermeadows is a large public park serving Towcester and the surrounding area. The River Tove runs along its western edge and much of the park is flood plain for the river. The site forms part of the grade II registered park and garden of Easton Neston, which was influenced by Christopher Wren and implemented by Nicholas Hawksmoor. Iron Age remains have been found on site, and the Watermeadows sits adjacent to the scheduled ancient monument of the Bury Mount and the grade II listed Towcester Mill.

### **4.5 Our local facilities**

In comparison to our major parks, our local parks and informal green spaces do not possess the same scope, however they remain a significant part of our green infrastructure. We will manage these spaces in accordance with this strategy's core principals and themes, seeking opportunities to increasingly engage and work with our local communities and our partners.

Play areas and outdoor sports facilities within our parks represent important assets helping children, young people and adults remain active, build confidence, and improve social skills. We aspire to ensure these facilities are accessible and they help make our parks an inviting destination for recreation and quality time.

## **5. Our vision and objectives**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This section of the Strategy considers the context for the parks and considers how they can best contribute to a thriving West Northamptonshire. It then sets out a vision and objectives.

Our strategy is underpinned by an aspiration to utilise our parks and green spaces as an asset that will enable us to effectively work with our colleagues, partners, and local communities to leverage and deliver our shared objectives. In doing so, we also want to ensure we capture the thoughts of our residents, thereby creating greater local participation in shaping our plans.

### **5.2 Related local policies and strategies**

As part of the Council's corporate plan, we have set ourselves ambitious environmental, sustainability, and health and wellbeing goals. Our "Green and Clean" objective will see us focus on a number of aspirational outcomes to which this Strategy will facilitate, including Net zero carbon by 2030; Increased wildlife species and more trees; High quality parks and; Accessible green space for all.

The Council is also preparing a new Local Plan for West Northamptonshire, which will replace the existing West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and part 2 local plans. This plan will guide development until 2041, setting out our long-term vision and objectives for our locality. It aims to identify locations for developing new housing and employment, changes to our transport infrastructure and other supporting community facilities. It is developing a new Local Transport Plan and in support of that Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans. In some cases these will make proposals with provide active travel access to our parks; in orders, active travel routes will pass through them.

The Council is developing a Playing Pitch Strategy and a Sports Facilities Strategy, these will be completed by April 2024. In providing a strategic framework, they will ensure we have sufficient provision of outdoor playing pitches and sports facilities to meet the evolving needs of our communities until 2041. Many of these facilities lie within parks.

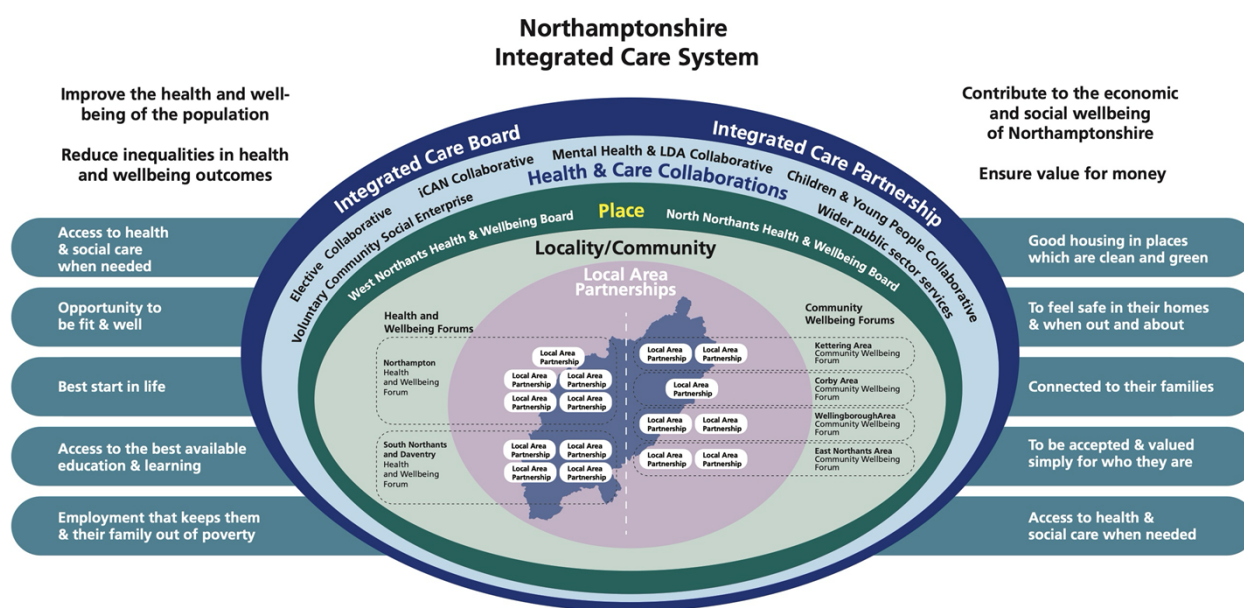
The Council is developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for West Northamptonshire. This, with the statutory backing provided by the Environment Act 2021, will specify priority areas for delivering and enhancing habitats across the area. In some cases, existing or new parks will be suitable locations for this work.

The Council's Estate Climate Strategy and Construction & Maintenance Climate Strategy call for the Council to explore creating a new productive woodland. The core purposes would be carbon capture and timber production, but the strategies call for the benefits to be maximised, identifying public access and biodiversity gain as being potential ancillary benefits. Such a woodland, if found to be viable, would form part of the Council's parks network. Development in and around the parks, including such a woodland, have natural relationships with the Council's emerging Tree Policy & Strategy.

We are also a partner in the delivery of the countywide Integrated Care Strategy. This Strategy seeks to ensure all Northamptonshire residents receive fair opportunities to be the best version of themselves, whilst delivering the best health and wellbeing outcomes for all.

We have adopted these principles on a local level in West Northants with our Joint Health and Wellbeing Board’s Live Your Best Life Strategy (see Figure 2). We believe that every child should have the best start in life, whilst everyone should have a good experience of ageing and at the end of life. This strategy recognises that no partner can achieve these aims alone. Key park-related outcomes included within this strategy encompass connecting communities, creating safe environments, and maximising opportunities to be fit well and independent. Move Northamptonshire<sup>9</sup> is an integrated care system-wide framework for developing more active lifestyles in Northamptonshire. Our parks will plan an important role in achieving the outcomes it seeks. In many cases parks will also contribute to the priorities of our Local Area Partnerships.

**Figure 2: Northamptonshire Integrated Care Strategy: Life Your Best Life**



In July 2021, we adopted the Oxford – Cambridge Arc Environmental Principals for protecting, restoring, and enhancing the environment. These principals aim to double economic growth along the OxCam Arc by doubling nature and ensuring it leads the way in the “zero-carbon living and working of the future”. We will achieve this by committing to greener transport, doubling the number of trees and acreage of accessible managed green spaces and supporting local green energy production.

Our parks also have a role to play in supporting the Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy, both by helping create the setting for other tourist attractions, and in some cases being attractions in their own right (see 6.3.2).

### 5.3 Supporting wider national and global initiatives

Delivering against the outcomes identified above will improve the environment and quality of life for our residents and visitors. However, they also form part of a larger national and global<sup>10</sup> approach to protecting and rejuvenating our planet.

<sup>9</sup> <https://movenorthamptonshire.org>

<sup>10</sup> E.g., [Urban green spaces: a brief for action](#), World Health Organisation, 2017; [Assessing the value of urban green and blue spaces for health and well-being](#), World Health Organisation, 2023; [Green Infrastructure Principles](#), Natural England.



Nationally, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has launched its environment plan, “A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment”, which seeks to improve the environment within a generation. Its goals are cleaner air and water; plants and animals which are thriving; and a cleaner, greener country for us all<sup>11</sup>. As part of our package of Council-wide measures, which includes the intentions included in this Strategy, our local activity will also contribute towards many of central government’s environmental aspirations.

As well as contributing to the government’s twenty-five-year environmental plan, the actions we take will also support the delivery of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Whilst we recognise the scale of the seventeen goals the UN has set, by delivering the many local initiatives, which include those contained within this Strategy, the Council would be supporting the global response.



Our organisation has a key role to play locally in discussing, shaping, and leading how the various communities, including the business sector, across West Northamptonshire respond to the challenges posed. However, our contribution doesn’t end there as there are clear synergies between this Strategy and the SDGs 3, 13, 14 and 15<sup>12</sup>, whilst it can also play a part in supporting a number of others too.

In addition to its provisions relating to local nature recovery strategies, the Environment Act 2021 creates requirements for all new developments to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity. As local planning authority the Council is responsible for securing this. However, it can also play a role in making that net gain is delivered locally, potentially including in its parks.

## 5.4 The vision and objectives

Drawing from the Council’s vision and corporate priorities, the results of our consultation informing the development of this strategy, the local, national, and global initiatives

<sup>11</sup> HM Government (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment.

<sup>12</sup> SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing. SDG 13: Climate Action. SDG 14: Life Below Water. SDG 15: Life on Land.



outlined above, and the existing and projected context of West Northamptonshire, our vision for our parks and green spaces is:

**“West Northamptonshire’s parks are places for people of all backgrounds to thrive through exercise and relaxation in the open air, enjoying nature and heritage, building communities, and supporting biodiversity.”**

Fleshing out the vision, our objectives have been developed to make sure that any changes made to our parks are appropriate, affordable, sustainable, and clearly deliver against our strategic aspirations. These objectives will be used when considering any changes that affect the current or future management or maintenance of our parks. They are to:

- 1. Provide a network of safe and accessible parks serving the whole of West Northamptonshire.**
- 2. Create spaces for health and wellbeing to flourish.**
- 3. Preserve and develop the biodiversity, heritage, and landscape values of all sites.**
- 4. Encourage engagement and participation of communities and partners to develop a sense of pride and community cohesion.**
- 5. Secure investment in our parks.**
- 6. Make good use of public money and assets.**

We will develop and market our major parks as a network of destinations, which cater for the local community they serve, but also attract residents and visitors from further afield. We aim to maximise the range of facilities provided at these parks so we can enrich the visitor experience. This includes as appropriate providing parking, toilets, and café, alongside the potential to host larger scales events.

## **6. How are we going to do it?**

### **6.1 Delivering our vision**

Our major parks represent places people from across West Northamptonshire and beyond can come to enjoy. They provide wide ranging facilities and opportunities for fun, relaxation, and personal development. Each of our major parks possesses its own character and identity, reflecting their specific heritage. Together they offer many ways of enjoying nature and the outdoors.

Our parks also present potential economic opportunities, which could contribute to the wider West Northamptonshire economy by making it a destination people want to visit, live and spend time in.

This Strategy focuses on our major parks including their amenities, such as car parks, cafés, toilets, signage, lighting, benches, and play equipment. It does not include town and parish council managed parks and green spaces, pocket parks, allotments, or public rights of way, although in some cases there are relationships with these spaces and those who manage them.

Delivery actions form three types:

- Overarching interventions, where actions relate to all parks or several of them.
- Delivery of new or renewed parks, to fill gaps, meet needs, and take advantage of opportunities.
- Enhancing our existing parks.

Where reference is made to actions that would require money not provided for in approved budgets, or secured from developer contributions, grants, or private investment, then those actions will only be implemented if it is agreed budget is to be made available for that purpose.

## 6.2 Overarching actions

### 6.2.1 Purpose

Some actions relate to all, or a number of, parks and to the way we approach the parks as a whole. These are described here.

### 6.2.2 Good land management

The Green Flag Award scheme recognises well managed parks and green spaces, setting a benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces. It is an international standard for parks and green spaces. Holding a Green Flag Award is an excellent example of achievement and should provide communities with a great sense of local pride. We are proud to hold six awards and are looking to increase the number of Green Flag Award winning parks in the future.



Some of our parks have specific management requirements such as conservation areas, stewardship agreements, scheduled ancient monuments, and listed and other historic buildings. These requirements will impact and influence how we can develop and use these sites, as we must adhere to specific management arrangements. Compliance with these arrangements will enable us to demonstrate that we are protecting and enhancing the heritage and natural environment of these sites. The Council will:

- a) Seek to retain existing Green Flag awards and secure additional ones.
- b) Ensure parks are managed in ways which are consistent with stewardship agreements, conservation area management plans, and other relevant documents.

### 6.2.3 Safe and accessible parks

It is vital our parks remain in good order, and that, as far as practical, they can be enjoyed by all (see also 6.2.8). Therefore, we will:

- a) Develop plans for proactive maintenance of the parks estate.
- b) Ensure projects or improvements are, as far as practical, accessible to all. This includes both physical accessibility and measures designed to encourage use by those who may otherwise feel unsafe or that the parks are 'not for them'. As appropriate, we will engage with our communities in designing these measures. Measures may include:
  - i. Engagement with women and girls when designing new facilities to identify the specific requirements for women and girls.
  - ii. Improvements to sight lines, visibility and escape routes when designing and installing new facilities, developing tree planting schemes, etc.
  - iii. Ensuring adequate lighting, that is low and even rather than lights that create strong contrast and glare.
  - iv. Delivering good path networks that are easy to understand and navigate.
- c) Explore possibilities for delivering new and enhanced toilet facilities, including 'changing places' toilets for those with the greatest needs.

#### **6.2.4 Freedom to enjoy**

We recognise the detrimental effect nuisance and anti-social behaviour can have on the enjoyment of our parks and other open spaces. This ranges from littering to use of unauthorised motor vehicles. We are particularly aware of the need to ensure our parks are accessible to all, including women and girls<sup>13</sup>, and those from minority backgrounds.

Actions which will be taken include:

- a) Creating a single, up to date, set of park bylaws, to clearly set out what not permitted and the consequences of breaching the bylaws.
- b) Where bylaws are not a practical solution, use of public spaces protection orders (PSPOs). Currently in use in open spaces across West Northamptonshire with specific provisions in use in Daventry Country Park and Upton Country Park. Current PSPOs provide for direct enforcement against specific problematic behaviours and can be considered as an enforcement option for a range of anti-social behaviour.
- c) Appropriate physical measures, where these can prevent some types of nuisance or anti-social behaviour without materially harming the interests of other park users.
- d) Where this can be done, encouraging informal surveillance. This may involve, for example, letting out disused buildings so the occupiers have an interest in observing and reporting unsuitable behaviour.
- e) Additional CCTV, where this is practical and justified.
- f) Making parks where there are known problems a focus for deployment of Park Rangers, Neighbourhood Wardens, and other enforcement officers.
- g) Work through the community safety partnership to seek Police support as needed.
- h) Ensuring regular parks surveys (see 6.2.11(g)) include questions designed to understand factors which may inhibit the use of parks by women, girls, and people from minority backgrounds.

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<sup>13</sup> Having regard to the factors described in, for example, Barker, A and Fox, R (2023) Women and Girls' Safety in Parks: Lessons from Research and Practice. Report. University of Leeds.  
<https://doi.org/10.48785/100/231>

Together these actions should reduce issues of anti-social and nuisance behaviour and thus allow legitimate uses of the parks to flourish.

### **6.2.5 Additional means of exercise and enjoyment**

The parks offer a range of means of enjoying being outdoors, including walking, cycling, open water swimming, and water-skiing. However, to maximise their attraction it would be good to offer a wider range. For these purposes those listed below are considered; all of them combine physical exercise with a 'reward' in the form of sensations of motion or (safe) risk, and of achievement. This benefits physical and mental health, and overall well-being. Such activities are also often undertaken in groups, helping to build social inclusion and cohesion.

#### **High ropes and allied activities**



There are a range of activities people enjoy involving climbing, walking along, or controlled falls from, ropes. These activities typically involve a degree of excitement which results in people being willing to exercise, including upper body muscle groups not engaged in many other activities.

#### **Alpine Coasters**



Alpine coasters are single-person rides driven by gravity, on tracks. A sufficiently steep hillside is needed but the other requirements are relatively modest. Users experience an adrenaline rush going down and get exercise walking (or running) to the top.

#### **Grass bobsleigh**

Grass bobsleigh works similarly to alpine coasters, but without the track. A sufficiently steep hillside is needed.



## Velorail



Velorail is the use of – typically – old rail alignments with pedal-driven vehicles, typically for up to four people. The track can be in a condition completely unsuitable for traditional rail or tram vehicles, as the velorail carriage (draisine) is very light. Users experience the sensation of quick movement in the open air, as well as, often, enjoying the heritage of the site.

## Boat hire



Providing boats for hire is a traditional arrangement in many parks. It is not currently on offer in West Northamptonshire. Many people enjoy the experience, which typically involves a moderate degree of exercise.

## Large slides

Slides suitable for adults and children offer the experience of 'falling', in a safe context. As with Alpine coasters and grass bobsleighs, Users experience an adrenaline rush going down and get exercise walking (or running) to the top.

### 6.2.6 Strategic concession agreements

The additional forms of physical exercise and enjoyment mentioned in 6.2.5 would doubtless be welcomed by many residents of West Northamptonshire. However, the Council is not particularly familiar with running any of them and the nature of the business models involved. Therefore, to manage the risk it is proposed that one or more concession partners be sought. These would bring operating experience and private capital for installation.

The procurement of these concessions would include the options for operators to make proposals for such facilities in Northampton town centre.

### **6.2.7 Biodiversity enhancement and a habitat bank**

If we are to leave our natural environment in a better state than we found it so that our children and their children can truly enjoy this inheritance, we must ensure we respect the intrinsic value of nature. Whilst it is imperative that our parks and green spaces evolve and adapt so to meet the changing needs of our communities, it is also important that they do not lose the character and heritage that made them so special in the first place. To this end we will safeguard our varied landscapes, ensuring they are not unduly exploited and protect our indigenous wildlife, including protecting and preserving native and endangered animals, woodland and plant life.

Our parks are already important reservoirs of habitat supporting biodiversity. However, they could support more, both within their existing boundaries and in potential extensions and new parks. In particular, there is potential for the Council to establish a 'habitat bank'. This involves creating or enhancing biodiversity value, the value of which is converted into credits which can be used by developers who need to meet their biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements. Whilst sometimes it is best for BNG to be delivered on development sites, it can enhance the benefits if the effort is focused on areas where a significant difference is made.

We will:

- a) Identify where our parks can most effectively support biodiversity including critical species, and carry out maintenance and improvement works with this in view.
- b) Explore setting up a West Northamptonshire Habitat Bank, enabling investment to enhance the parks estate through sale of biodiversity credits.
- c) Take opportunities for increasing tree planting and tree cover in our parks, where is in line with the Tree Policy & Strategy and enhances the overall ecological benefits.

### **6.2.8 Contributing to active and sustainable transport**

Sustainable and active travel addresses many of the Council's duties and policy goals, including supporting good public health, reducing carbon emissions, and making thriving, engaging places. Therefore, we will seek both to encourage active travel within our parks, and active and sustainable travel to them. We will:

- a) Support appropriate provision of active travel routes within our parks.
- b) Support the provision of active and public travel routes between our parks and places where people live and work, including where practical providing public transport routes which serve parks (whilst recognising the financial and practical constraints on what may be possible).
- c) Explore delivering further cycle and mobility aid hire in parks (see 6.2.9).



### 6.2.9 Cycle and mobility aids hire

We want to encourage people of all kinds, ages, and levels of ability to enjoy our parks, and to spread use across them. To facilitate this it would be helpful for visitors to be able to hire cycles, mobility aids, and potentially other forms of mobility device, mixing pleasure and practicality. Such services may form part of strategic concession agreements (see 6.2.6). We will therefore:

- a) Identify sites potentially suitable for one or more type of hire service.
- b) Seek to procure suitable partners to deliver them.



### 6.2.10 Enhancing the café offer

Our parks are great places for physical exercise, whether vigorous or gentle, but also for sitting, enjoying the surroundings, and eating or drinking. We will therefore review the provision of catering across the parks, seeking to increase provision and secure maximum benefits for the parks. We recognise this will need to be a long-term plan, as some existing facilities have many years of contracted presence.

Particular opportunities identified for new café facilities are identified in section 6.4.

### 6.2.11 Working with users, residents, and partners

If we are to ensure our parks and green spaces are managed for the benefit of all, it is important that local people and our partners are provided with the ability to input into how they are being used and developed. By giving our communities a voice, we can assure ourselves that our plans are reflective of their aspirations for their local environment. Likewise, working with partners helps us ensure the widest set of benefits are achieved from our parks. We will:

- a) Work collaboratively with local communities, including 'friends of' groups, and businesses to secure public value through volunteering, community engagement, consultation and partnership working.
- b) Encourage new partnerships to develop park activities and greater participation opportunities, supporting local communities to use parks and create opportunities to improve wellbeing, physically, mentally, and socially.
- c) Increase the range of volunteer opportunities to build skills, create social cohesion and instil a sense of pride and ownership.
- d) Work with health partners to ensure parks and green spaces provide relevant opportunities for health and wellbeing interventions e.g., social prescribing and activity on referral.
- e) Work with local educational institutions to increase opportunities for learning and development which also contributes to the character and condition of the parks.
- f) Work with Local Area Partnerships to ensure our parks and green spaces support the relevant priorities that emerge in each area.
- g) Undertake regular visitor surveys to understand the wants and needs of park users and evaluate the outcomes to contribute to plans and proposals.

### **6.2.12 Encouraging use and enjoyment**

Whilst our parks are an amazing resource, they are used to different degrees by our residents. This partly depends on location but is also affected by awareness. People are sometimes unaware of what parks offer, and in particular may miss out on the heritage preserved and presented in them. We want to maximise the ability of everyone to enjoy what the parks offer. Therefore, we will:

- a) Develop a marketing and communication plan for parks and green spaces.
- b) Develop web content to maximise the use of the internet as an information resource.
- c) Work with partners to deliver local heritage events and displays.
- d) Develop and support a programme of community open days and family activities, including activities designed to encourage women and girls, and those from minority backgrounds.

### **6.2.13 Developing the team**

Delivering the Strategy and the ongoing parks operations requires a team – both WNC staff and volunteers – who have the right skills, knowledge, and experience. The Council will:

- a) Seek to retain a fully-staffed Environment, Countryside & Parks service, promoting parks and green spaces as an attractive career option.
- b) Continue to facilitate and encourage volunteering opportunities, including:
  - i. Encouraging and supporting a network of sustainable volunteer groups which are formally constituted and follow best practice guidance, including induction training and continuous development.
  - ii. Maintaining a volunteer database.
  - iii. Running staff-led volunteering sessions to increase volunteer hours.
  - iv. Hold a community or volunteer celebration event at least every two years to acknowledge the contribution of the voluntary and community sector.
- c) Offer development opportunities to staff and recognised volunteers to expand their abilities and minimise skill gaps.
- d) Provide and publicise opportunities for businesses to realise corporate social responsibility goals by carrying out improvement works in the parks.

## **6.3 New and renewed parks**

### **6.3.1 Introduction**

There are noticeable gaps in park coverage in West Northamptonshire, as well as varied access to good quality parks within Northampton specifically. It is therefore proposed to address these issues as set out below. Any new or renewed parks would reflect its specific context, environment, and cultural heritage.

### **6.3.2 Battle of Naseby Country Park**

Naseby is a site of significant historical importance in the English Civil War. Representing the final key battle, Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentarian (Roundhead) New Model Army decimated the Royalist (Cavalier) army of King Charles I. Our proposed Country Park would seek to commemorate the battle site and the impact it had on the course of British history and Parliamentary democracy. It would also provide country park access for the north-east of West Northamptonshire.

A Battle of Naseby Country Park should provide a valuable addition to the area's attraction to tourists, encouraging people to come into and spend time in West Northamptonshire. Currently there is no real way to appreciate the battle, which is a noticeable omission given its importance to English history and indeed to that of these islands as a whole.

The Council will:

- a) Conduct a feasibility study to establish the likely level of demand, appropriate type of facilities, environmental impact, sources of funding, and overall proposal viability.
- b) Where the viability of providing facilities is confirmed, develop business cases to seek approval to progress.

### **6.3.3 Brackley Country (Linear) Park**

As shown in section 4.4, there is a noticeable gap in major park coverage in the south-west of West Northamptonshire, serving Brackley and its surrounding villages. Brackley has grown substantially, and further growth is expected. This makes addressing this issue of increasing importance. Whilst Brackley is surrounded by countryside, it is not generally accessible to the public, with only seven rights of way emerging from the town.

Working in partnership with our planning colleagues, we aim to identify a suitable location for a new country park. Whilst it would not be appropriate to restrict choices in this strategy, an attractive option appears to be to create a park which includes a linear section utilising part of the former Great Central Railway, perhaps through the West Northamptonshire countryside to Helmdon. This would be consistent with the Council's draft Local Walking and Cycling Plan for the area.

The Council will:

- a) Conduct a feasibility study to establish the likely level of demand, appropriate type of facilities, environmental impact, sources of funding, and overall proposal viability.
- b) Where the viability of providing facilities is confirmed, develop business cases to seek approval to progress.

### **6.3.4 Houghton Linear Park**

Substantial growth is planned for south-east Northampton. The Council also owns the basis of a potential linear park, which would help provide for both existing and new residents. This is the former Northampton to Bedford railway running from London Road, Northampton, into the West Northamptonshire countryside near Horton.

By also assessing the viability of incorporating part of the former Northampton to Wellingborough railway, this park would potentially run between Delapre Park and Becketts Park, through Brackmills and Great Houghton, past Little Houghton, out towards Horton. We envisage the length of this proposed park to be 9.2km, however, there is currently a 0.5 km break in our ownership, which occurs circa 7.8km outside Northampton.

Whilst this site is currently largely inaccessible, it does give us the opportunity to enhance accessibility to open spaces for all Northampton's communities, especially those living on the south of the town.

As part of this emerging development, we are assessing the viability of introducing velorail (see 6.2.5). However, our ability to do so will be influenced by the outcome of further

surveys of the site, which can confirm both the existence and condition of the old track, and assess how practical it would be to restore track to missing sections.

The Council will:

- a) Conduct a feasibility study to establish the likely level of demand, appropriate type of facilities, environmental impact, sources of funding, and overall proposal viability.
- b) Where the viability of providing facilities is confirmed, develop business cases to seek approval to progress.

### **6.3.5 Marefair Heritage Park**

Work is scheduled to begin on this new Heritage Park during Autumn 2023. Costing £1.5 million, we anticipate the work to create this park being completed by the Autumn 2024. This new green space will incorporate a play area, new safe pathways, flowerbeds, and seating areas. In celebrating the area's rich heritage, it will also include archaeological remains, protect heritage assets and help enhance the settings of Northampton Castle and Mound, Grade 1 listed St Peter's Church and Grade 2 listed Castle Hill Reformed Church.

The Council will progress this scheme as part of its ongoing regeneration of Northampton town centre.

### **6.3.6 Eastern Northampton Park**

Recognising the social and economic challenges faced by parts of eastern Northampton, it is proposed to explore the possibility of bringing together the areas of open space described in 4.4.13, or most of them, to create a more cohesive Eastern Northampton Park. This would involve reducing the impact of the roads which currently separate these areas, introducing visitor facilities and improving security. At the same time questions around the maintenance and management of the Billing lakes would be addressed.

The Council will:

- a) Conduct a feasibility study to establish the likely level of demand, appropriate type of facilities, environmental impact, sources of funding, and overall proposal viability.
- b) Where the viability of providing facilities is confirmed, develop business cases to seek approval to progress.

### **6.3.7 West Northamptonshire productive woodland**

In its Estate and Construction & Maintenance Climate Strategies, the Council has identified the potential for a new woodland to capture residual carbon emission from its operations. The same woodland may, in time, provide timber and other wood products for use in construction. By 'locking up' carbon from the atmosphere and then allowing the use of the same land to extract more carbon through fresh planting, this would secure additional benefits. Clearly, it would take some time to reach a point where trees were a size whereby using timber from the woodland would be practical, but these issues require long-term thinking.

The same woodland should secure additional benefits, which should include public access – hence creating essentially a new woodland park – and may also provide biodiversity gains and, depending on location, flood risk mitigation.

The Council will:

- a) Prepare a business case for productive woodland.
- b) Seek to create new woodland as soon as possible, so that impact on carbon capture is being delivered by 2030.
- c) Seek grants and other external funding for tree planting.

This work will be done in alignment with work on the Council's Tree Policy & Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

### **6.3.8 Northampton town centre**

As part of its plans for the regeneration of Northampton town centre, the Council will be improving open spaces. It sees the future of all the town centres in West Northamptonshire as places where people go to enjoy themselves, with shopping only as part of the experience. Therefore, whilst it has many purposes, one perspective on the centre of Northampton will be as a 'park'. Of course, this does not literally mean central Northampton would be a park in the traditional sense. However, in particular, we will look for opportunities to create new outdoor physical leisure attractions (see 6.2.6). When people come to use these, some will stay longer and spend time and money in shops, cafés, or other attractions.

The Council will include Northampton town centre as a potential location when procuring strategic concession agreements (6.2.6).

## **6.4 Enhancing our existing parks**

### **6.4.1 Introduction**

Earlier in this strategy we provided an overview of our current portfolio of parks and green spaces. We are committed to maximising the value these assets provide to our communities. Working in partnership with our partners and wider stakeholders we will seek to capitalise on site-specific opportunities capable of generating increasing footfall, whilst retaining their individual character.

### **6.4.2 Abington Park**

As identified earlier in this strategy, Abington Park is currently divided into two sections by Park Avenue South. Whilst when traffic consisted largely of people on foot or cycle, horses, and carriages, this was not a major issue. With current traffic is a significant one. Working in partnership with our key stakeholders we aim to reduce the impact this major thoroughfare currently has on this major, historical site.

We also aim to improve the park's existing infrastructure by:

- a) Installing a new toilet block to serve the eastern section.
- b) Making improvements to the lake.
- c) Reviewing the current security measures, including options to increase informal surveillance.
- d) Delivery of Abington area active travel scheme.

### **6.4.3 Bradlaugh Fields**

The key issue to address at Bradlaugh Fields is the loss of natural water supply to the ponds. The Council will work with partners to explore ways this might be overcome,

including whether storm water drains serving nearby developments could be reconfigured to discharge into the park.

#### **6.4.4 Brampton Valley Way**

We are aware of tentative proposals to reinstate a railway line and rail services between Northampton and Market Harborough. Bearing this in mind our proposals for the Brampton Valley Way will seek to ensure that the facility is resilient and would still offer an attractive facility and biodiversity value if the railway was re-opened. In particular we will:

- a) When opportunities arise, look to widen the corridor for both nature and people.

As part of our continued development of our Brampton Valley Way Linear Park we will assess the viability of:

- b) Creating a new “focal point” in the northern part of the route, perhaps at the former station site next to the former the Harrington airfield site. The concept would be to develop refreshment and providing other supporting amenities, which could potentially include a cycle hire facility.
- c) Developing a new car park at Draughton Crossing.
- d) Improving the surface in the tunnels and providing low-level lighting in them. If this is not possible, we will seek to improve the above-ground ‘bypass’ arrangements.
- e) Improving the connection to Brixworth Country Park by cycle. This would probably involve improvements to Merry Tom Lane and improved cycle route from this to the country park.

We will also:

- f) Seek to improve connections from the southern end of the route into Northampton, helping people to access it by foot and cycle, and to access local shops and amenities in Northampton from the route.
- g) Encourage Leicestershire County Council to improve the connection from the end of the Brampton Valley Way into Market Harborough town centre. This should make the far north of the route more attractive to users.

#### **6.4.5 Brixworth Country Park**

We aim to enhance our offer at Brixworth Country Park and make it a premier destination in Northamptonshire and the wider area. Key actions will be to:

- a) Remove unnecessary barriers between the WNC-owned country park and Anglian Water-owned Pitsford reservoir, so people can enjoy the space more freely.
- b) If practical, extend the park, so it is better able to accommodate increasing numbers of people. It may also be appropriate to extend the car park.
- c) Explore enhancement of the play park. This is already a very popular attraction and is often very busy on days with good weather. Further enhancement would increase the enjoyment of children and their parents or carers and should increase parking income and secondary spend.
- d) Explore delivery of an alpine coaster and/or grass bobsleigh. This would add a new class of attraction, widening the user base and generating both direct and indirect income.
- e) Work with the newly-formed wild swimming group to improve arrangements for swimming in Pitsford Water using facilities at the country park.



- f) Work with Northampton Sailing Club to maximise the benefits the club offers to residents.
- g) Work with Anglian Water to deliver, as a joint project, a sandy beach in Pitsford Reservoir, with swimmers using facilities in the country park nearby. This would enable more enjoyment of the open water.

(See also the proposed cycle link to Brampton Valley Way under 6.4.3(e).)

Through effectively engaging and collaborating with our communities, partners and wider stakeholders we believe our plans will create a destination of choice in the heart of our locality.

#### **6.4.6 Daventry Country Park**

We have numerous plans to enhance Daventry Country Park. In addition to the on-going work to extend the Park to the Grand Union Canal to its north, we are looking at potentially introducing a range of activities that would enhance our offer to visitors:

- a) Investigating the viability of working with a partner to create a high rope activity space enabling visitors to get close with nature whilst also completing a variety of activities such as zip wires, cargo nets, Tarzan swings, flying trapeze, suspending logs and wobbly bridges.
- b) We are also exploring the possibility of enabling visitors to bring out their inner medieval warrior by introducing an axe throwing activity where tools such as Angel axes and Norse tomahawks are thrown at targets. Many high ropes operators consider this a good paring, as it allows them to operate for more of the year – clearly, the two activities are segregated from each other.
- c) For those visitors who prefer to engage in more sedate and leisurely activities we will explore the feasibility of introducing a boat hire offer to the reservoir.

In conjunction with the Outdoor Learning Service, we will also assess the viability of developing an existing outbuilding in the park to support the Service's outreach pilot, which will assess the impact increasing the centre's reach on our communities has.

#### **6.4.7 Delapre Park, Northampton**

Delapre Park is unique in its relationship with Delapre Abbey and DAPT which operates the Abbey. Plans for Delapre Park will be worked on in engagement with DAPT. Addressing the issues and taking the opportunities, the Council will:

- a) Support DAPT's proposals for regeneration of the Victorian stable block.
- b) Work with DAPT to enhance car parking in suitable locations, ideally at Ransome Road.
- c) Work with DAPT to enhance historic assets and to reduce inappropriate modern intrusions on the historic site.
- d) Continue to work with the Active Quarter partnership to deliver active travel project plans.
- e) Develop, in partnership with NSME, a strategy to develop and promote the miniature railway. Explore if there are income-generating opportunities arising from this.
- f) If it can be accommodated given the presence of water ski activities, explore boat hire on Delapre lake.

- g) Seek support from National Highways in addressing the noise from the A45 Nene Valley Way.

#### **6.4.8 Hunsbury Hill**

We are keen to explore opportunities as to how the onsite railway could be better utilised. Ideally this would be in partnership with the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust. We will:

- a) Support appropriate proposals by the Trust to extend its running track, conditional on the site being managed in a safe manner.
- b) Work with the Trust to develop its offer to the community, including a marketing strategy. Explore if there are income-generating opportunities arising from this.
- c) Look to introduce velorail using the track (on days it is not used by the Trust to run trains).

#### **6.4.9 Upton Country Park**

Our plans to enhance the facilities at Upton Country Park include creating a new café, perhaps starting with a mobile concession site. In addition to providing visitors with access to on-site refreshments, we are also exploring the viability of making further improvements to the Park's facilities, including installing toilets. These improvements should enhance the visitor experience and increase footfall.

### **6.5 Development of the Outdoor Learning Service**

As described above, the Outdoor Learning Service provides valuable and enjoyable experience for children, currently largely of primary school age. The Council recognises the benefits the service has; not only does it deliver valuable education, but it also helps people reconnect with the natural world. Post Covid-19, the importance of this in alleviating anxiety and stress is particularly obvious. We will therefore:

- a) Continue to develop the programme of activities run by the service for primary-age children, both on site at Everdon and in parks across West Northamptonshire.
- b) Work with colleagues in Children's Services and in schools to explore developing an offer for both primary and secondary-age children and young people who are struggling with mainstream education, and for whom learning in a natural setting may be valuable.

## **7. Legacy Strategy Actions**

### **7.1 Purpose and sources**

#### **7.1.1 Introduction**

Whilst this Strategy supersedes the previous strategies developed by the predecessor Councils, we have reviewed the aspirations our legacy councils committed to deliver on behalf of their local communities. Where we have identified actions which align to our goals and objectives, they are taking into this Strategy's delivery framework. The documents are:

- Daventry District Council: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy (2009)
- Northampton Borough Council: Parks and Open Spaces Strategy Refresh (2013)
- South Northamptonshire Council: Open Space Strategy (2007 to 2021)

Each of our predecessor councils took a different approach to setting their locality-specific direction of travel. Whilst the intention of this strategy is to set the priorities and direction of travel for West Northamptonshire, we also want to acknowledge the status of any outstanding actions, especially where their continuation and completion are of relevance to what we want to achieve.

#### **7.1.2 Daventry District Council: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy (2009)**

Published in 2009, this Strategy contained numerous recommendations alongside a supporting Action Plan. Split into three phases, Phase 3 was described as covering "2015+". Those actions which comprised "Phase 3" of Daventry's Action Plan have been included in the update below.

#### **7.1.3 Northampton Borough Council: Parks and Open Spaces Strategy Refresh (2013)**

This strategy referenced numerous policies and included a suite of statements which would provide a framework within which Northampton's open spaces could be improved. However, it did not include any specific actions or supporting timescales.

#### **7.1.4 South Northamptonshire Council: Open Space Strategy (2007 to 2021)**

Published in 2009, this Strategy contains a green space Action Plan, which indicated that actions would be completed over "the short term", "the medium term" or "the long term". Some actions were described as being "on-going". Those actions which were described as either "long term" or "on-going" have been included in the update below.

### **7.2 Legacy Actions Status Update**

Having reviewed the three preceding strategies, we believe that the actions identified below represent those which align to and contribute to our new authority's strategic intentions. We have also provided an overview as to the actions taken by either the legacy authority, or ourselves to deliver them.

## **We said ...**

Provide a further six play facilities and one facility for young people in Towcester in light of the anticipated growth in this area. Decisions regarding the appropriate location of these facilities should be informed by the location of any new development

Identify (and implement) opportunities for the provision of three additional facilities for children and an additional facility for young people in Brackley

Continue the use of the mobile skatepark in rural areas, particularly targeting larger villages with resident populations exceeding 5,000. The availability of this facility should be promoted through leaflets to parish councils

Coordinate activities at parks and green spaces across the district for children (aged up to 11) and young people (up to 16). These events should be promoted through schools and be delivered through multiple agencies.

Work with the Community Safety Partnership to help implement their strategy to combat anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and graffiti and dog fouling at green space sites. This will improve quality and the perception of safety at green space sites.

Ensure the provision of at least one informal area in villages exceeding 250 people - this should be a minimum of one amenity green space area.

## **We did ...**

To date we can report that a new play facility has been incorporated into the park at Watermeadows, with a further two forming part of new developments within the Towcester locality. We encourage developers to incorporate play facilities into their developments, with the associated site management typically being devolved to the relevant parish council in line with the Council's Adoption of Assets policy.

We have delivered one facility as part of a new development within the Brackley locality. A further facility is currently being planned. Brackley Town Council will be providing a new youth centre alongside a new stake park.

As identified in this strategy we are exploring opportunities to identify a new Linear/Country Park within the Brackley area, which will also include either a natural play or more generic play facilities.

The skatepark is being donated to a suitable group. We would grant access for the suitable use of the mobile skatepark use within our parks.

We will continue to work with Everdon Outdoor Learning Centre to offer opportunities for activities across our parks and green spaces. We will also grant access for other agencies to deliver such activities where appropriate.

We have delivered various campaigns across our sites to support the Partnership's work.

As identified in this strategy we will continue to support the Partnership to combat issues within our parks and green spaces.

## **We said ...**

Negotiate with schools to secure community use of school facilities outside school hours for informal recreation purposes. Efforts should be concentrated on areas where the school facilities are the only form of recreational green space in the village.

Reinstate dismantled railway lines to provide new green corridors linking rural areas. Community involvement and ownership in these projects should be encouraged.

Given the reliance on the limited number of parks and gardens in the district, and particularly in rural areas, the creation of a green corridor network should be sought.

Ensure that all new housing developments contribute appropriately to the provision of green space through the effective implementation of developer contributions.

New developments should include the provision of those facilities which normally meet user needs in Parks and Gardens, i.e. play, formal and informal recreation.

Continue to support and develop the 'green gym' initiative at allotment sites, helping to raise awareness of the wider benefits of allotment provision across local communities.

In light of the importance placed on the provision of quality facilities, strive to achieve a Green Flag award at least one site in the district.

Discussions should also take place with bus service providers with a view to improving the routing and increasing the frequency of bus links from rural areas to parks and gardens.

## **We did ...**

This has been actioned by our Leisure Services team with the goal of increasing informal recreation and activity.

We are considering this as part of the proposals for new linear parks at south-east Northampton and at Brackley. Such corridors will also be considered when the Council prepared local cycling and walking plans and reviews rights of way.

The proposed new country parks at Brackley and for the Battle of Naseby will contribute to this. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will also address aspects of it.

This is addressed through the Council's planning policies.

This is addressed through the Council's planning policies.

Allotments are largely managed by parish councils or are run privately. We will therefore not be pursuing such initiatives within this Strategy.

This action remains a corporate priority and we aim to increase the number of Green Flag Awards held by parks across West Northamptonshire.

This is not something the Council can make a priority given pressures on bus service budgets. However, where there are opportunities to make such connections within other routes they will be taken (see 6.2.8(b)).

## 8. Delivery and finance

### 8.1 Delivery mechanisms

For this Strategy to have value, it must be delivered. Accordingly, an action plan is appended. This identifies for each action which part or parts of the Council is responsible for delivery and the planned timescales.

### 8.2 Approach to finance

The Council operates within tight financial constraints; these were considered in drawing up the proposals in this Strategy. It therefore seeks to:

- Make best use of existing resources (physical, human, and monetary).
- Open up opportunities for private investment to deliver the Strategy's aims, noticeably in the strategic concession proposals and for catering.
- Provide a structure within which developer contributions (planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the future Infrastructure Levy (IL), and any new or replacement system) can be secured and used to best effect, allowing the parks estate to contribute to meeting the need for sustainable development.
- Proposing a biodiversity bank, which would allow the parks estate to be developed through the use of biodiversity credits from developers seeking to deliver biodiversity net gain.
- Exploring a business case for a productive woodland which, at least in part, should be self-financing. To the extent it was not, this would be meeting the Council's carbon offsetting requirements in a cost-effective manner.

Where new parks are proposed, the intention would be that the business cases for each one would look to achieve operational nil or better financial impacts on the Council. Similarly, initial provision of these would be funded from grants or developer contributions, with Council capital only used if there was likely to be sufficient operational surplus to meet the financing costs.





## 9. Appendix: Action Plan

This section sets out the actions in the Strategy together with delivery arrangements. This plan will undergo regular review and refinement as part of the overall management review cycle. The abbreviations for service areas are 'A&E' for Assets & Environment, 'CM' for Communications, 'H&C' for Housing and Communities, 'HR' for Human Resources, 'H&T' for Highways & Transport, 'PH' for Public Health, 'PS' for Place Shaping, 'RS' for Regulatory Services, 'WS' for Waste.

No.	Service areas	Source	Action	Objectives	Target delivery date	Resources
1.	A&E	6.2.2(a)	Seek to retain existing Green Flag awards and secure additional ones.	1, 2, 3, 4	Ongoing	Staff time, existing budgets
2.	A&E	6.2.2(b)	Ensure parks are managed in ways which are consistent with stewardship agreements, conservation area management plans, and other relevant documents.	3	Ongoing	Staff time, existing budgets
3.	A&E	6.2.3(a)	Develop plans for proactive maintenance of the parks estate.	1, 6	2025	Staff time, existing budgets, potential new finance
4.	A&E	6.2.3(b)	Ensure projects or improvements are, as far as practical, accessible to all. This includes both physical accessibility and measures designed to encourage use by those who may otherwise feel unsafe or that the parks are 'not for them'.	1, 4	Ongoing	Staff time, relevant budgets
5.	A&E	6.2.3(c)	Explore possibilities for delivering new and enhanced toilet facilities, including 'changing places' toilets for those with the greatest needs.	1, 4, 5	2025	Staff time, potential new finance (including government grants)
6.	A&E	6.2.4(a)	Creating a single, up to date, set of park bylaws.	1, 2, 4	2025	Staff time, existing budgets
7.	RS	6.2.4(b)	Where bylaws are not a practical solution, use of public spaces protection orders (PSPOs).	1, 2, 4	Ongoing	Staff time, existing budgets

No.	Service areas	Source	Action	Objectives	Target delivery date	Resources
8.	A&E	6.2.4(c)	Appropriate physical measures, where these can prevent some types of nuisance or anti-social behaviour without materially harming the interests of other park users.	1, 2, 4	Ongoing	Staff time, existing budgets, potential new finance
9.	A&E	6.2.4(d)	Where this can be done, encouraging informal surveillance.	1, 2, 4, 5	2025 and ongoing	Staff time
10.	A&E	6.2.4(e)	Additional CCTV, where this is practical and justified.	1, 2, 4	Ongoing	Staff time, existing budgets, potential new finance
11.	A&E, RS	6.2.4(f)	Making parks where there are known problems a focus for deployment of Park Rangers and Neighbourhood Wardens	1, 2, 4	Ongoing	Staff time
12.	A&E, H&C	6.2.4(g)	Work through the community safety partnership to seek Police support as needed	1, 2, 4	Ongoing	Staff time
13.	A&E	6.2.6, 6.3.8	Procurement of strategic concession agreements (including Northampton town centre).	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	2026	Staff time, possible consultancy costs
14.	A&E	6.2.7(a)	Identify where our parks can most effectively support biodiversity including critical species, and carry out maintenance and improvement works with this in view.	3	2026	Staff time, possible consultancy costs
15.	A&E	6.2.7(b)	Explore setting up a West Northamptonshire Habitat Bank, enabling investment to enhance the parks estate through sale of biodiversity credits.	3, 5, 6	2025	Staff time, possible consultancy costs
16.	A&E	6.2.7(c)	Take opportunities for increasing tree planting and tree cover in our parks, where is in line with the Tree Policy & Strategy and enhances the overall ecological benefits.	3, 5, 6	Ongoing	Staff time, existing budgets, potential new finance (including grants)

No.	Service areas	Source	Action	Objectives	Target delivery date	Resources
17.	A&E, H&T	6.2.8(a)	Support appropriate provision of active travel routes within our parks.	2, 4, 5	Ongoing	Staff time, scheme costs (potential grant funding)
18.	H&T, A&E	6.2.8(b)	Support the provision of active and public travel routes between our parks and places where people live and work, including where practical providing public transport routes which serve parks.	1, 2	Ongoing	Staff time, scheme costs (potential grant funding)
19.	A&E	6.2.8(c), 6.2.9(a)	Identify sites potentially suitable for one or more type of cycle or other mobility aid hire service.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	2025	Staff time
20.	A&E	6.2.8(c), 6.2.9(b)	Seek to procure suitable partners to deliver the cycle or other mobility aid hire service.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	2025	Staff time
21.	A&E	6.2.10	Review provision of catering across the parks, seeking to increase provision and secure maximum benefits for the parks.	1, 2, 5, 6	2026	Staff time
22.	A&E	6.2.11(a)	Work collaboratively with local communities, including 'friends of' groups, and businesses to secure public value through volunteering, community engagement, consultation and partnership working.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Ongoing	Staff time
23.	A&E	6.2.11(b)	Encourage new partnerships to develop park activities and greater participation opportunities, supporting local communities to use parks and create opportunities to improve wellbeing, physically, mentally, and socially.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	2025	Staff time
24.	A&E	6.2.11(c), 6.2.13(b)	Increase the range of volunteer opportunities to build skills, create social cohesion and instil a sense of pride and ownership.	4, 5, 6	2026 and ongoing	Staff time

<b>No.</b>	<b>Service areas</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Target delivery date</b>	<b>Resources</b>
25.	A&E, PH	6.2.11(d)	Work with health partners to ensure parks and green spaces provide relevant opportunities for health and wellbeing interventions e.g., social prescribing and activity on referral.	2, 4	2026 and ongoing	Staff time
26.	A&E	6.2.11(e)	Work with local educational institutions to increase opportunities for learning and development which also contributes to the character and condition of the parks.	3, 4, 5, 6	2026 and ongoing	Staff time
27.	A&E	6.2.11(f)	Work with Local Area Partnerships to ensure our parks and green spaces support the relevant priorities that emerge in each area.	1, 4, 5, 6	2024 and ongoing	Staff time
28.	A&E	6.2.11(g), 6.2.4(h)	Undertake regular visitor surveys to understand the wants and needs of park users and evaluate the outcomes to contribute to plans and proposals. Ensuring these include questions designed to understand factors which may inhibit the use of parks by women, girls, and people from minority backgrounds.	1, 2, 4, 6	Ongoing (annual)	Staff time
29.	A&E, CM	6.2.12(a)	Develop a marketing and communication plan for parks and green spaces.	4	2024, 2027, 2031, 2034	Staff time
30.	A&E, CM	6.2.12(b)	Develop web content to maximise the use of the internet as an information resource.	4	2024 and then ongoing (annual)	Staff time
31.	A&E	6.2.12(c)	Work with partners to deliver local heritage events and displays.	3, 4	2025 and then ongoing	Staff time
32.	A&E	6.2.12(d)	Develop and support a programme of community open days and family activities, including activities designed to	2, 4	2026 and then ongoing	Staff time

No.	Service areas	Source	Action	Objectives	Target delivery date	Resources
			encourage women and girls, and those from minority backgrounds.			
33.	A&E	6.2.13(a)	Seek to retain a fully-staffed Environment, Countryside & Parks service, promoting parks and green spaces as an attractive career option	All	Ongoing	Staff time, potential consultancy costs
34.	A&E	6.2.13(c)	Offer development opportunities to staff and recognised volunteers to expand their abilities and minimise skill gaps.	All	Ongoing	Staff time, training budgets
35.	A&E, CM	6.2.13(d)	Provide and publicise opportunities for businesses to realise corporate social responsibility goals by carrying out improvement works in the parks.	All	2024 and ongoing	Staff time
36.	A&E	6.3.2(a)	Battle of Naseby Country Park: Conduct a feasibility study to establish the likely level of demand, appropriate type of facilities, environmental impact, sources of funding, and overall proposal viability	All	2029	Staff time, potential consultancy costs
37.	A&E	6.3.2(b)	Battle of Naseby Country Park: Where the viability of providing facilities is confirmed, develop business cases to seek approval to progress.	All	2031	Staff time, possible new finance (including BNG credit income, developer contributions)
38.	A&E	6.3.3(a)	Brackley Country (Linear) Park: Conduct a feasibility study to establish the likely level of demand, appropriate type of facilities, environmental impact, sources of funding, and overall proposal viability	All	2027	Staff time, potential consultancy costs
39.	A&E	6.3.3(b)	Brackley Country (Linear) Park: Where the viability of providing facilities is confirmed, develop business cases to seek approval to progress.	All	2029	Staff time, possible new finance (including BNG credit income, developer contributions)

No.	Service areas	Source	Action	Objectives	Target delivery date	Resources
40.	A&E	6.3.4(a)	Houghton Linear Park: Conduct a feasibility study to establish the likely level of demand, appropriate type of facilities, environmental impact, sources of funding, and overall proposal viability	All	2025	Staff time, potential consultancy costs
41.	A&E	6.3.4(b)	Houghton Linear Park: Where the viability of providing facilities is confirmed, develop business cases to seek approval to progress.	All	2027	Staff time, possible new finance (including BNG credit income, developer contributions)
42.	PS	6.3.5	Marefair Heritage Park: Progress this scheme as part of its ongoing regeneration of Northampton town centre.	All	2028	Staff time, existing capital budget
43.	A&E	6.3.6(a)	Eastern Northampton Park: Conduct a feasibility study to establish the likely level of demand, appropriate type of facilities, environmental impact, sources of funding, and overall proposal viability	All	2029	Staff time, potential consultancy costs
44.	A&E	6.3.6(b)	Eastern Northampton Park: Where the viability of providing facilities is confirmed, develop business cases to seek approval to progress.	All	2031	Staff time, possible new finance (including BNG credit income, developer contributions)
45.	A&E	6.3.7(a)	Prepare a business case for productive woodland.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	2025	Staff time, potential consultancy costs
46.	A&E	6.3.7(b)	Seek to create new woodland as soon as possible, so that impact on carbon capture is being delivered by 2030.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	2025 and ongoing	Staff time, potential new costs (as cost effective means of carbon offsetting)
47.	A&E	6.3.7(c)	Seek grants and other external funding for tree planting.	3, 5, 6	Ongoing	Staff time
48.	A&E	6.4.2(a)	Installing a new toilet block to serve the eastern section of Abington Park.	1, 5	2024	Staff time, existing capital budget



No.	Service areas	Source	Action	Objectives	Target delivery date	Resources
49.	A&E	6.4.2(b)	Make improvements to the Abington Park lake.	2, 3, 5	2028	Staff time, existing budgets, potential new finance (including grants)
50.	A&E	6.4.2(c)	Reviewing the current security measures at Abington Park, including options to increase informal surveillance.	1, 2, 4, 5	2024	Staff time, existing budgets, potential new finance
51.	H&T	6.4.2(d)	Delivery of Abington area active travel scheme.	2, 5, 6	2025	Staff time, existing capital budget
52.	A&E	6.4.3	Work with partners to explore ways the reduced natural water supply to the ponds at Bradlaugh Fields might be overcome.	3, 5	2026	Staff time, possible new finance (including BNG credit income, developer contributions, Anglian Water contributions)
53.	A&E	6.4.4(a)	When opportunities arise, look to widen the Brampton Valley Way (BVW) corridor for both nature and people.	1, 2, 3, 5	Ongoing	Staff time, possible new finance (including BNG credit income, developer contributions)
54.	A&E	6.4.4(b)	Assess the viability of creating a new "focal point" in the northern part of the BVW route.	1, 2, 5, 6	2026	Staff time, possible new finance (including developer contributions)
55.	A&E	6.4.4(c)	Assess the viability of developing a new car park at the BVW Draughton Crossing.	1, 5	2027	Staff time, new finance (including developer contributions)
56.	A&E	6.4.4(d)	Assess the viability of improving the surface in the BVW tunnels and providing low-level lighting in them. If this is not possible, seek to improve the above-ground 'bypass' arrangements.	1, 2, 5, 6	2025	Staff time, new finance (including developer contributions)
57.	H&T	6.4.4(e)	Assess the viability of improving the connection from the BVW to Brixworth Country Park by cycle.	1, 2, 5, 6	2025	Staff time, scheme costs (potential grant funding)

<b>No.</b>	<b>Service areas</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Target delivery date</b>	<b>Resources</b>
58.	H&T	6.4.4(f)	Seek to improve connections from the southern end of the BVW into Northampton.	1, 2, 6	2025	Staff time, scheme costs (potential grant funding)
59.	A&E	6.4.4(g)	Encourage Leicestershire County Council to improve the connection from the end of the BVW into Market Harborough town centre.	1, 2, 6	2024 and ongoing	Staff time
60.	A&E	6.4.5(a)	Remove unnecessary barriers between Brixworth Country Park and Pitsford reservoir.	1, 2, 6	2024	Staff time, existing budgets
61.	A&E	6.4.5(b)	If practical, extend Brixworth Country Park, so it is better able to accommodate increasing numbers of people. It may also be appropriate to extend the car park.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	2025 and ongoing	Staff time, new finance (including BNG credit income, developer contributions)
62.	A&E	6.4.5(c)	Explore enhancement of the play park at Brixworth Country Park.	2, 5, 6	2024	Staff time, existing budgets, potential new finance (including developer contributions)
63.	A&E	6.4.5(d)	Explore delivery of an alpine coaster and/or grass bobsleigh at Brixworth Country Park.	2, 5, 6	2025	Staff time, operator capital
64.	A&E	6.4.5(e)	Work with the wild swimming group to improve arrangements for swimming in Pitsford Water using facilities at Brixworth Country Park.	2, 4, 6	2024	Staff time, existing budgets
65.	A&E	6.4.5(f)	Work with Northampton Sailing Club to maximise the benefits the club offers to residents	2, 4	2026	Staff time
66.	A&E	6.4.5(g)	Work with Anglian Water to deliver a sandy beach in Pitsford Reservoir, with swimmers using facilities in Brixworth Country Park.	2, 4, 5, 6	2026	Staff time, potential new finance (including developer contributions)

<b>No.</b>	<b>Service areas</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Target delivery date</b>	<b>Resources</b>
67.	A&E	6.4.6(a)	Daventry Country Park: Investigate the viability of working with a partner to create a high rope activity space.	2, 5, 6	2026	Staff time, operator capital
68.	A&E	6.4.6(b)	Daventry Country Park: Exploring the possibility of introducing an axe throwing activity.	2, 5, 6	2026	Staff time, operator capital
69.	A&E	6.4.6(c)	Daventry Country Park: Explore the feasibility of introducing a boat hire offer to the reservoir	2, 5, 6	2026	Staff time
70.	A&E	6.4.6	Assess the viability of developing an existing outbuilding in Daventry Country Park to support the Outdoor Learning Service's outreach.	2, 4, 5, 6	2025	Staff time, potential new finance (including developer contributions)
71.	A&E	6.4.7(a)	Support DAPT's proposals for regeneration of the Victorian stable block.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	As applicable	Staff time
72.	A&E	6.4.7(b)	Work with DAPT to enhance car parking in suitable locations, ideally at Ransome Road.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6	2027	Staff time, possible new finance (including BNG credit income, developer contributions)
73.	A&E	6.4.7(c)	Work with DAPT to enhance historic assets and to reduce inappropriate modern intrusions on the historic site.	2, 3, 4, 6	Ongoing	Staff time, possible new finance (including developer contributions)
74.	A&E, H&T	6.4.7(d)	Continue to work with the Active Quarter partnership to deliver active travel project plans.	1, 2, 5, 6	Ongoing	Staff time, scheme costs (potential grant funding)
75.	A&E	6.4.7(e)	Develop, in partnership with NSME, a strategy to develop and promote the miniature railway. Explore if there are income-generating opportunities arising from this.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	2025 and ongoing	Staff time

No.	Service areas	Source	Action	Objectives	Target delivery date	Resources
76.	A&E	6.4.7(f)	If it can be accommodated given the presence of water ski activities, explore boat hire on Delapre lake.	2, 5, 6	2026	Staff time
77.	A&E, H&T	6.4.7(g)	Seek support from National Highways in addressing the noise from the A45 Nene Valley Way affecting Delapre Park.	2, 3, 5	Ongoing	Staff time
78.	A&E	6.4.8(a)	Support appropriate proposals by the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust to extend its running track.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	As applicable	Staff time
79.	A&E, CM	6.4.8(b)	Work with the Trust to develop its offer to the community, including a marketing strategy. Explore if there are income-generating opportunities arising from this.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	2024	Staff time
80.	A&E	6.4.8(c)	Look to introduce velorail using the track.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	2026	Staff time, operator capital
81.	A&E	6.4.9	Creating a new café, perhaps starting with a mobile concession site, at Upton Country Park.	2, 4, 5, 6	2025	Staff time, possible new finance (including developer contributions)
82.	A&E	6.4.9	Exploring the viability of installing toilets at Upton Country Park.	1, 2, 5	2028	Staff time, possible new finance (including developer contributions)
83.	A&E	6.5(a)	Continue to develop the programme of activities run by the Outdoor Learning Service for primary-age children, both on site at Everdon and in parks across West Northamptonshire	2, 4, 6	Ongoing	Staff time
84.	A&E	6.5(b)	Work with colleagues in Children's Services and in schools to explore developing an offer for both primary and secondary-age children and young people who are struggling with mainstream education	2, 4, 6	2025	Staff time, possible increase budget funded from charges to schools

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# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## CABINET

16 APRIL 2024

### CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE, WELLBEING AND HEALTH INTEGRATION – COUNCILLOR MATT GOLBY

Report Title	Director of Public Health Report 2023
Report Author	Sally Burns, Director of Public Health

#### List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	24/03/2024
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	24/03/2024
Other Director	Stuart Lackenby	24/03/2024
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	24/03/2024

#### List of Appendices

Appendix A – Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023

Appendix B – [Video link](#)

#### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 To highlight the content of the annual Director of Public Health (DPH) statutory report for West Northamptonshire.
- 1.2 To endorse the key recommendations made in the DPH annual report.
- 1.3 To update on the progress made in relation to the recommendations set in the 2022 annual report.



## **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 The focus of the DPH Annual Report for 2023 is around West Northamptonshire’s place-based approach to tackling inequalities. This ultimately means giving communities, the voluntary sector and other partners more opportunity to have an active involvement in shaping services to better meet their needs. This is important as each community has their own individual barriers and challenges and this approach can therefore be tailor-made. The annual report sets out why certain groups who are marginalised, such as the homeless, Gypsy and Roma travellers and sex workers for example, are at most risk of health inequalities and how some interventions such as direct collaboration with those groups, engaging with local voluntary organisations and utilising pre-existing community assets such as mutual aid and social networks for advice can really help to tackle specific issues in community groups.
- 2.2 Whilst we have begun to address the poor health outcomes for those living within marginalised groups or areas of deprivation, health inequalities remain a big concern and it is clear there is still more to do to address the needs of all of our residents across such a diverse area. This report and its accompanying video, will demonstrate how some of the work that has taken place, has started to address this issue and how the idea of taking a place-based approach embodies this way of thinking.

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 For Cabinet to note the contents of the report and recommendations made.
- 3.2 For the Board to also note the progress made with regard to the recommendations in the previous annual report.

## **4. Reason for Recommendations**

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- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement for this report to be signed off for publication by the Health and Wellbeing Board however it was recognised that Cabinet should be made aware of the contents of the report for information.

## **5. Report Background**

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- 5.1 The core purpose of the Director of Public Health (DPH) is to be an independent advocate for the health of the population and system leader for its improvement and protection. DPH’s across the country are required to produce an annual report and the Health and Wellbeing Board has a duty to publish their report. The DPH annual report provides an opportunity to:

- Raise awareness and understanding of the wellbeing of the county
- Identify key issues and challenges relating to the wellbeing of the local population
- Provide added value over and above intelligence and information routinely available
- Reflect on work already undertaken and the continued impact
- Identify recommendations for future courses of action to improve health and wellbeing locally.

## **6. Issues and Choices**

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- 6.1 Each year the Director of Public Health must produce an Annual Report, highlighting to key stakeholders and members of the public, the work that has been carried out over the last 12 months.
- 6.2 One recommendation, made in the previous Director of Public Health report, committed to taking a place-based and asset-based approach within West Northamptonshire's Local Area Partnership areas, to try to tackle health inequalities. Tackling health inequalities is an extremely important area of focus within Public Health and the wider system and therefore this recommendation helped determine the direction of travel for this year's report.

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

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

- 7.1.1 The production of an Annual Report is a statutory function that should be executed by the Director of Public Health. A budget is therefore put aside for this annually and comes from the Public Health Grant. There are no additional financial implications or Council resources required as a result of this paper.

### **7.2 Legal**

- 7.2.1 There is a statutory obligation for the Health & Wellbeing Board to agree publication and distribution of this report.
- 7.2.2 There are no other legal implications that will result from carrying out the recommendations in this report.

### **7.3 Risk**

- 7.3.1 Should this report not be agreed and published, the Council and the Director of Public Health would not meet the relevant statutory duties.
- 7.3.2 There would be a risk of reputational damage to WNC and the Public Health team.
- 7.3.3 There would be a lack of guidance to local communities/organisations in relation to health and wellbeing in the county.

### **7.4 Consultation and communication**

- 7.4.1 The Director of Public Health report has been designed to meet accessibility standards and compliances on the website.

7.4.2 A communications plan will support the promotion of the report following final approval, in which clips of the accompanying video will be shared on social media and articles distributed to partners and stakeholders.

7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 Not applicable

7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 Not applicable

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 Not applicable

**8. Background Papers**

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8.1 Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022



DIRECTOR OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2023

TAKING A PLACE-BASED APPROACH  
TO ADDRESSING HEALTH INEQUALITIES.

Wellbeing  
WEST NORTHANTS Page 131



West  
Northamptonshire  
Council



# FOREWORDS

Dear Reader,

It is with pleasure I welcome you to the 2023 Director of Public Health Annual Report for West Northamptonshire. This year, the report focuses on the Place Based Approach to a really important issue, tackling health inequalities.

Health inequalities is something that affects nearly all communities in some way. Bridging the gap in life chances and health outcomes between those in our more affluent communities and those in our poorest ones, is something that myself and my colleagues are all devoted to doing. We are committed to community involvement and ensuring that our residents can be involved in the way that services are delivered and our new place-based approach will enable us to achieve this.

I am really excited by all the work that is happening here in West Northamptonshire particularly in our Local Area Partnership initiative which you will hear more about in this report.

**Cllr Matt Golby,**  
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Wellbeing



## FOREWORD FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

2023 has been another busy year with many impactful projects happening. It has been particularly significant for my Public Health team as it is the first full year where public health has sat solely within West Northamptonshire Council, working closely with partners to serve residents of West Northants.

In Public Health terms, 2023 has also seen a number of unsettling events continue; the cost of living crisis (which was the focus of my 2022 report), the humanitarian crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine, and now also in the middle east. Whilst globally being downgraded from its pandemic status, the threat of COVID-19 and the recovery from this prolonged pandemic still very much continues to play a big part in the world of Public Health.

However, there has been a huge response effort from partners, both internal and external, to the Council that has quickly mobilised together, to put in place the right support for our residents. And this is something I am incredibly proud of to all involved.

As well as this, the world has seen a number of medical breakthroughs, successful vaccines and treatments being developed for diseases and illnesses such as cancer, Alzheimer's and malaria. Positive steps have also been taken to tackle some of the most worrying climate and environmental issues the world currently faces and on a local level, we have also seen lots of exciting progress within West Northamptonshire itself, particularly around a place-based plan to develop our Local Area Partnership approach. Great strides have been taken to work with our partners across each local area to help residents achieve our shared aim to 'Live your best life'. More about this is featured within this report.

The last year has certainly demonstrated to me that working together with our systemwide partners, ensuring that our aims and outcomes are properly aligned, can and will make a real difference to people and their communities. This report gives real examples of how we have worked with our partners, voluntary sector and communities to start to embed our place-based and 'asset-based' approach, ultimately helping communities and individuals alike to have hands on involvement in being able to shape services to meet their needs.

Whilst we have begun to address the poor health outcomes for those living within marginalised groups or areas of deprivation, health inequalities remains a big concern and it is clear there is still more to do to address the needs of all of our residents across such a diverse area. Within this report and its accompanying video, you will see how some of the work that has taken place, has started to address this issue and how the idea of taking a place-based approach embodies this way of thinking.

The hope is that together we can start to break down these health inequities so everyone in West Northamptonshire can live a long and healthy life.

**Sally Burns,**  
Director of Public Health



# INTRODUCTION

The previous Director of Public Health report made the recommendation to take place-based and asset-based approaches linking with the work of the emerging Local Area Partnerships.

This report provides an update on the progress made in implementing this recommendation and embedding place-based and asset-based approaches across West Northamptonshire.

To stay healthy, people need good homes, good jobs, friends and an environment that makes healthy choices possible<sup>i</sup>. However, we know that not all people in society have the same chance to be healthy, due to not having good homes, good jobs, friends and healthy environments to live in. This results in health inequalities, and they are due to:

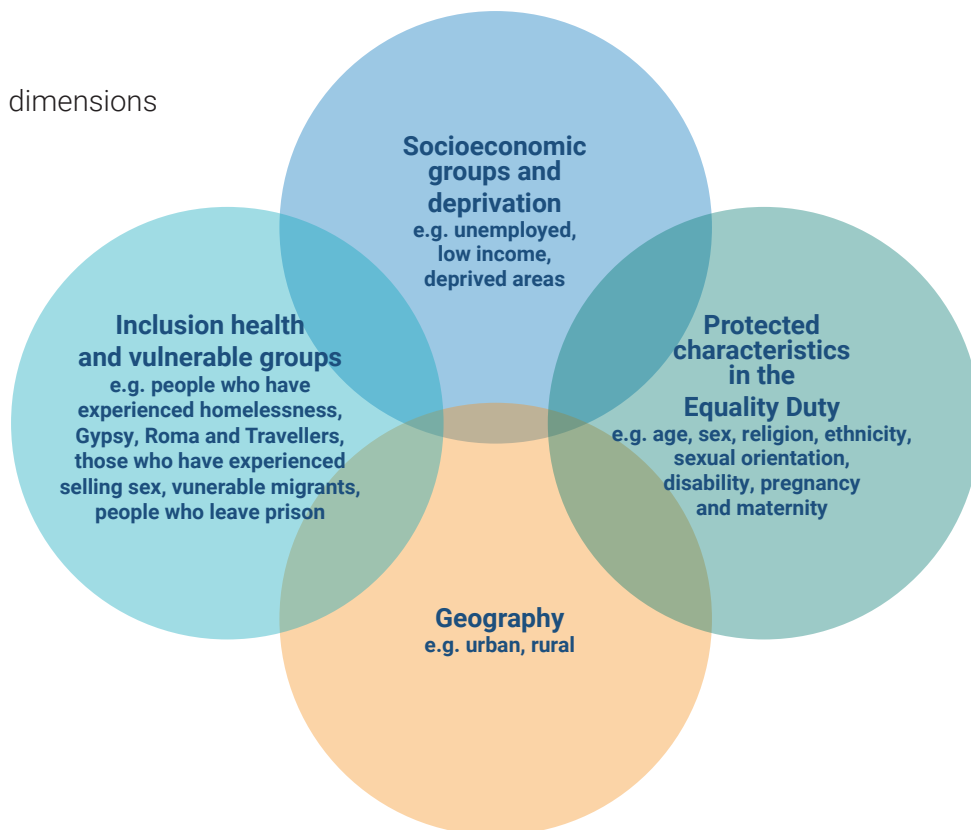
- wider determinants of health, eg quality of housing, employment, places people live
- behavioural risks to health, eg smoking rates and access to healthy food
- health status, eg health conditions
- access to care, eg treatments for ill health or advice on staying well
- quality and experience of care, eg levels of patient satisfaction<sup>ii</sup>.

Health inequalities can be significantly reduced. The most effective way to do this is to improve the places people are born, live, work and age<sup>iii</sup>. Figure 1 shows the different groups that are most vulnerable to health inequalities and how these overlap. The different groups are:

- socioeconomic groups and deprivation i.e. people with low income / unemployment
- people living in deprived areas
- protected characteristics listed in the Equality Duty such as age, sex, ethnicity
- the places people live i.e. urban / rural areas
- inclusion health and vulnerable groups such as people experiencing homelessness, those who have experienced selling sex.

Many people fall into more than one of these groups and experience multiple disadvantages.

**Figure 1**  
The overlapping dimensions of inequality





## INTRODUCTION

Those described as inclusion health or vulnerable groups are particularly disadvantaged and excluded from society. In the UK, the concept of inclusion health has typically encompassed homeless people; Gypsy, Roma, and traveller communities; vulnerable migrants; and sex workers<sup>iv</sup> but other groups can be included. Social exclusion can be driven by unequal power relationships that interact across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions<sup>v</sup>.

Inclusion health groups experience the poorest health outcomes and commonly have very high levels of morbidity and mortality, often with multiple and complex needs. This includes overlapping mental and physical ill-health and substance dependency, creating complex situations that health services are not always equipped to deal with and that traditional health and social care approaches generally fail to address<sup>vi</sup>.

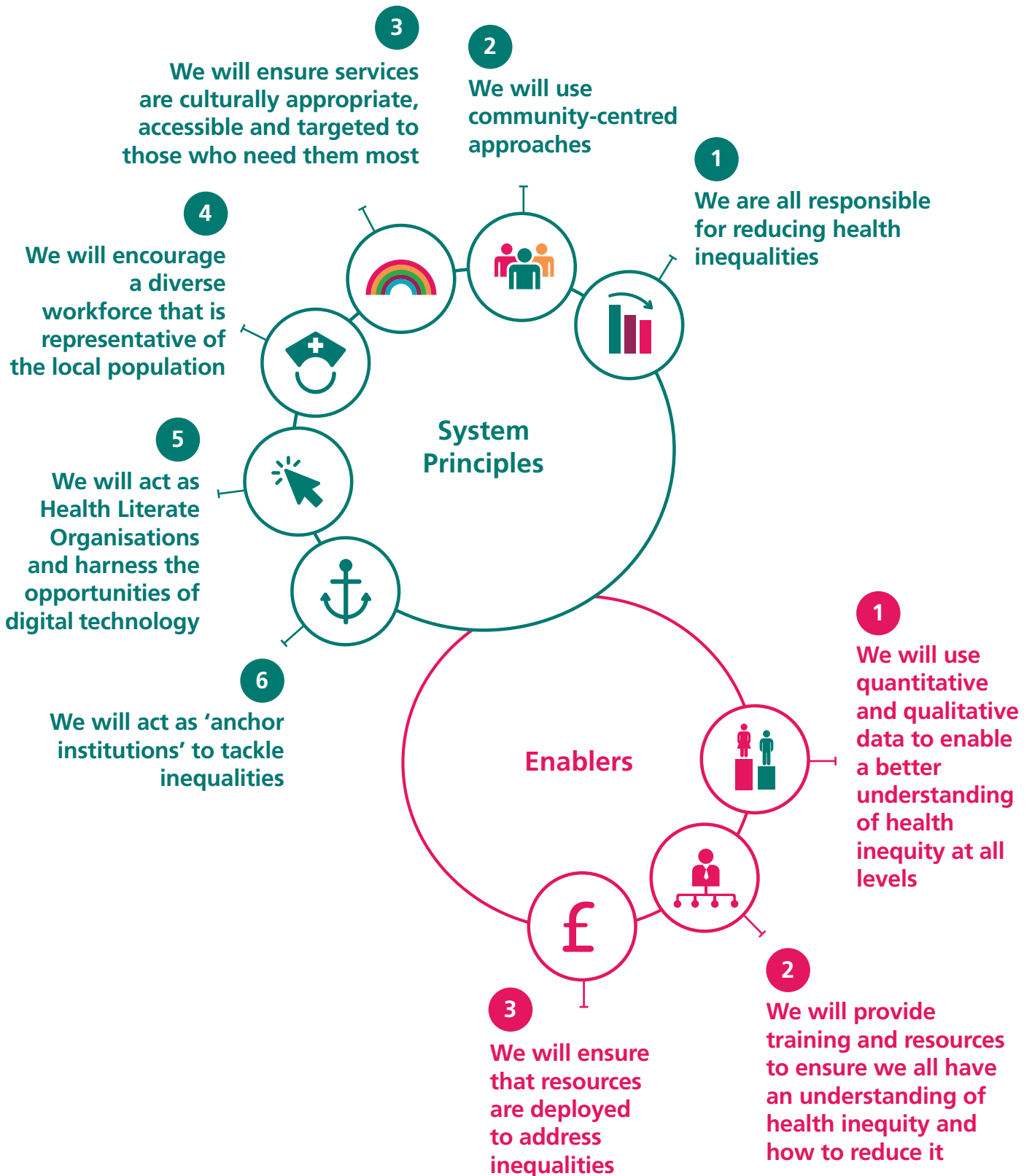
Common experiences cut across inclusion health groups. Most have been or are exposed to multiple, overlapping risk factors, such as adverse childhood experiences, trauma and poverty. Adding to this, many face multiple barriers in access to health services because of fear, language and communication issues or negative past experiences, such as being turned away<sup>vii</sup>. This results in overuse of some services, such as accident and emergency departments and underuse of others, such as primary and preventative care, resulting in poor health outcomes, inefficiencies and extra costs. Many of these populations are also highly mobile, making it difficult to ensure access and continuity of care from services that are typically designed for fixed populations<sup>viii</sup>.

These groups frequently face stigma, discrimination and public misconception, and marginalisation can further be compounded by punitive social policies. Notably, inclusion health groups are not consistently recorded in electronic records, making them effectively invisible for policy and service planning purposes<sup>ix</sup>. These experiences can create a vicious cycle of health and social deterioration for those affected.

In 2021 NHS England developed the CORE20PLUS5 framework to better understand health inequalities and target services to those most vulnerable to them. CORE20 represents those living in the 20% most deprived areas and PLUS represents the other groups represented in figure 2, considering the specific communities within an area. The 5 element recommends focussing on 5 areas most considered to reduce health inequalities in healthcare. For adults this is early cancer diagnosis, physical health checks for people with serious mental health conditions, hypertension case finding, continuity of care for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in maternity services and chronic respiratory disease. For children and young people, the 5 areas are epilepsy, asthma, diabetes, oral health and mental health.

In July 2021 Integrated Care Northamptonshire published its Health Inequalities Plan, which describes how we will work with communities so that everyone has the chance to thrive and to access quality services providing excellent experiences and the best outcomes for all. The Integrated Care Northamptonshire Health Inequalities Plan sets out the principles which all partners working across the system need to adopt to address health inequalities, as shown below in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**  
Summary of the ICN Health Inequalities  
Plan system principles and enablers



## TAKING A PLACE-BASED APPROACH

While action on behaviours and conditions is a necessary part of the solution to reduce health inequalities, these need to be addressed within the context of their root causes in the wider determinants of health. Given the range of causes of health inequalities, a joined-up approach that focusses on specific places/communities is necessary.

### COMMUNITY CENTRED INTERVENTIONS

'Community' as a term, is used as shorthand for the relationships, bonds, identities and interests that join people together or give them a shared stake in a place, service, culture or activity. Distinctions are often made between communities of place or geography and communities of interest, identity or affinity, as strategies for engaging people may vary accordingly. Communities are dynamic and complex, and people's identities and allegiances may shift over time and in different social circumstances<sup>x</sup>.

There is growing evidence which supports the case for a shift to more community-centred approaches to health and wellbeing<sup>xi</sup>. They involve:

- using non-clinical methods
- using participatory approaches, such as community members being actively involved in design, delivery and evaluation of services
- reducing barriers to engagement
- utilising and building on the local community assets
- collaborating with those most at risk of poor health
- changing the conditions that drive poor health
- addressing community-level factors such as social networks, social capital and empowerment
- increasing people's control over their health.

Actively involving residents in prevention of ill health and strengthening community assets is a key strategy in helping to improve the health of the poorest, in the fastest way. Community assets include:

- the skills, knowledge, social competence and commitment of individual community members
- friendships, inter-generational solidarity, community cohesion and neighbourliness
- local groups and community and voluntary associations, ranging from formal organisations to informal groups, or mutual aid networks such as babysitting circles
- physical, environmental and economic resources
- assets brought by external agencies including the public, private and third sector<sup>xii</sup>.

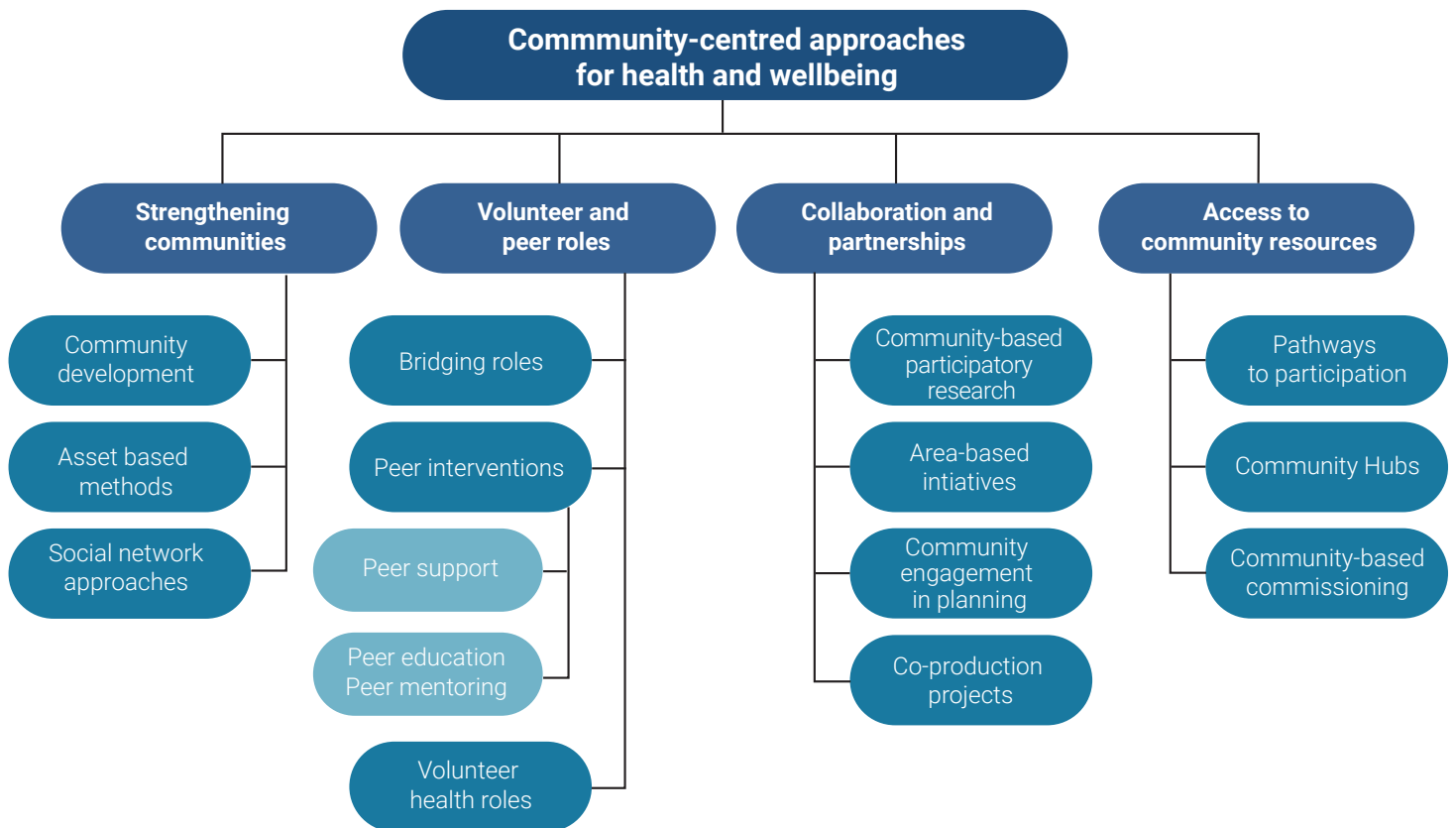
Community-centred approaches are about making the most of assets within communities, increasing people's control over their health and lives and ensuring everyone has the same opportunity to have good health and wellbeing. However, not all groups have equal access to community assets. Those who are socially excluded often do not have a voice in local decisions and are not given as many opportunities to participate in community life as others. Participatory approaches can directly address marginalisation and powerlessness that underpins this and can be more effective than professional-led services. Involving individuals and communities so that they define the problems and develop community solutions means we can shift power towards individuals and communities and address health inequalities.

# COMMUNITY-CENTRED APPROACHES

PHE/OHID developed a ‘family of community-centred approaches’ as a framework to represent some of the practical options that can be used to improve community health and wellbeing. It includes four strands of community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing, including:
















- strengthening communities: building on community capacities to take action together on health and the social determinants of health
- volunteer and peer roles: enhancing individuals’ capabilities to provide advice, information and support or organise activities around health and wellbeing in their or other communities
- collaborations and partnerships: approaches that involve communities and local services working together at any stage of the planning cycle, from identifying needs through to implementation and evaluation
- access to community resources: connecting people to community resources, practical help, group activities and volunteering opportunities to meet health needs and increase social participation.

**Figure 3:**  
Community-centred approaches  
for health and wellbeing



# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE










## POPULATION AND INEQUALITIES HIGHLIGHTS

-  429,013 people live in West Northamptonshire, an increase of 14.4% since 2011.
-  In 2022 there were 4,540 live births and 3,502 deaths. 
-  13.7% of the population live in the 20% most deprived areas.
-  The proportion who are not White British (nWB) increased from 8.8% in 2001 to 24.9% in 2021. This is below the England average of 26.5%. Of this population a significant number, about 9.7% are from Eastern European countries. 3.4% are Black Caribbean; 2.3% are Bangladeshi; 1.1% Asian Indian; 0.9% Black African.
-  6.6% of households contain no one who has English as their main language. (England 5.0%)
-  19.9% of residents (aged 3+) who do not have English as their main language, either cannot speak English well or cannot speak English at all. (England 20.2%)
-  The proportion stating, they have no religion has shifted from 17.4% (2001) to 38.2%. (2021)
-  There is a lower-than-average proportion of residents following religions other than Christianity (6.2% v. 11.0% in England). Since 2011, the WN area has logged a 43% increase in persons of Muslim faith and a 27% increase in Hindus.
-  2.7% of the population over 16 have a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. (England 3.2%)
-  The Gypsy and Traveller population in West Northamptonshire in 2021 was 340. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women live 12 years less and men 10 years less than the general population.
-  Between 2018 and 2023, 706 in total were recorded as having an accommodation at the time of application that was either Rough Sleeping or No Fixed Address (NFA), while a further 301 had a history of Rough Sleeping.
-  Most people sleeping rough have been male, averaging 78.8% across each of these cohorts. The average age at death of people who sleep rough is 44 years for men and 42 years for women.
-  20,369 households (11.6%) were living in fuel poverty in 2021. (England 13.1%)
-  287 people were killed or seriously injured on Northamptonshire's roads in 2022. (an increase from 215 in 2021)











# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

## POPULATION AND INEQUALITIES HIGHLIGHTS









### Starting Well

-  21.4% (92,008) are children aged under 18.
-  19.8% of children live in relative low-income families. (England 19.9%)
-  9.7% of women smoked during pregnancy in 2022/23, significantly higher than England. (8%)
-  58.6% of babies were breastfed in 2022/23, (significantly higher than England 49.2%)
-  1.9% of term babies born in 2021 had a low birth weight, significantly lower than England. (2.8%)
-  3,504 children and young people have an EHC plan, 71.5% are boys, 32.9% have ASD.
-  8,167 have SEN Support, 62.9% are boys. 16.8% have social, emotional, or mental health needs.
-  68.6% of schoolchildren achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception in 2022/23. (England 67.2%)
-  19.9% of children in Reception and 34.3% in Year 6 were overweight or obese in 2022/23. Compared to England 21.3% and 36.6% respectively.

### Living Well

-  60.8% (261,167) are adults aged 18 to 64.
-  69.4% of adults are classified as overweight or obese. (significantly worse than England at 63.8%)
-  65.3% of adults aged 19 and over were physically active (England 67.3%) and 24.0% were physically inactive in 2021/22. (England 22.3%)
-  12% of adults aged 18 and over were current smokers in 2022. (England 12.7%)
-  47.1% of adults do walking or cycling for any purpose at least 3 times a week in 2022. (England 45.8%)
-  83.2% of working-aged adults (16–64) were in employment in 2022-23 (England 78.6%); 2.9% were unemployed. (England 3.8%)
-  The average annual salary for full-time workers was £31,776 per year in 2022 (England £33,106); for part-time workers, it was £12,203. (England £12,260)
-  Average house prices were 8.4 times a person's average annual gross salary in 2022. (England 7.91)
-  The average house price was £290,000 in Q1 of 2023. (England £277,732)
-  15.9% of households (27,457) did not have a car or van in 2021. (England 23.5%)

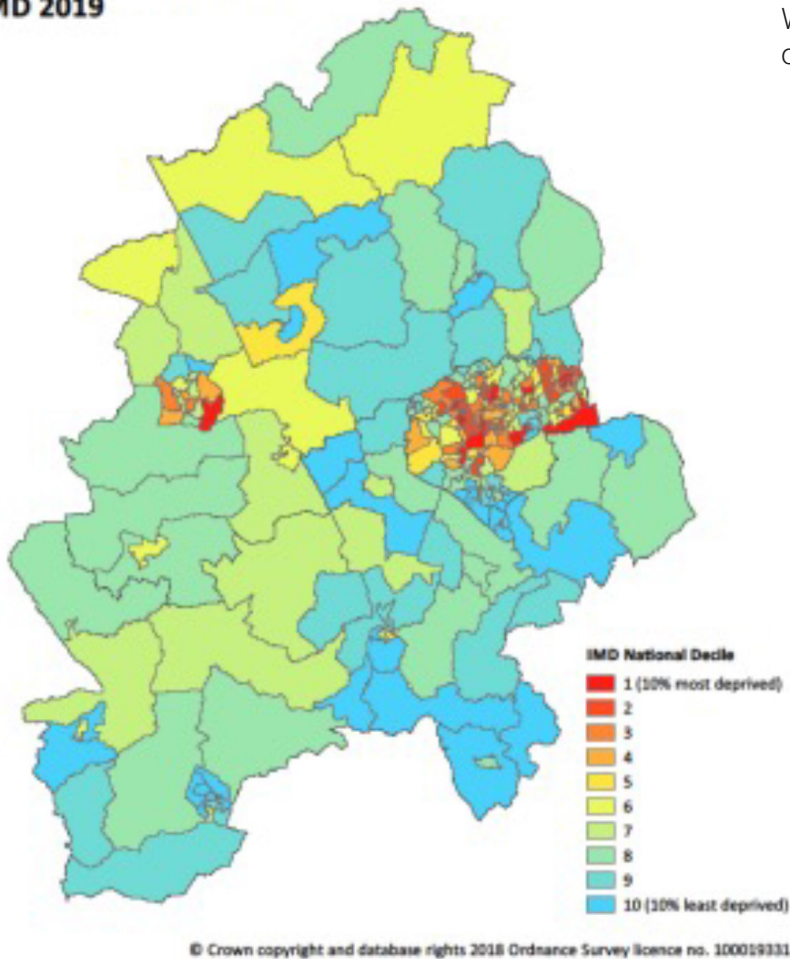
### Ageing Well

-  17.1% (73,287) are aged 65 and over.
-  2.1% (8,957) of the resident population are 85 and over.
-  Average life expectancy at birth for males was 79.4 years in 2021 (England 78.7) and 83.4 years for females. (England, 82.8 years)
-  1,293 people died before the age of 75 in 2021 (premature deaths); 641 people died before the age of 75 from deaths considered preventable.
-  Estimated dementia diagnosis rate (aged 65 and older) was 62.3% for 2023. (England 63%)
-  1,343 Falls admissions for patients aged 65 and over.
-  34.9 percent excess winter mortality (% of extra deaths for all adults) in 2020/21. (37.5% nationally)
-  The top 5 causes of death are cancer, dementia and Alzheimer disease, ischemic heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease and cardiovascular diseases.

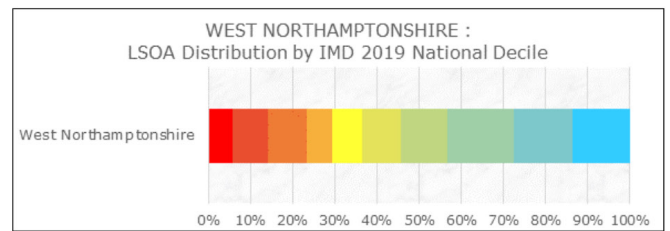


# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POPULATION AND INEQUALITIES HIGHLIGHTS

## West Northamptonshire IMD 2019



**Figure 4:**  
West Northamptonshire Indices  
of Multiple Deprivation 2019

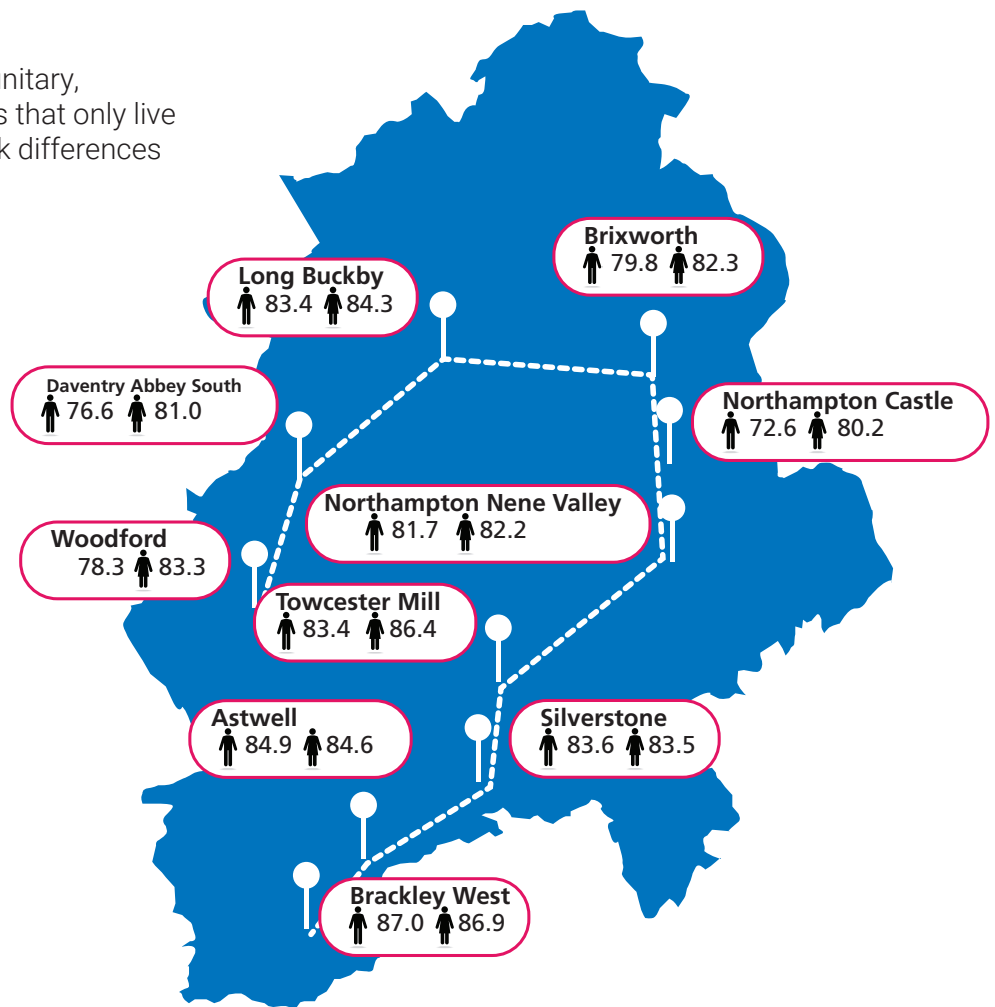


Deprivation Affected Population Counts based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 and the ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2018									
WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	Total Population	Aged 0-4	Aged 5-15	Age 16-17	Aged 18-24	Aged 25-44	Aged 45-64	Aged 65-84	Aged 85 & Over
West Northamptonshire Population Living in Top 20% most Deprived LSOAs Nationally IMD 2019	55779	4751	9554	1520	5361	16822	12016	5141	614
% of total population		8.5%	17.1%	2.7%	9.6%	30.2%	21.5%	9.2%	1.1%
West Northamptonshire Population Living in Bottom 80% LSOAs Nationally IMD 2019 (Not Deprived)	346366	20942	46887	7547	25285	86048	94969	56772	7916
% of total population		6.0%	13.5%	2.2%	7.3%	24.8%	27.4%	16.4%	2.3%

The table shows the approximate number of residents of West Northamptonshire (by age) who live in the top 20% most deprived LSOAs nationally based on 2018 mid-year estimates.

# LIFE EXPECTANCY ACROSS WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Following a 'bus route' in each unitary, demonstrates that communities that only live a few miles apart can have stark differences in life expectancy.

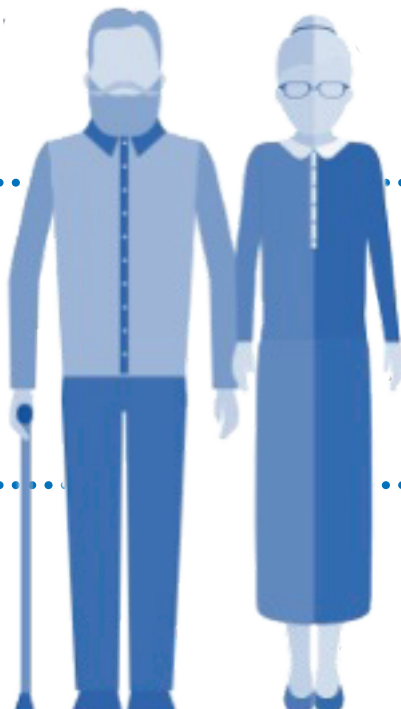


Average life expectancy at birth for men is 79.4

Average life expectancy at birth for women is 83.4

Men living in the more affluent 20% of the West can expect to live 9 years longer than those in the 20% most deprived areas

Women living in the more affluent 20% of the West can expect to live 8 years longer than those in the 20% most deprived areas



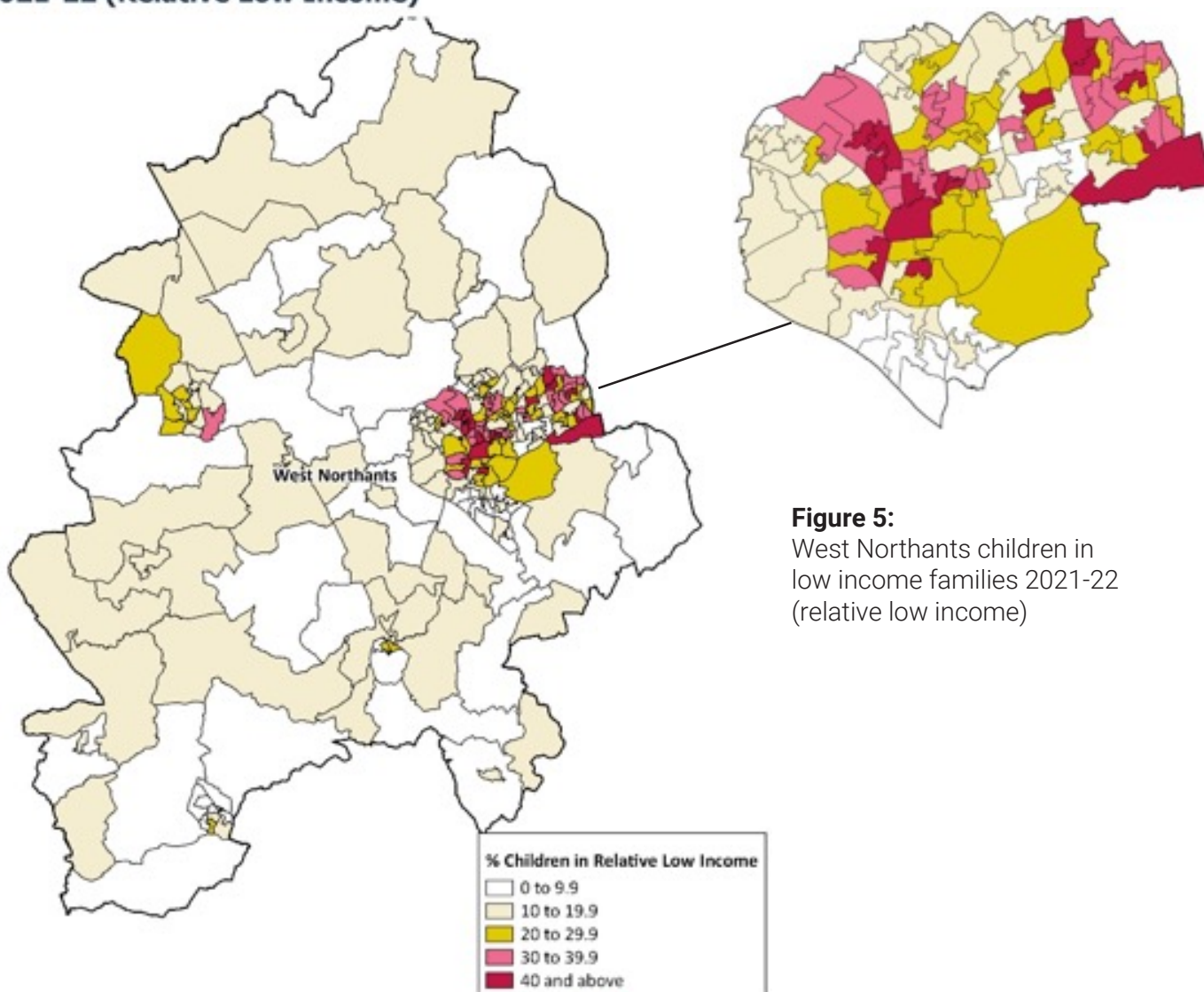
# CHILDREN IN RELATIVE LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

In 2021-22, 19.8% of children aged 0-15 in West Northamptonshire were living in relative low income. This was just short of the England average (19.9%).

This number has increased by 42.1% compared to two years ago, compared to an increase of 1.2% across England as a whole.

50.3% live with lone parents above the England average (44.5%) - 70.9% increase in children in two years. 72.7% live in working families 2% above the England average.

## West Northants: Children in Low Income Families 2021-22 (Relative Low Income)



**Figure 5:**  
West Northants children in low income families 2021-22 (relative low income)

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Created by Business Intelligence, West Northamptonshire Council



Dependent Children in Low Income Families (CinLIFs) are those under 16 years or aged 16 to 19 in full-time non-advanced education or in unwaged government training, living in families with a gross income before housing costs of less than 60% of the median income. A family must have claimed one or more of Universal Credit, Tax Credits or Housing Benefit at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics. Relative CinLIF measures children in low-income families before housing costs, in the reference year.

# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S PLACE-BASED APPROACH

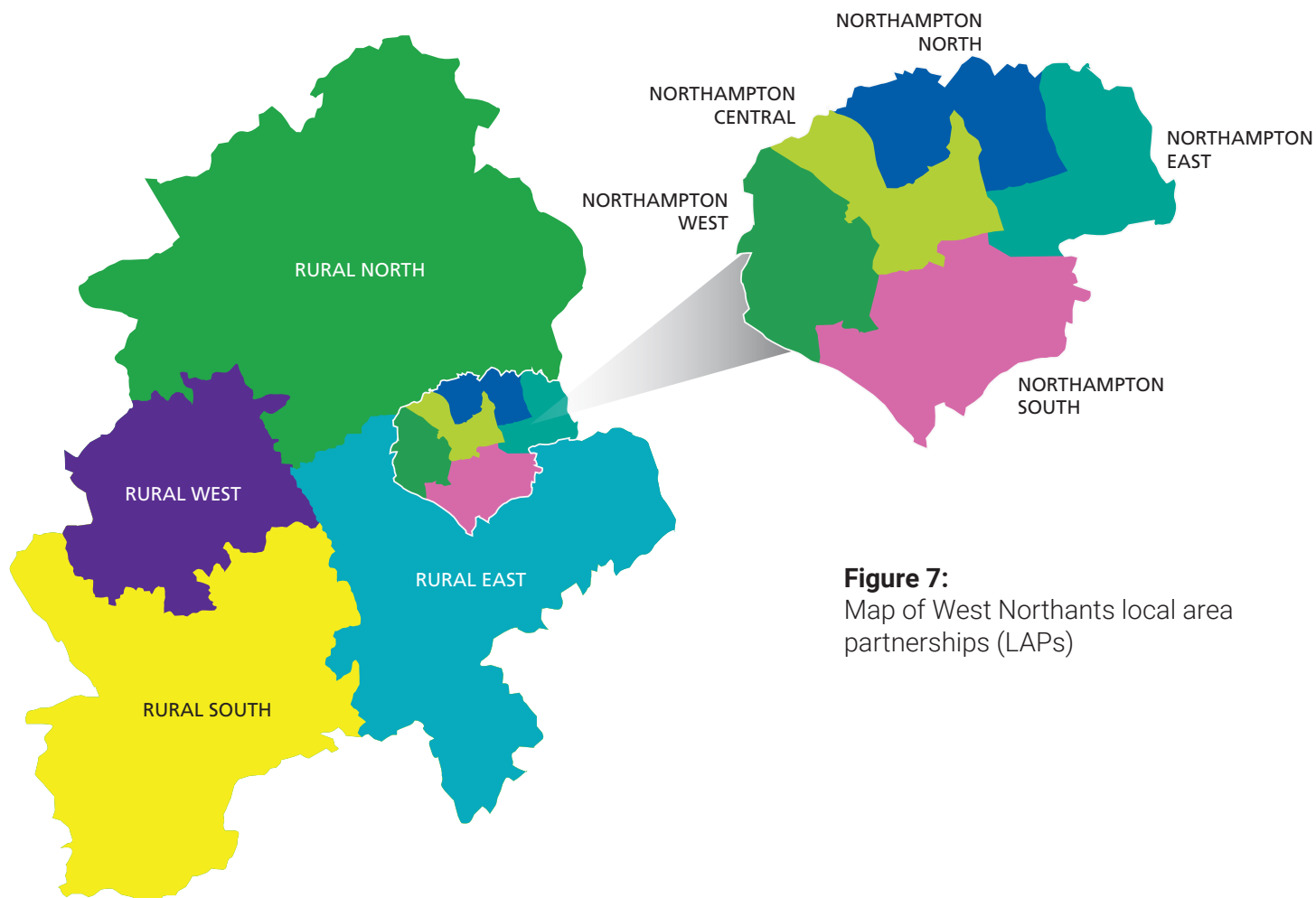
In June 2022 the new Integrated Care System was adopted across Northamptonshire. Partners in the system committed to working towards the delivery of 10 ambitions and a set of common metrics. West Northamptonshire's Health and Wellbeing Board, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28 sets out the actions all partners working in West Northamptonshire will take to deliver these ambitions, recognising the importance of place-based approaches. Outcomes will be improved through collaboration, integration and listening to the needs of local people.

**Figure 6:**  
Summary of ICN ambitions, outcomes and system measures

Ambition	Key outcomes	Available system priority metrics
<b>Best start in life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women are healthy and well during and after pregnancy.</li> <li>Children are healthy from birth.</li> <li>All children grow and develop well so they are ready and equipped to start school.</li> <li>Children in care are healthy, well and ready for adulthood.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% achieving good level of development at age 2-3</li> </ul>
<b>Access to best education and learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people perform well at all key stages.</li> <li>SEND education meets the needs of children locally.</li> <li>Schools serve all children and young people well and nobody misses out on learning.</li> <li>Adults have access to learning opportunities which supports employment and life skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average attainment 8 score of all pupils</li> <li>% of SEND children electively home educated</li> <li>Rate of permanent exclusions (per 100 pupils)</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities to be fit, well and independent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adults are healthy and active, and enjoy good mental health.</li> <li>People experience less ill-health and disability due to lung and heart diseases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of adults currently smoke (APS)</li> <li>% Adults classified as overweight or obese</li> <li>Adolescent self-reported wellbeing (SHEU)</li> <li>Standardised rate of emergency admissions due to COPD</li> </ul>
<b>Employment that keeps you and your families out of poverty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More adults are employed and receive a 'living wage'.</li> <li>Adults and families take up benefits they are entitled to.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gap in employment for those in touch with secondary mental health services</li> </ul>
<b>Good housing in places which are clean and green</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good access to affordable, safe, quality, accommodation and security of tenure.</li> <li>The local environment is clean and green with lower carbon emissions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of households owed a prevention duty under Homelessness Reduction Act</li> </ul>
<b>Safe in your homes and when out and about</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People are safe in their homes, on public transport and in public places.</li> <li>Children and young people are safe and protected from harm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of re-referrals to MARAC for children experiencing domestic abuse</li> </ul>
<b>Connected to families and friends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People feel well connected to family, friends and their community.</li> <li>Connections are helped by public transport and technology.</li> <li>Improving outcomes for those who are socially excluded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% adult social care users with as much social contact as they like</li> </ul>
<b>The chance for a fresh start when things go wrong</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homeless people and ex-offenders are helped back into society.</li> <li>People have good access to support for addictive behaviour and take it up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of emergency hospital admissions for those with no fixed abode</li> </ul>
<b>Access to health and social care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timely access to all health and social care services when it is required, life course from conception to end of life.</li> <li>People are supported to live at places of their residence and only spend time in hospital to meet medical needs.</li> <li>Services to prevent illness (all health screening and vaccinations) are easy to access with quality service provision.</li> <li>People are treated with dignity and respect in all care provisions including end of life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% Cancer diagnosed at stage 1/2</li> <li>% of people discharged from hospital to their usual place of residence</li> <li>Rate of emergency department attendances for falls in those aged 65+</li> <li>% eligible adults with learning disability/severe mental illness receive annual health check</li> </ul>
<b>To be accepted and valued simply for who you are</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity is respected and celebrated.</li> <li>People feel they are a valued part of their community and are not isolated or lonely.</li> <li>People are treated with dignity and respect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metrics to be developed</li> </ul>

During 2023 the new Place Operating Model was rolled out across West Northamptonshire. The model is underpinned by targeting local needs and improving outcomes for local communities, adopting the community-centred approaches to health and wellbeing. It is delivered through nine Local Area Partnerships (LAPs), which are now in place, and they include local membership from a wide range of system partners who know their local population. The key to success of the LAPs is the range of agencies and services working in partnership at a very local level to reduce organisational barriers and drive integration. This provides focus, reduces duplication and improves efficiencies. A diagram illustrating the geography of the nine LAPs is shown below.

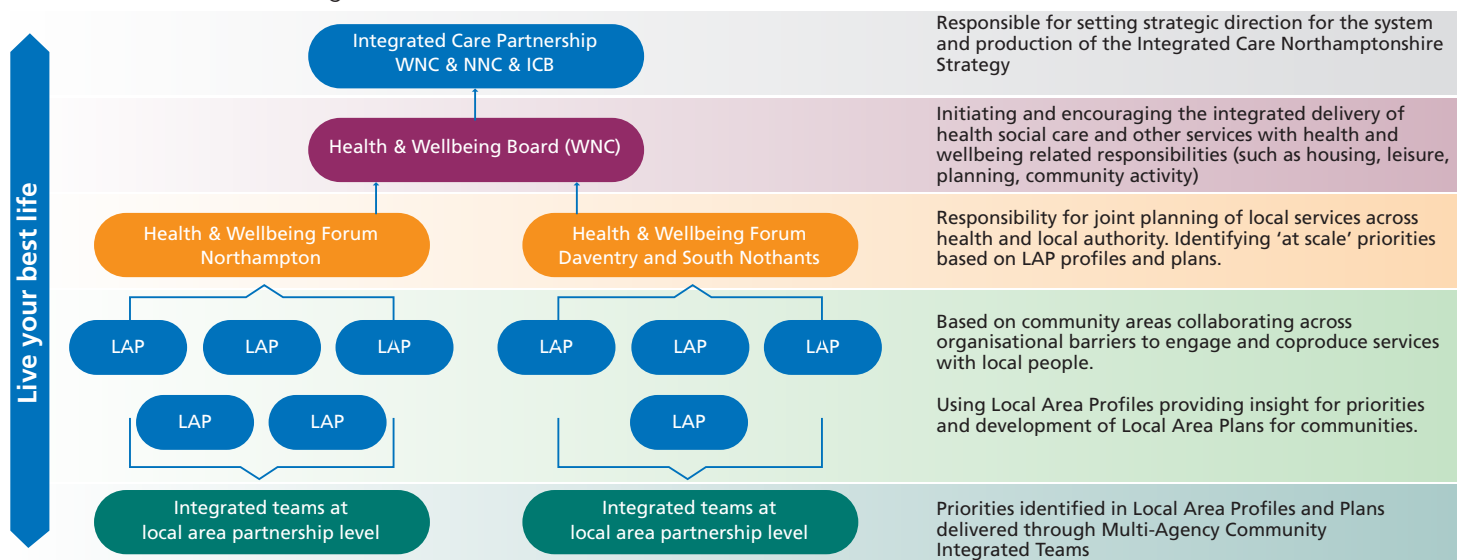
# WEST NORTHANTS LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS (LAPs)



**Figure 7:**  
Map of West Northants local area partnerships (LAPs)

The diagram below illustrates how the local community approach influences the decisions of the Integrated Care System and contributes to the 10 LYBL (Live Your Best Life) ambitions.

**Figure 8:**  
West Northants Place governance structure





# WEST NORTHANTS LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS (LAPs)

LAPs are the focus of how partners within local communities co-design activities and services to improve outcomes, reduce health inequalities and contribute to the 10 LYBL ambitions.

## The LAPs aim:

- To represent local areas and give a voice to residents.
- To empower residents to co-produce new services and solutions for their local area.
- To ensure local services are appropriate and delivered in a way that will meet the needs of the community.
- To contribute to West Northamptonshire priorities by utilising evidence-based information and local insight from frontline services and communities.
- To empower local leaders to take accountability for local action.

The LAP membership includes representation from a wide range of local partners including West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), Public Health, Adult Social Care, Police, Fire and Safety, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE), GPs, local Elected Councillors, Northamptonshire Children's Trust and others.

As the LAP local leadership team their role is to:

- Determine two to three priorities that need addressing to reduce inequalities and oversee development of groups to take action to address these.
- Oversee the development of the LAP communications, engagement with communities and local websites.
- Escalate any areas of concern to the local Health and Wellbeing Forum.

Through discussions and agreements many partners have aligned themselves to the local areas including Adult Social Care aligning services to the LAP areas based on need, Northamptonshire Police aligning all their beats to the LAP areas, VCSE colleagues identifying representatives for all the LAPs based on the LAP priorities.

Partnership working in the LAPs provides the opportunity to share data and insights at a very local level which in turn means that the LAP leadership is able to identify meaningful specific priorities for the local population.

The majority of LAPs are focusing on children and young people, with others targeting the needs of older people and social isolation. The high level priorities are included in the figure in the next page.



# WEST NORTHANTS LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS (LAPs)

## Rural West

### Children & Young People:

- 20% of population are 0-16 yrs. old
- Mental health issues high with self-harm higher than average
- 5.6% youth unemployment higher than England average 4.9%

### Families:

- 49.1% of families on relatively low incomes
- High proportion of obesity in adults
- Lower levels of achievement in education
- Development in EYFS (0-5 yrs.) falling below regional and national averages

### Social Isolation:

- Connection to secondary schools for some is poor
- Low satisfaction scores for belonging.
- Some areas in Daventry town have high levels of income deprivation
- 7.7% of pensioners living in poverty

## Rural North

### Older People:

- High population age 65+ (21%)
- Higher life expectancy
- Poor mental health indicators

### Carers:

- 8.5% of the population are providing unpaid care for others
- Almost 26% of carers deliver more than 50 hours per week.
- Majority of care is for older people

### Social Isolation:

- Highest number of rural aging residents of all LAPs
- Furthest to travel for secondary education
- High food vulnerability index score
- High numbers attending Welcoming Spaces



## Rural South

### Older Population:

- 20.06% of population is aged 65+
- Highest proportion of persons 75+ of all LAPs
- Highest loneliness index score

### Children and Young People:

- Average travel time to facilities and amenities is higher than England average.
- Prevalence of depression is high at 13.2%••
- Percentage of children (15+) smoking is high at 8.7%

## Rural East

### Older People:

- Higher proportion of population is aged 65+ (20%) & 75+ (8.8%) greater than England averages
- Number of pensioner households is rising, up to 23.7%

### Families:

- High proportion of children in relative low-income lone parent families (51.1%)
- Percentage of children (15+) smoking is high at 8.6%

### Transport & Services:

- High number of people living in rural location (31.1% compared to England average (10.5%))
- Higher levels of depression than England average

# WEST NORTHANTS LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS (LAPs)

## Northampton North

### Older People:

- Highest numbers of people aged 65+ of all LAPs
- Higher than average proportion of Pension Credit claims 12.2% compared to England average 11.3%

### Anti-Social Behaviour & Youth Provision:

- High levels of neighbourhood level incidents of anti-social behaviour
- A higher-than-expected number of children live in relative low-income families

### Children & young people:

- High levels of mental health needs

## Northampton West

### Youth Provision:

- Highest proportion of Children 0-16 of all LAPs
- High proportion of children smoking
- Nearly a third of children obese in Yr. 6
- High than average number seeking help for depression
- More UC claimants from single parent households

### Multi-Agency Education Team:

- Suspensions is 2nd highest in WNC
- Seven-fold increase in exclusions relating to drugs and alcohol. High numbers of exclusions for disruptive behaviour and other reasons

### Digital Information (Safeguarding):

- There is a need to improve the customer experience and communication routes across social care

## Northampton South

### Supporting families & pupils where English is not their first language:

- 30% identify as non-white British, 22.3% born outside the UK
- 8% of households have no English Speakers
- Significant increase in numbers from ethnic minorities

### Early Years:

- Area of high levels of deprivation some wards in the 20% most deprived areas of England
- High numbers of lone parent families

### Active Travel:

- Highest Carbon footprint of all the LAPs
- High average number of vehicles per household 35.6% compared to England average 26.1%
- Lowest average walking distance to key services
- Highest proportion of LAP populations that are of working age

## Northampton Central

### Multi-Agency Education Team:

- Suspensions and exclusions mean a loss of 12.5yrs of education
- Highest suspension rates in West Northamptonshire
- High numbers of exclusions for disruptive behaviour or for inappropriate use of social media

### Access to Community Space for Youth Provision:

- 33.7% of children live in relative low income
- High youth involvement in anti-social behaviour; drugs weapons crimes
- Higher than average number of reports of feeling unsafe

### Comprehensive COPD Programme:

- Significantly higher rates of COPD related illnesses
- 30% of residents smoke
- Of those with diagnosed COPD just 25% access services

### Women's Health Inequalities:

- Life and health expectancy of women lowest in Northants.
- Largest non-white population in West Northants.
- Women have fewer years of healthy life due to poorer reproductive and gynaecological health.

## Northampton East

### Community Safety:

- High level of recorded crime over a 12-month period
- Violent crimes are higher than national average
- High numbers of burglaries and anti-social behaviour reports
- Low level of satisfaction score

### Anti-Poverty/Cost of Living

- LAP area is ranked in the 20% most deprived areas of England
- 30% of children live in relative low-income families.
- Largest % of people claiming Disability Benefits
- Higher than average number of homes have no central heating
- Youth unemployment is higher than the national average

### Youth Provision:

- Highest proportion of 0-16-year-olds of all the LAPs
- 4 in 10 children in Year 6 are overweight or obese
- High Proportion of lone parents
- Greater Socio-Cultural barriers such as beliefs and traditions

# WEST NORTHANTS LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS (LAPs)

Partners work together on the emerging issues to bring about positive impact on wellbeing, using a range of different approaches. An example is included below.

## Central Northampton LAP

When compared with the West Northamptonshire LAPs, this LAP has:

- A total population of 59,083, with the lowest proportion of persons aged 75 and over
- The highest proportion of non-white British residents (50%)
- 5.8% that do not speak English at all or do not speak it well
- 17.7% households where no one speaks English as their main language
- The highest proportion of residents working in elementary occupations (25%)
- The highest proportion of no qualifications (19%)
- The highest proportion of deprived households: 50% of households living with 1 deprivation dimension; 5.2% of households living with 3 or more deprivation dimensions
- Highest number of people with a diagnosis of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and high rates of emergency admissions, for both all ages and those under 75 years.

Based on the data, Northampton Central LAP identified poor respiratory outcomes as a priority. We have worked with partners across the NHS, VCSE and local authority to develop a test and learn programme to test a place-based approach to addressing inequalities in respiratory outcomes in this area.

It included reviewing the pathway for respiratory care, looking at the factors that influence respiratory health, starting with the wider determinants of health (the places people live and work), the opportunities to live healthy lives through to the opportunities to access support for people with respiratory conditions, considering both children and young people and adults. The model was developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders through a process of engagement, which was initiated at a Health and Wellbeing Board development workshop (attendees included elected members, local authority, NHS, VCSE partners) and refined through an iterative process in discussion with stakeholders.

The programme uses a number of approaches from the family of community approaches and is working with a number of partners across West Northamptonshire:

- Working with community organisations to conduct community engagement work to better understand experiences of respiratory conditions and identify opportunities for action.
- Develop a 2-year community health champions programme to recruit volunteers that represent local communities who will be trained and supported to be a link into communities and share information on health-related matters and signpost to services and support.
- Deliver a targeted outreach offer to bring health improvement services into the community, including a Stop Smoking Service, health checks, immunisation and screening.
- GPA recruited Health and Wellbeing Coaches, to engage with and offer 1:1 support for over-looked groups in the local community who are not currently accessing support to manage their COPD diagnosis.
- Engage with existing service providers to support and develop services currently available for people with a COPD diagnosis, such as Pulmonary Rehab and Breathing Space.
- Develop a digital exclusion project to increase access and improve engagement on the myCOPD self-management app.
- Develop an air quality project to increase awareness and reduce poor air quality in and around schools.
- Develop a children and young people with asthma project to support them, parents/carers and schools with effective asthma action plans and develop an Asthma Friendly Schools programme.
- Working with an evaluation partner to evaluate this place-based programme of work.

# AN ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Through the LAPs, West Northamptonshire Council want to build community capacity to enable people to come together to identify local issues, devise solutions and build sustainable local action on health and the determinants of health. Well Northants uses an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach, targeting specific groups who are most vulnerable to health inequalities.

## Well Northants

Asset Based Community Development's premise is that communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing, but often unrecognised assets. This means that communities are able to respond to challenges and create local social improvement and economic development.

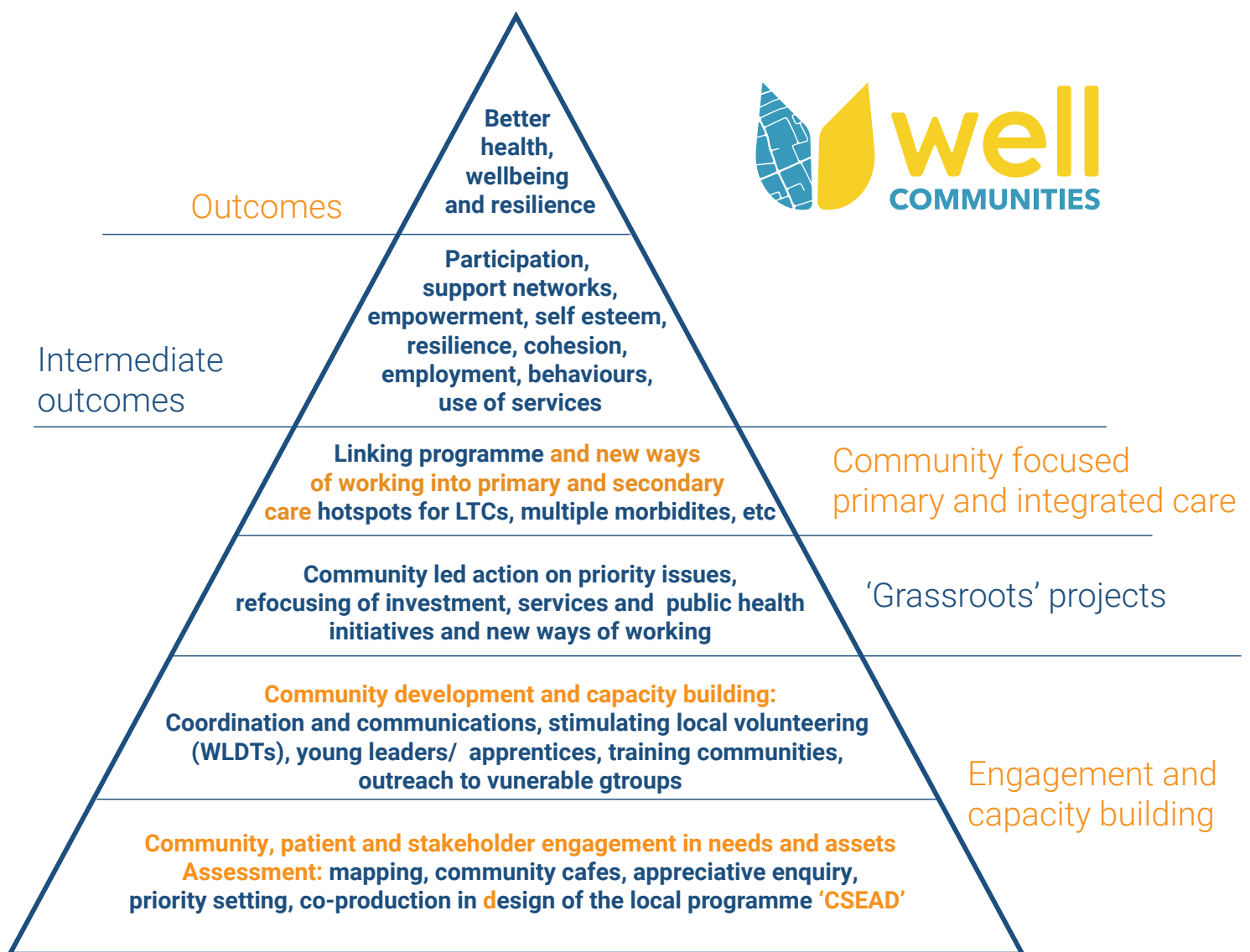
Through the 'Well Northants' programme, community development workers are embedded within local communities with high deprivation (St David's Kingsthorpe, King's Heath, Blackthorn in Northampton and Southbrook in Daventry) or shared experiences (currently Gypsy Roma Traveller Community and Sex Workers) to better understand local needs and assets and to coproduce interventions to improve individual and community wellbeing.



# AN ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The overall outcome it seeks to achieve is improved health, wellbeing and resilience. The model adopted for this work is the Well Communities Programme developed by the University of East London. The figure below shows the process taken to achieve this outcome, starting with engagement and capacity building, developing local projects and integration of work to build community involvement, empowerment, self-esteem and community cohesion. This results in improved access to services and better health and wellbeing outcomes.

**Figure 9:**  
Well Communities model





# WEST NORTANTS LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS (LAPs)

## Community and Stakeholder Engagement, Assessment and Design (CSEAD)

This engagement uses the Community and Stakeholder Engagement in needs assessment (CSEAD) process which leads to local programme co-design. This begins with talking directly to residents through street interviews, ensuring that their views are heard and that they are involved from the outset. Intelligence gathered from residents is then used to conduct a needs assessment, followed by a coproduction workshop with the community and stakeholders to develop an action plan.



Community development workers have been working with local people and partners to develop neighbourhood, action plans and to implement the actions and monitor progress. Residents, groups and organisations from each community have been invited to bid for funding for an idea that addresses a theme identified through the feedback and insight received from residents. Inviting them to be involved in making decisions about how to spend public money, based on ideas from people who live in their neighbourhood can help achieve involvement. All bids for funding have been voted on by residents in the neighbourhood to choose the ideas they would like to see happen, with the proposals with the most votes receiving funding until the allocated budget is used.

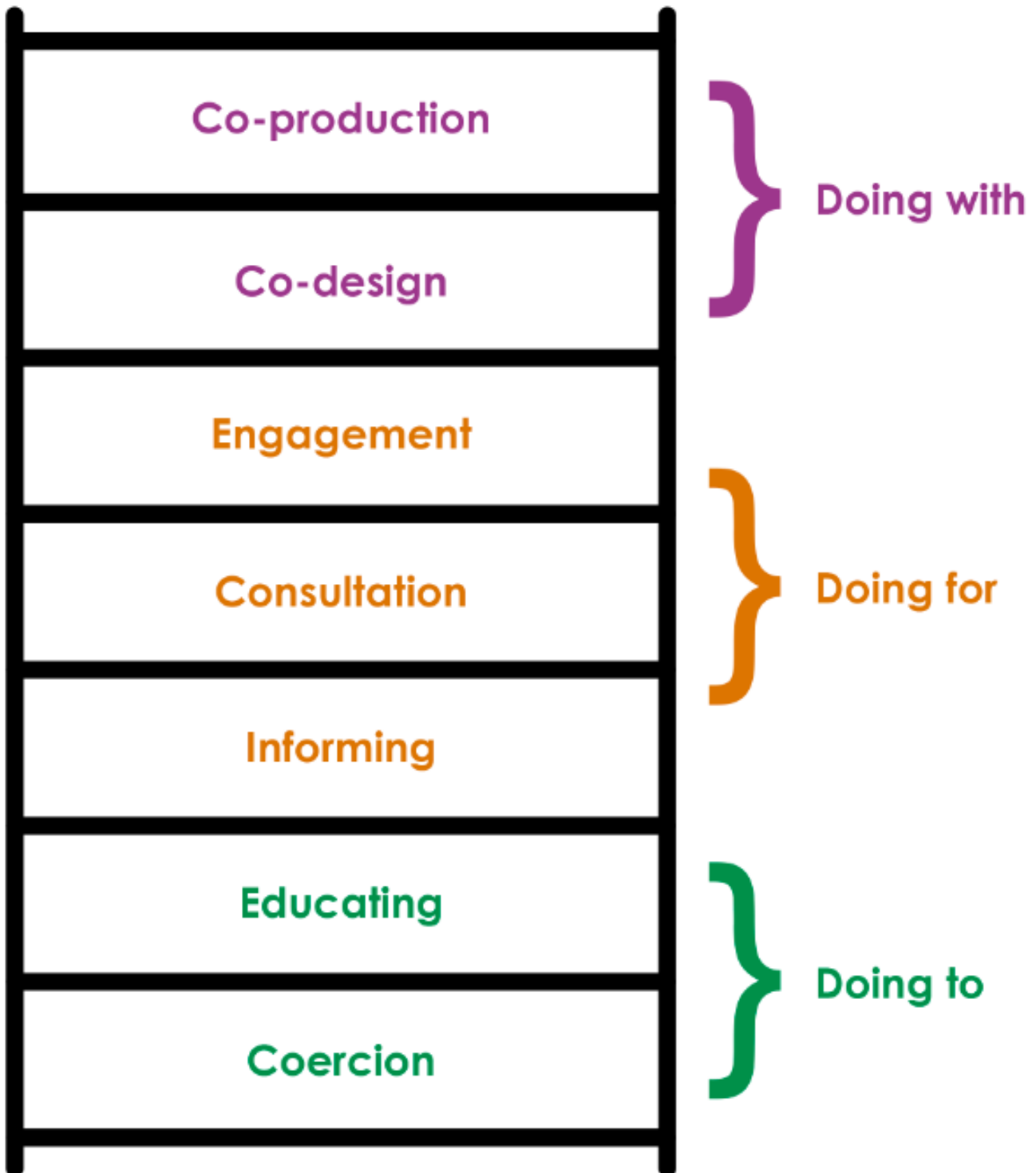
For the long-term impacts of this programme, it is important to build social capital and community resilience. The ambition is for local needs to be met, with improved social connections and networks that reduce risk factors like smoking, obesity, drug and alcohol use and psychological stressors. Due to the nature of the programme targeting, we expect these outcomes will reduce health inequalities in those groups and ultimately result in an increase in life expectancy and healthy life years.

One of the local activities moving forward include the empowerment of a group of vulnerable women, some of whom are involved in sex work, to set up their own peer led beauty and support session, with a team of volunteers accessing training on a pathway to employment. The aim was to provide a safe space for vulnerable women to come together and feel good about themselves, and to provide an opportunity to get to know other people with the same lived experiences. The volunteers involved reported this has had a positive impact on their wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem and provided them with opportunities previously unavailable to them. This has also resulted in a recommendation by the women to develop a harm reduction pack to be given to vulnerable women by health professionals, with training to enable professionals to be able to support sex workers to reduce risk of harm.



## ENSURING COMMUNITIES HAVE A VOICE


The Integrated Care Northamptonshire (ICN) and WNC are developing a set of principles for engagement, to ensure that all partners working in West Northamptonshire agree to working in partnership with communities to inform everything we do, based on the ladder of coproduction to move towards coproduction of services. WNC have also developed a coproduction charter to embed coproduction in everything we do and these principles were used to develop the Special Educational Needs (SEND) Strategy.



## West Northants Co-production Charter

### 'Together we are stronger'




This Co-Production Charter outlines the shared values that all partners have agreed to adhere to when working with children, young people and their families.



### What is Co-production?

Co-production means working with people who use services as equal partners, to make a decision or shape a service that works for them.


### Why co-produce and how do we know it makes a difference?

-  Everyone feels equally valued and listened to.
-  It leads to better services that improve people's lives.
-  It is a legal requirement for all agencies to co-produce with children, young people and families.

### This co-production charter outlines the 5 values that all parties will use to work together.

#### Communication

We will make our communication clear, consistent informative and timely.



#### Transparency

We will be open and honest as we make decisions.

#### Accountability


We will take responsibility, find solutions and regularly review to ensure we make a real difference.

#### Respect

We will listen to and empower people and treat them as equal partners.

#### Working together

We will work together and recognise that everyone has valuable contributions to make.





## CASE STUDY: COPRODUCING THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEND) STRATEGY

- 3,504 CYP aged between 3 and 25 years have an EHCP plan
- 50.5% attend a mainstream school and 38.% attend a special school
- 32% have autistic spectrum disorder
- 22.6% have a speech, language or communication difficulty
- 18.6% have a social, emotional or mental health need
- 14.1% have a moderate learning difficulty

A multi-agency working party was established to scope the task of developing a partnership SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy that will improve the outcomes for children and young people; improve the lived experiences for families, reducing the current adversity and frustration they face; and deliver financial sustainability. Over a 4-month time frame a series of partnership co-production events and discussions took place across West Northamptonshire. Children, young people and their families and all partners across Education, Health and Social care, engaged in robust discussions about past, present and future needs. This included elected members, early years providers, mainstream and special schools, alternative providers, further education colleges, the University of Northampton, local voluntary/community organisations and employers. Mentimeter was used to capture views. The resulting strategy emerged from 21 drafts developed through an iterative process and reflects the aspirations of more than 800 people and more than 3,200 individual inputs. More than 50% of comments came from children, young people and their parents, supported by Northampton Parent Forum Group and other parent groups. The final SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy is the partnership's ambitious vision, aims and priorities co-produced with and by the community to ensure that system change can happen.



## CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY WELLBEING FORUMS

As part of the engagement framework, WNC have a number of community forums, which provide a safe, accessible space to engage our communities, particularly our seldom heard communities, who we know may not ordinarily engage. The community forums are aligned to various protected characteristics including disability, gender, sexuality, age, religion, faith and ethnicity. Members can be individuals who live, work or are otherwise involved in community life in West Northamptonshire, or may attend on behalf of a business, community, voluntary or faith organisation. Each forum has a councillor co-chair appointed by the Council and a community co-chair, elected from its members.

The priority, aims and objectives of the forums are to:

- Give people a way to have a dialogue with WNC and its partner organisations
- Provide feedback on issues of concern
- Pass on ideas for future plans for West Northamptonshire and services provided locally, including those provided by the Council and its partners
- Help improve the quality of life for the community they are representing in West Northamptonshire
- Help community groups identify, develop and support people in the community
- Support community groups to raise awareness and educate people about related health and discrimination issues.

The forums seek to monitor the effectiveness of our services in relation to equality by:

- Providing information about services and how to access them
- Identifying and removing barriers to ensure access to services
- Promoting dialogue about issues of concern between us, our members and officers and other people in the community
- Identifying the specific requirements of the people the forums represent.

The forums meet at least every eight weeks and are part of our wider community engagement strategy and network.

The Diverse (Ethnicity and Faith) Communities Forum is an important networking, coordinating and information sharing platform for professionals, partnering organisations and community groups. The forum engages and has representation across a wide range of faith and ethnic groups, providing a mechanism to bring forward issues and barriers to accessing services, exchanging information, developing events, projects and programmes, resulting in it being a first point of contact for many services and organisations wanting to engage with specific communities.

This forum also supports community events that bring our communities together to foster good relationships and celebrate diversity. Including Black History month, Windrush, Independence Day celebrations and faith events such as Diwali and the Ukrainian flag raising event. Recently this forum has been used as a focal point by both the police and fire service in their recruitment to help increase diversity within both organisations. By having constant representation at the meeting, they are able to provide updates, share new information, and seek new advice and perspectives.

The LGBTQ and Allies Forum brings together partners from local LGBTQ+ services, volunteers and community members, marking events such as International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia and World Aids Day.

Recent forum discussions include:

- The care of LGBTQ+ people in older age groups
- Social care staff, care providers and LGBTQ+ organisations
- Improving services for LGBTQ+ people
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and support services for the LGBTQ community
- A review of policy providing an LGBTQ+ lens



## CASE STUDY: WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY 2023

In the UK, 115 people die by suicide every week – with 75 percent of those deaths being male (ONS), 1 in 5 people have suicidal thoughts (NHS Digital) and 1 in 14 people self-harm (NHS Digital). ONS figures report that there were 36 suicides in West Northamptonshire in 2022, which is a reduction from 43 in 2021.

World Suicide Prevention Day takes place annually, and this year's theme was 'Creating Hope Through Action'. For World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September 2023, a sofa travelled around Northamptonshire giving people the opportunity to sit and chat about their mental health. The 'Take a Break' campaign encouraged passers-by to stop, sit and talk, to help to raise awareness of suicide prevention and the services that can provide support, as well as reducing stigma around suicide and self-harm. It provided a relaxed environment for people to chat, share any concerns and find out how to get help.

The brown leather two-seater sofa was transported to different locations across Northamptonshire, over six days at varying times, with different organisations supporting at each place.

The campaign was run by Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) with support from West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire Public Health teams.

In West Northamptonshire, the sofa visited Brackmills Industrial Estate, Becket's Park and The Amazing Northampton Run 2023.



## CASE STUDY: A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO WORKING WITH ROUGH SLEEPERS

Individuals and families experiencing homelessness are more vulnerable to health inequalities and have disproportionately poor health outcomes and as a result, people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping have a greatly reduced life expectancy (44 years for men vs. the national average of 79.4 and 42 years for women vs. national average of 83.1). This is underpinned by poor health outcomes, with 73% of people experiencing homelessness suffering from a physical health problem and 80% from a mental health problem (UKHSA, 2019). According to the British Red Cross (2021 in NHSE, 2022) homeless people are significantly less likely to be registered with a GP meaning preventable healthcare needs are not treated in a timely fashion, making hospital attendance more likely. Therefore, public health services play a pivotal role in enhancing the wellbeing of these vulnerable individuals and communities by preventing diseases and injuries, detecting health issues early, and responding promptly to avoid the development of severe illnesses. While public health may not always be at the forefront of our minds, it is crucial in maintaining a healthy society, and increased life expectancy. Unfortunately, individuals experiencing acute homelessness and hardship face unique challenges in accessing healthcare, including barriers related to transportation and lack of structure to their lives.

WNC worked in collaboration with The Northampton Hope Centre and Bridge Substance Misuse Programme to organise a range of successful Health and Wellbeing events, benefiting those who are homeless, rough sleeping and in temporary accommodation within our community. This initiative aimed to provide crucial public health services to the community, with a focus on preventive healthcare measures. The team worked with providers to offer a range of essential services, including COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, NHS health checks, sexual health consultations, drug and alcohol support, hepatitis C testing, stop smoking services, smear testing and access to optical care.

Alex Copeland, the CEO of Northampton Hope Centre, emphasized the importance of easy access to public health services, especially given the increasing numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness in Northampton. He stated, "With the numbers of individuals presenting themselves as homeless at Hope, now often into the 50's and 60's daily, it is crucial that we work together on initiatives like this to make access to public health services as easy as possible to the most in need." Copeland added, "Collaborating with Public Health with events like this will be important as we tackle homelessness head-on, particularly as we head into winter and need to avoid deaths on the street."

Karl McGuinness from the Hepatitis C Trust said "Really well planned and executed, great number of people tested, and a lot of people also educated about transmission routes and risks."

Bridget Carroll, a Director of the Bridge Substance Misuse Programme, commented that "the whole day was a success. Having all the providers in one room meant it was a relaxed and comfortable environment and welcoming to their clients. The service users who attended have been telling others about the day and are looking forward to attending the next event with the Public Health Team".

These initiatives have received positive feedback from service users and our team are committed to continue working in partnership with settings to provide similar interventions throughout the year.



## PROVIDING COMMUNITIES WITH A MEANS TO DRIVE POSITIVE CHANGE

Community funding is the way the council supports the local voluntary and community sector with grant awards to help them deliver projects and services within our communities. During the first six months of this financial year, we have awarded just short of £1.4m in community funding grants.

Demand for community grant funding, post-covid and with the cost-of-living increases, is exceptionally high, so it is not possible to satisfy all requests. But the Community Funding Grants team has introduced a framework which targets funding towards projects and services that support the delivery of the council's strategic aims and priorities and crucially, where there is the greatest need within the population or local community.

Community funding grants offer a wide range of benefits that contribute to the wellbeing and development of our communities and residents. Grants empower local organisations and residents' groups to take ownership of projects that matter to them. After all, they know their communities needs and aspirations best.

Grants can be tailored to address specific needs, targeting issues within a community whether it's youth engagement, money advice, food support, arts and cultural opportunities or other priorities.

They are also a great way to strengthen local communities, with people coming together to achieve a shared ambition, and many of the projects that receive funding focus directly on improving people's lives and generating a positive social impact. Whether it's access to mental wellbeing support, food banks or community fridges or youth clubs, grants contribute to the overall wellbeing of a community as a whole.

### Participatory budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a process that has co-production at its core. Working within the targeted communities, it puts local people at the heart of prioritising need. It enables the community to set their own criteria, and encourages them to have their say, through a Community Voting process. The process enables the community to select the projects and initiatives that they believe will best deliver their outcomes.

As a successfully developed methodology, the PB engagement process seeks to raise awareness and interest from both traditionally engaged sectors of the community, as well as those who are seldom heard. It involves encouraging all those connected to use their formal and informal local networks to spread awareness of the opportunity.

Where there is interest and potential in the community, additional support will be given to capacity-build parties to be deliverers of projects and initiatives. Existing local organisations are encouraged to become sponsor organisations to monitor progress, provide 'umbrella' governance and support burgeoning groups and individuals to pilot projects.

From the outset, the key message is 'You decide!' making it clear that local residents are in charge of deciding the priorities, as well as which projects get funded to deliver. This results in:

- a range of projects addressing community identified health needs
- a more engaged and connected community, empowered to create solutions to health needs.
- improved access to, and communication of, health interventions and improvement opportunities.
- strengthening of the voluntary and community sector in local communities.

Well Northants used participatory budgeting to provide funding to local areas. To ensure ease of community understanding, the term 'Community Voting Day' (CVD) was adopted to replace the term Participatory Budgeting, as it emphasises in simpler terms what the project is about.

The initial community voting days were delivered in the style of a 'Dragons Den' in which applicants bid for funding by pitching their project ideas to the community. A list of projects to be funded, would then be decided via a voting process, with the pitches with the highest scoring votes prioritised first. The results were then announced and applicants informed of the outcome.

## PROVIDING COMMUNITIES WITH A MEANS TO DRIVE POSITIVE CHANGE

In 2023, Well Northants successfully delivered funding to the value of £60,784 to enable 31 community projects to be delivered in Well Northants communities.

Feedback from participants included:

“Amazing to see the community coming together to support each other – THANK YOU!!”

“A truly lovely day. Fantastic new opportunity for community groups to meet and hopefully work together in future”

“Great to connect with so many organisations and people trying to improve the community, I feel more part of community and curious about all the things that are happening. I now have information to share with people who complain that nothing happens/no-one cares!”

“Good to meet the organisations – inspiring to hear about the groups and learn that so much is available in my community”

The team listened to what people said about the community voting day and adapted how it was delivered on the day to increase reach, make the events easier to access and engaging. The latest community voting day was less of a dragons den and more of a market place. Overall attracting more residents in a more informal way, this was an opportunity for people to meet, learn about projects and talk about how they can get involved.

Examples of some projects funded:

- Fruit trees for the new community orchard at Bradlaugh Fields and Barn
- Discover yourself workshops for children and young people delivered by Lemon Pop
- Resources for the Keep Ever Young (KEY) club, supporting friendships and reducing isolation amongst older people.
- Gardening after school club at Blackthorn Primary school so children can grow their own and learn where their food comes from.
- Parenting workshops delivered by Free2Talk, helping to build confidence.

## DEVELOPING COMMUNITY HUBS

The cost-of-living crisis created unprecedented pressures on people already in poverty, and despite central government support, many people in West Northamptonshire have been unable to afford to heat their home. Working with parish and town councils and partners in the voluntary and community sector we created a network of 96 Welcoming Spaces - non-judgemental, safe and welcoming places where people can come together to stay warm, and perhaps enjoy a hot meal or a cup of tea and a biscuit.

WNC offered grants of between £500 to £1,500 to support the creation and development of these spaces, and during the winter of 2022/23 the grant-funded spaces had 58,600+ attendees, referring over 3,500 clients on to wrap-around support services.

Below are a number of testimonials from different settings that host welcoming spaces:

### Brackley Library

"One of our customers has been struggling with his electricity. Through coming to the library, we've been able to talk to him and signpost him to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), who come on Fridays. With their support, he has been in contact with other council teams and charities that have helped him. We always check in to see how he is doing when he visits, and recently he said how grateful he is that the library, CAB and charities have offered him support. The help alleviated his stress, and he is finally getting to a point where he feels he is more financially settled."

### Broadmead Church

"We have a lady who comes in every week from work, she has a break of four hours and can't afford to travel home so she comes and sits in the café, and we serve her drinks and food."

### Bugbrooke Parish Council

"One of our regular visitors is elderly and partially sighted. His wife died last year so he now lives alone. He really enjoys coming to the Warm Space to chat to friends. He's sometimes tearful, but his friends are very supportive. He is determined to learn to cook for himself and has been getting advice from some of the other attendees."

### The Hope Centre

"One client used the Warm Space to simply keep warm and avoid the cost of putting his heating on. When he first came, he wouldn't talk to anyone and sat quietly in the corner. Over the week his confidence grew, and he began talking to other clients and staff. He became interested in helping in the café and after chatting with the team it was agreed that he could begin working there. He later told staff: 'I wouldn't be here if it weren't for Hope'. Before finding the Warm Space, he'd tried to take his own life, but supporting the Warm Space has given him purpose and a reason to carry on."

The team at the Hope Centre are currently working on a plan to deliver sustainable services in these local trusted settings, where local people need them the most. They are working with partners to provide outreach for money and debt advice, mental health support, housing and employment, public health services and training for frontline workers and volunteers through the Community Training Partnership.

Welcoming Spaces form part of our Anti-Poverty Strategy, which sets out how the council will work with partners to support people who are struggling financially and what can be done to help prevent people falling into poverty. These spaces continue to develop, and are part of the WNC programme to develop one-stop shops, that bring together a range of services within a community to improve access to services.

## VOLUNTEER AND PEER ROLES

Another strand of the family of community-based approaches are volunteer and peer roles, which enhance individual capabilities to provide advice, information and support or organise activities in their own or other communities – community members use their life experience and social connections to reach out to others. Common models include:

- peer support
- peer education
- health trainers
- health champions
- community navigators
- befriending and volunteer schemes such as health walks

Recognising the value of these approaches, WNC commissioned Grow! Cook! Eat! to build community capacity for healthy living in our communities through growing and cooking in West Northamptonshire. It is a collaborative project run by The Northampton Hope Centre and Health Works. The project has coined the phrase, 'A community that grows together, cooks together, eats together, stays together'. The programme recruits and trains community champions to grow and cook healthy food and share their new knowledge and skills to those around them, and provides small grants (£500 - £3000) to enable this to happen. An example is C2C Grows – Gardening for Wellbeing, which was established during lockdown (Autumn 2020) when they acquired a double plot at the Kingsthorpe Park Allotments. As a charity C2C has a proven track record of working with women on the fringes of society. The majority of the women who attend the allotment sessions have had some life changing challenges either with the criminal justice system, the impact of neglectful lifestyle choices, abuse through alcohol, drugs or violence, and some struggling with loss and bereavement. C2C Grows is a social and therapeutic gardening project that offers wellbeing gardening sessions for women and aims to build women's confidence in growing food and giving them a safe space to do this.

Prior to being involved in Grow!Cook!Eat! C2C struggled to get women up at the allotment consistently but with the grant funding and offering to cover transport this has been a game changer. C2C have been running weekly gardening for wellbeing sessions on Thursdays for women since April 2023. They focus on a different topic of gardening each week and aim to incorporate aspects of wellbeing into the sessions, such as looking at the healing properties of plants e.g., lavender to aid sleep. They always offer the women attending a chance to learn a new gardening skill – e.g., seed sowing, pricking out, pruning and plant care/ maintenance. The main focus of the project is to offer the vulnerable women a safe, green space to garden, grow a variety of fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers, and gain a sense of meaningful purpose to their day. C2C used April and May to plant and sow a wide range of vegetables and fruit including runner beans, broad beans, peas, potatoes, lettuce, parsnips, beetroot, chard, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, pumpkins, sweetcorn, radishes and butternut squash. Fruit currently growing includes plums, apples, redcurrants, gooseberries, blackcurrants, strawberries, raspberries and cherries. The women harvested all of this produce to take home, alongside cooking sessions on site using as much of the vegetables as possible.

C2C have received positive feedback from the women attending the sessions so far, with one woman saying that coming to the sessions really lifts her mood and another saying that she leaves her troubles at the gate and can forget about everything else whilst being at the sessions. The project is providing a unique safe, green space for vulnerable women in the local community. C2C are now taking referrals from local GP surgeries who are offering the project as a green prescription.

New Life Amalgamation is another organisation who have received training and a community grant from

## VOLUNTEER AND PEER ROLES

Grow!Cook!Eat!. New Life Amalgamation was established after Amanda Tandoh saw the need for both the spiritual and physical needs of her community to be met. Since its conception Amanda has been running weekly church services, a weekly foodbank, support groups and recently health heart checks. There is a mixed group of people who come along to the various sessions put on at the church, both men and women, young and old. After attending the champions training, Amanda established a session to teach participants to grow, cook and eat healthy on a budget. It is called 'cooking with a twist' because it teaches people to cook even with food they have been cooking before but in different and interesting ways. Amanda encourages participants to come with recipes and to teach the group how the meal is made. One of the ladies was amazed at how easy it was to prepare a healthy meal using simple ingredients. She said she would come back for more of the cooking sessions. The classes also provide an avenue to meet other people and foster a sense of community around food.

WNC also commission the Bridge Substance Misuse Programme, which is a Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO). LEROs are organisations led by people with lived experience of drug and alcohol recovery, for the benefit of the recovery community. We believe in the therapeutic value of one addict helping another.

Bridge recruit, train and supervise volunteers who have had drug or alcohol problems themselves, or close contact with people who have. They act as mentors or support workers to clients with drug or alcohol problems. The aim is to help Bridge members deal with their substance misuse by providing practical support in relation to social aspects which impact negatively on their lives.

People who have experienced substance misuse problems have a role to play in helping others. Their experience and understanding should not be wasted when it can be used to support people trying to recover from their own substance misuse. The experience and learning that mentors gain should be a valuable aid to them in their personal or career development.

As well as offering members the opportunity to engage with a mentor, Bridge have developed, and constantly review, a programme of physical and other activities that are available to members. Many of these sessions are led by peer mentors.

Coproduction is an important part of their offer and ensures that the service user's needs are heard. Bridge regularly host members meetings. These are service user meetings that provide the opportunity for members to provide feedback on the service, and to make suggestions and requests. Bridge also use suggestion boxes for the same purpose. They regularly implement requests from service users – such as event days, or activities for the timetable.

## CONCLUSIONS

This report has provided an update on how WNC has adopted the new place operating model, utilising the range of approaches in the family of community-centred approaches to addressing health inequalities. As this way of working becomes more embedded across the council, we expect more services to be utilising these types of interventions to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and to support delivery of the 10 Live Your Best Life ambitions. Below are a number of recommendations to help us further address health inequalities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2023 REPORT

1. We will ensure that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment considers the needs of the CORE20PLUS groups, including developing community fact sheets for diverse ethnic communities and inclusion health groups and this is used to inform further actions to address health inequalities in West Northamptonshire.
2. Produce a Community Cohesion Action Plan for West Northamptonshire.
3. Develop a set of systemwide principles for community engagement and coproduction, ensuring that all staff adopt the recommended principles and practices.
4. Build, expand and promote our community engagement network across the system.
5. Develop a system inclusion health strategy and action plan.
6. Refresh the ICN Health Inequalities Plan.
7. Ensure appropriate training is provided and carried out and guidance and toolkits are provided to foster a consistent approach to community-based models of work.
8. Ensure training and tools are developed to enable staff to better understand health inequalities and their role in addressing these.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 2022 DPH ANNUAL REPORT

The DPH Annual Report for 2022 looked at the effects of the cost of living crisis for resident's of West Northamptonshire. Below are the recommendations from that report and updates of the actions taken to address each recommendation.

	Recommendation	Action taken
1	Continue to deliver urgent support to those struggling right now – ensuring good access to rights advice and easy access to hardship support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for debt and money advisors in the VCSE sector in place</li> <li>• Transformation of WNC revenue and benefits team underway</li> <li>• Community Training Partnership launched with ongoing training offer for front line staff</li> <li>• Continuation of energy support and advice service for winter</li> <li>• Roll out of Household Support Fund 4</li> <li>• Preparation of welcoming warm spaces for winter</li> </ul>
2	Ensure that the impact of financial stress on mental health is understood and addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of an all-age mental health and suicide prevention training framework aimed at frontline workers and volunteers across the system as well as the general public. Key elements include increasing knowledge in relation to what can have a negative influence on our mental health and wellbeing, signs to look out for in relation to poor mental health, and strategies and approaches to support their own and the mental wellbeing of those they support. Training also includes understanding of what is available to support mental health, signposting and referral to appropriate support.</li> <li>• System-wide alignment of messaging related to the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing underpinned by the A4H 10 Keys to Happier Living. This includes a campaign starting in early 2024 aimed at working age men, using the 10 keys to happier living to promote actions to support positive mental health and wellbeing.</li> </ul>
3	Continue to build on the collaborative working to ensure partnership working is at the centre of anti-poverty action including the wider Integrated Care System constituent organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti poverty oversight group continues to meet with representation across statutory services and voluntary sector</li> <li>• Upstream anti-poverty actions including supporting employment and economy discussed at a system level by ICP Board and with West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board. Recognition at these meetings of the importance of the wider social and economic impact of the ICS partners (4th aim of Integrated Care Systems as set out by Integration White Paper)</li> </ul>
4	Take place-based and asset-based approaches linking with the work of the emerging Local Area Partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap-around support at welcoming spaces delivered in close collaboration with LAP teams</li> </ul>

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 2022 DPH ANNUAL REPORT

	Recommendation	Action taken
5	<p>Develop longer-term strategic approaches to reduce and prevent poverty and its impacts, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuel poverty and warm homes</li> <li>• Sustainable food</li> <li>• Skills and access to employment</li> <li>• Homelessness and rough sleeping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing partnership board subgroup focussing on quality and sustainability of homes</li> <li>• Support for food banks through HSF4 to improve sustainability and community food larder offer</li> <li>• Working group established to look at spend of UKSPF people and skills and prepare for work well partnership bid to support employment opportunities</li> </ul> <p>Homelessness and rough sleeping needs assessment published and work underway on the homeless and rough sleeping strategy</p>
6	<p>Keep learning and reflecting and ensure that evaluation results in improved outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outputs and outcomes of activity closely monitored to ensure progress of projects</li> <li>• In addition to hard data, qualitative feedback from service providers and service users sought to be able to understand impact of interventions.</li> </ul>

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