

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022**

Since our last meeting I have worked with the Cabinet, Members, the Chief Executive and Officers across all areas of the Council. Many of these activities and issues are referred to in more detail in Cabinet colleagues' reports.

## **Sustainability**

We launched Sustainable West Northants on 28th April at a well-attended partnership event on the 28th March. This initiative, whilst being spearheaded by the council, is aimed at a collective push for sustainability, with partners, residents, businesses and everybody across West Northants, and aims to ensure everyone is working towards dramatically improved sustainability through setting their own objectives and targets, mapped against the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This is an ambitious new approach towards protecting and improving the local environment, economy, and society for future generations.

The cross-party working group on Sustainability has now met, and will be meeting again in the near future for a workshop session to progress and map out more of this work.

At this stage, our new Sustainability Strategy shows the clear pathway ahead that we are committed to, and includes the council's own sustainability pledges, but will be further developed into a more fully detailed strategy, which will happen as the group develops and oversees the detail on such important areas as carbon and emissions measurement. Existing WNC activities are being mapped against the UN goals.

Further progress in this area since my last report to council includes WNC having become members of UK100, following a motion from council to do this. This membership is proving valuable to us as a source of guidance and good practice, and also holding us to account for the quality and sincerity of our sustainability plans and actions.

For WNC we have developed three key Sustainability Pledges – our primary commitments alongside the beginnings of our strategy for steering forward resources and actions – with underpinning goals and actions supporting them to continue to be developed:

1. Net Zero for the Council's own emissions by 2030, and those of residents and businesses by 2045
2. Take a community leadership role for Sustainability in West Northants
3. Ensure all Council strategies and policies are aligned to, and contribute to, the delivery of our Sustainability commitments.

## **Communications**

We have completed the reorganisation of the Communications team, with appointments now made to the new structure, and additional vacant posts now being advertised to complete the structure.

The structure is based on the positive LGA review of the service, and their recommendations to expand some key areas.

## **Transformation**

The development of the West Northants Grand Design plan has progressed further with the set-up of the boards and terms of reference for each area. There are now key projects attached to each of the workstreams to form the overall Transformation programme which are progressing.

The initial board meetings for each workstream have been held and the priority projects agreed along with project owners set.

The following achievements were met in Quarter 4:

- Disaggregation has completed, bar a few minor issues to resolve, on the following:
  - Waste
  - Learning, Independence, Volunteering and Employment
  - Deprivation of Liberty
  - Emergency Planning
  - Country Parks
- Exit plans have been created for all 2021/2022 disaggregating services (above)
- Highways and Transport staff consultation has begun
- The detailed planning of the next phase (by Quarter 2 of 2022/2023) of services disaggregation is now complete
- Green Waste harmonisation has been implemented and the revised service in South Northants is in place.

In addition, key priority projects which include Future Ways of Working and property strategy, Staff Pay and Grading, and Development Management review have all progressed well against the key milestones.

The Transformation team staff consultation is now complete, and the team have now been placed within the services with effect from 1st April 2022, to help drive through efficiency projects within the departments

## **Thrive Awards 2022**

On 31st March we celebrated some of the many superstars within WNC at our staff THRIVE Awards, as part of our First Birthday celebrations.

We received 170 nominations for the 6 staff awards (one award for each of our THRIVE values) and held an event for all shortlisted staff at the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

The descriptions that those nominating had given about their nominees and winners really demonstrated the great work that goes on throughout the organisation, and how so many colleagues go beyond their work role to support both their own colleagues and the residents that we serve, embodying the values of West Northamptonshire Council. It was great to see them all getting the recognition that they deserve, and on behalf of all Members, I was delighted to congratulate them, and thank them for all that they do. A video of the highlights can be accessed on the WNC intranet.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn  
**Leader of the Council**