



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Annual Report

2021/22

**Delivering services that
make a difference**



Contents

Foreword	4
Achieving our vision	5
Our drive to thrive	6
Our priorities for West Northants	7
Progress against our priorities	7
Council spending 2021/22	9
Council spending 2022/23	9
A look back at our first year	10
Finance	
Overview	13
Our performance and achievements	14
Service team highlights	16
Our priorities 2022/23	17
Looking ahead	18
Financial and operational challenges	19
2021/22 quarterly performance reporting	20
Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	21
Overview	21
Our performance and achievements	22
Service team highlights	23
Our priorities 2022/23	43
Financial and operational challenges	46
2021/22 quarterly performance reporting	48
Children's Services	51
Overview	51
Our performance and achievements	52
Service team highlights	53
Our priorities 2022/23	54
Looking ahead	55
Financial and operational challenges	56
2021/22 quarterly performance reporting	58

Chief Executive's Office	59
Overview	59
Our performance and achievements	60
Service team highlights	62
Our priorities 2022/23	63
Financial and operational challenges	64
Corporate Services	65
Overview	65
Our performance and achievements	65
Our priorities 2022/23	70
Financial and operational challenges	71
2021/22 quarterly performance reporting	71
Place, Economy & the Environment	72
Overview	72
Our performance and achievements	73
Service area highlights	73
Our priorities 2022/23	76
Financial and operational challenges	78
2021/22 quarterly performance reporting	79
Additional Information	83



Welcome to our

Annual Report

The first year of any new council will bring both challenges and opportunities. But coming from the pandemic and bringing together four sets of staff, culture, buildings and systems has been complex as it's taken time to stabilise.

It is now just over a year since West Northamptonshire Council was created, replacing the former county, district, and borough councils on 1st April last year. From day one we've been working hard to establish West Northamptonshire Council so we can develop and deliver better, local services for the whole of West Northamptonshire.

This report is a chance to reflect on the past year and update members on the activities we have been managing and what we have achieved. As we enter the second year of our journey, we have achieved many things, but we still have much to do on this internally as we bring more things together, as we adapt to big legislation challenges and national challenges, and to progress our ambitions. We have made a good start and staff advise that they feel positive about our next steps. The report provides the context to our starting point and where we go next.

During our first year we've worked hard to shape a fresh vision for our area, to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive for everyone – our residents, the voluntary sector, our communities and for social enterprise, businesses, and partner organisations.

We've made good progress towards our ambitions and a lot has been achieved. At the same time our communities have shown great spirit and resilience in the face of the pandemic, with its social and economic costs on our everyday lives.

Despite such significant challenges, we have delivered our first year within budget, and achieved a balanced budget for the year ahead, with improvements to services, and we have embarked on several bold new strategies.

Our sincere thanks to every member of our staff for their hard work throughout this first year, and to elected members for their work in cabinet or committees.



Cllr Jonathan Nunn

Leader of West Northamptonshire Council



Anna Earnshaw

Chief Executive of West Northamptonshire Council



Achieving our vision

**Five
ingredients
that will
help us
achieve
our vision**

1. Communities in control.

Everyone with a stake in West Northants has a part to play in our success, including civic leaders, business, the voluntary sector, community and social enterprises, parish and town councils and – most importantly of all – local people themselves.

2. People are at the heart of everything we do.

All our activity must put people and families at the centre. Our work must be designed and delivered in partnership with our diverse communities and integrated across organisations.

3. An integrated approach to “place-shaping”.

We will take an integrated approach to investing in all places in West Northants, so that they are attractive environments in which to live, work, visit and invest.

4. Leadership and accountability.

Each elected Council portfolio holder and each Executive Director has a specific area of responsibility aligned to our strategy, and working with public, private and community, voluntary and social enterprise partners, they will develop a work programme to support the delivery of this strategy.

5. Taking control of our future.

By setting out our vision, following these key principles for how we will achieve it, and setting a clear, robust and publicly transparent implementation plan, we can realise our ultimate goal of making West Northants a great place to grow up, get on and grow old.

Our drive to thrive

Everything we want to achieve for West Northants depends on having the right people in place and doing the right things. We need to retain, recruit, and develop talented and committed staff to provide the best services for our residents and businesses.

By making the most of people's skills and experience, we can take full advantage of the opportunities created by the new council. Everyone needs to be performing at their best to make the most of the opportunity we have with our new Council.

To support this, West Northants Council has developed a set of values in consultation with our staff, members, and stakeholders. These values underpin how we work and what partners and customers can expect from us. We want to do our very best for our residents, service users and businesses and for our staff – we want everyone to THRIVE.

Similarly, where services are provided through partners or external organisations, we will work with them to make sure these values are carried through in delivering services on our behalf. Our organisational culture will continue to develop as we carry on improving our services and ways of working as the new West Northants Council.

THRIVE

Our Core Values

TRUST

We are honest, fair, transparent and accountable. We can be trusted to do what we say we will.



HIGH PERFORMANCE

We get the basics right and what we do, we do well. We manage our business efficiently.



RESPECT

We respect each other and our customers in a diverse, professional and supportive environment.



INNOVATE

We encourage curiosity, we are creative and seize opportunities to grow individually as an organisation and as an area.



VALUE

We value each others skills, experience and ideas and we celebrate our similarities, differences and environment.



EMPOWER

We believe in people, will listen, learn and trust them to make decisions. We help people to realise their ambitions.



Our priorities for West Northants

We want our Council to reflect the times we live in. We believe our future is bright and are taking this opportunity to create a fresh start for us, our area, our residents and our businesses.

The impact of COVID-19 is still being felt and we have new pressures facing us. We therefore are focussed on playing our part to create a sustainable recovery, and harnessing the strengths of our diverse West Northants people, businesses and places, to create an inclusive and productive area where everyone and every place can thrive.

We will use partnerships and collaboration within in our communities and with both public and private partners. We aim to use all infrastructure funding that connects people and places across our region, and we will bring to life the plans we have for the regeneration of

our towns and for building more affordable housing.

We aim to make a real difference to the lives of real people and will consider our whole area and whole population in our strategy and work to address climate change, education, health and well-being, work, economic development, and our rural and urban gems, simultaneously.

By doing this, everyone across West Northamptonshire can have the opportunity to reach their potential, whether they're growing up, getting on or growing old.

Progress against our priorities

We have included in this report, the latest quarterly progress updates on the delivery of our priorities as part of delivering our West Northamptonshire Council Corporate Plan. These are included within the section reports on the Directorate(s) that primarily contribute to the delivery of each priority.

Each summary update contains two main elements - a summary 'dashboard' of information and metrics, accompanied by a short narrative. All indicators are available in a detailed scorecard view at the end of the Annual Report.

Our 6 priorities

Green and Clean

Environment & Wellbeing

1

- Carbon neutral by 2030
- Climate summit in first few months
- Increased wildlife species & more trees
- Increased electric charging & energy efficiency
- Vibrant towns & villages
- High quality parks
- Accessible green space for all

Improved Life Chances

Health, Social Care & Families

2

- Healthy, safe and protected Children
- Increased aspirations in young people
- Investment in new schools & provision
- Adults supported to live independently
- Care provided for those that need it
- Reduced hospital stays and delays
- Joined up and local services with health
- Safe and secure accommodation for all

Connected Communities

Transport & Connectivity

3

- Improved road, rail and bus networks
- Completion of major roads projects
- Improved road quality
- Increased use of electric vehicles & charging points
- Enhanced broadband and mobile connectivity

Thriving Villages & Towns

Place shaping & Homes

4

- Regeneration of our core town centres
- Safer communities with less anti social behaviour
- Flourishing and supported small business
- Sustainable planning for growth
- Increased affordable housing & Council homes
- Raised standards of privately rented homes

Economic Development

Growth & Prosperity

5

- Published west strategic infrastructure plan
- Framework for long term economic growth
- Increased inward investment
- Building on our rich heritage
- Increased visitors to our attractions
- Infrastructure benefits and investment through our role in regional forums and plans

Robust Resource Management

Transparency & financial probity

6

- Council tax rises capped at £99 a year
- Stable finances and rainy day reserves
- Robust scrutiny of spending
- Open and transparent decision making
- Financial prudence underpinning long term decisions and plans
- Optimised debt management

Council spending 2021/22

▶ **Adults, Communities & Wellbeing 33.3%**

(looking after the elderly and vulnerable, supporting people's health and wellbeing)

▶ **Chief Executive Services 0.5%**

(Setting strategy and priorities, informing and engaging on what we do)

▶ **Children's Services 22.6%**

(caring for our young people)

▶ **Corporate Services 6.4%**

(Organisational support such as HR, technology and governance)

▶ **Finance Services 3.2%**

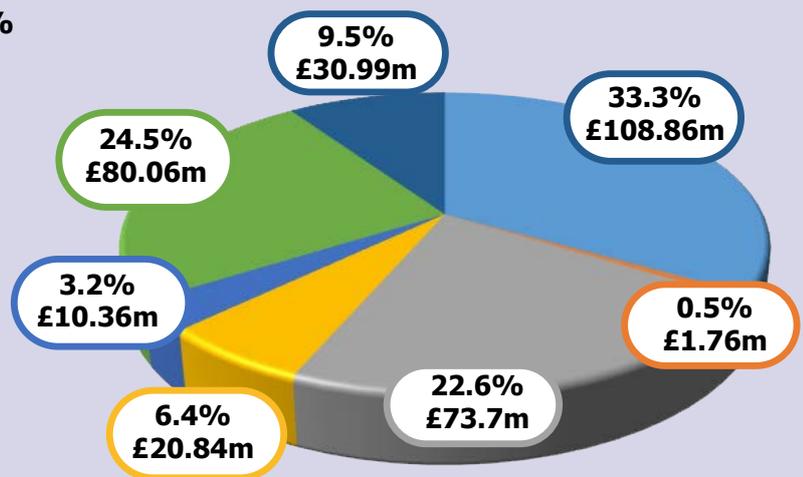
(Managing your money and resources, administering benefits to those in need)

▶ **Place and Economy 24.5%**

(From bin collections and highways to planning and economic development)

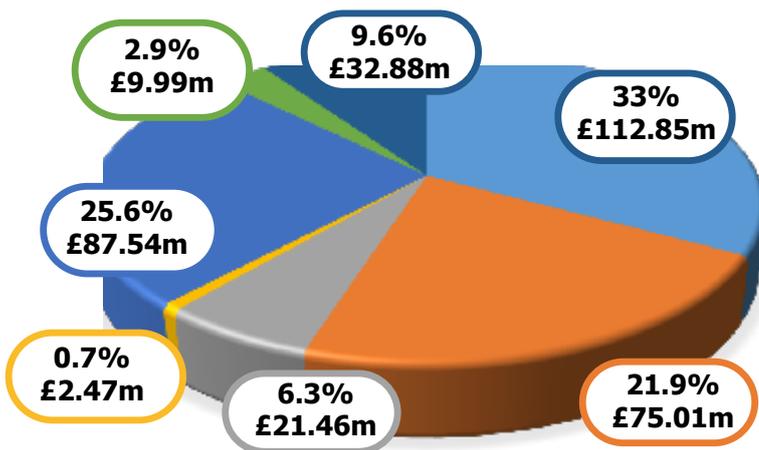
▶ **Central resources & financing 9.5%**

(Other budgets such as external audit fees, costs of servicing inherited borrowing, pension fund deficits and contingencies)



In 2021/22 West Northamptonshire Council received approximately £326.6m to deliver the day-to-day running of services. The money from the Council Tax made up around two-thirds of this total income, with the remainder coming from sources including government grants and part of the national business rates.

Council spending 2022/23



In 2022/23 West Northamptonshire Council will receive approximately £342.2m to deliver the day-to-day running of services. The money from your Council Tax makes up around two-thirds of this total income, with the remainder coming from sources including government grants and part of the national business rates.

▶ **Adults, Communities & Wellbeing 33%**

(looking after the elderly and vulnerable, supporting people's health and wellbeing)

▶ **Children's Services 21.9%**

(caring for our young people)

▶ **Corporate Services 6.3%**

(Organisational support such as HR, technology and governance)

▶ **Chief Executive Services 0.7%**

(Setting strategy and priorities, informing and engaging on what we do)

▶ **Place and Economy 25.6%**

(From bin collections and highways to planning and economic development)

▶ **Finance Services 2.9%**

(Managing your money and resources, administering benefits to those in need)

▶ **Central resources & financing 9.6%**

(Other budgets such as external audit fees, costs of servicing inherited borrowing, pension fund deficits and contingencies)

A look back at our first year

Green and Clean Environment & Wellbeing

1



- Shaping our new sustainability goals - to net zero the Council's own emissions by 2030 and those of residents and businesses by 2045
- Retaining Green Flag awards for our high-quality parks
- Developing Towcester Watermeadows and encouraging community tree planting
- £6.2m grant for community flood protection scheme for Collingtree area
- Installing new electric charge points across West Northants
- Crackdowns and prosecutions on environmental offenders, from fly-tipping and food safety to Trading Standards
- New litter charter and community litter-picking initiatives
- Grants for landowners to tackle fly tipping
- Successfully applying for DEFRA Air Quality funding
- Currently consulting on two public protection orders in the Daventry and South areas
- Developing and now implementing our fly tipping charter with investment in cameras across West Northants.
- Refurbishing and reopening Farthinghoe Recycling Centre.

Improved Life Chances Health, Social Care & Families

2



- Supporting and guiding residents and businesses through the covid pandemic
- Continuing the improvement journey in children's services as recognised by Ofsted
- Progressing plans to join up health and social care services
- Helping the most vulnerable including free school meals, funds to help households with food and energy bills, resettling Afghan families and beginning to co-ordinate the Government's Ukraine response locally.
- We distributed over £1.5m to residents suffering hardship over the winter period.
- Developing our Anti-Poverty Strategy with partner organisations and charities
- Continuing to build high quality council homes
- Council Tax reduction scheme and improving financial support for care leavers
- Allocating school places and proposals for a new secondary school Proposal for Moulton
- Staging a range of events to celebrate our communities, equality and diversity – including the Male Role Model & Inspirational Women awards
- Awareness and commemoration days and events –Pride, Armed Forces Day, International Day of Disabilities and Black History Month
- Developing the Armed Forces Covenant and establishing new armed forces hubs
- New customer experience strategy to improve how residents access our services
- Our One Stop Shop has remained open throughout the pandemic, ensuring frontline support was available for our vulnerable customers
- Providing accommodation and support for rough sleepers.

A look back at our first year

Connected Communities

3

Transport & Connectivity

- Embarking on a major roads improvement programme
- Starting on site constructing the North-west Relief Toad.
- Making plans and funding bids to improve bus services
- Developing a strong partnership with rail operators and England's Economic Heartland helping to develop a future West Northants rail strategy
- Extending Northampton's public e-scooter scheme
- Shaping and progressing our future highways maintenance service and transport infrastructure
- Development of an Active Travel Strategy looking across West Northants to ensure we have a pipeline a projects such as improved cycling links at Brackley and to our country parks as well as seeking improved ways to work and safe routes to schools.



- Appointment of a new HS2 warden to ensure the construction of the HS2 link is controlled.

Thriving Villages & Towns

4

Place shaping & Homes



- Localising planning arrangements and simplified, more effective planning enforcement
- Investing in a host of initiatives to make communities safer
- Distributing grant funding for community and voluntary groups
- Re-opening the refurbished and extended Northampton Museum and Art Gallery
- Showcasing our heritage with open days and supporting the Go Northamptonshire destination campaign
- Redevelopment of Avenue campus into 170 new homes
- Working with parishes on Neighbourhood development plans and conservation area appraisals
- Designated conservation areas for Spratton and Hellidon with neighbourhood plans agreed
- for Ashton, Clipston, Hackleton and Overstone with a Village Design Statement agreed for Deanshanger.
- Reopening the Museum representing the history of West Northants.

A look back at our first year

Economic Development

5

Growth & Prosperity

- Submitting a bid for city status for Northampton
- Securing £37m funding for regenerating Northampton town centre and Market Square
- Delivering Daventry's new cinema complex
- Redeveloping Brackley Library and delivering our award- winning 'For the Love of Books' reading challenge to over a thousand residents Consulting on shaping our Strategic Plan
- Supporting businesses and start-ups with funding, advice and support
- We provided financial support to thousands of local businesses across West Northants to help them through the pandemic, distributing grants totalling nearly £6m from government support schemes.



Robust Resource Management

6

Transparency & financial probity

- Capping Council Tax rises at £99 per year
- On target to deliver our first year on budget, and setting a balanced budget for the year ahead and making robust plans to tackle financial challenges
- Working to join up local services across the whole West Northants area, to make them better and more cost-effective
- Ensuring business continuity from the legacy councils; all staff and suppliers paid, no disruptions
- Holding our first ever unitary elections
- Staging hybrid Council meetings to improve access and convenience for our residents
- Reviewing our Constitution and improving the decision-making process
- Delivering the Annual canvass and 2021 Census
- Responding to major incidents including Health and Care and our major IT emergency
- Preparing for major incidents with robust procedures in place in the event of floods, storms and business continuity.
- The teams have answered an average of 27,000 calls a month, with an additional 9,000 enquiries per month being handled via email.





Finance

Overview

The first year for West Northamptonshire has been challenging but we have achieved a great deal, it has been incredibly rewarding and exciting.

Within the Finance Directorate we have attracted people who want to work here and make a difference; and who share the ethos and culture that we are working hard to demonstrate in line with our THRIVE values.

The financial position has settled down throughout the year and we are looking to stabilise that further in 2022-23 having had a very collaborative, robust and constructive budget setting process.

We are proud of what we have achieved, and if we continue in this manner with really excellent people working really hard to stabilise, improve and make services more efficient, we will continually improve the service offering to all residents, businesses, organisations and other stakeholders.

Our performance and achievements

The main areas of work, challenges and achievements within the Finance directorate are set out below:

Finance

- We delivered the first budget ever for West Northamptonshire Council for the financial year 2021-22.
- Although the budgets have taken some 'settling down' it appears that the financial out-turn position will be in line with the original budget set.
- We have implemented an interim staffing structure for the finance team for day one. Listened to staff comments as part of informal consultation and amended and accommodated requests where we could.
- A week before vesting day, ten sets of predecessor accounts were outstanding. Now there are only two sets awaiting final auditor approval (NBC 2020-21 and NCC 2020-21).
- Where they became apparent, we highlighted and 'cleaned up' erroneous budgets that were inherited.
- We carried out a robust budget setting process for 2022-23, including members and officer 'star chamber' sessions and 'budget robustness' sessions to test and check the robustness of the budget for 2022-23.
- We reviewed and re-organised all the reserves that were inherited by the authority.
- We got to grips with significant capital programmes that came across from predecessor authorities and brought them into one programme.
- We set up the member and officer Capital Assets Board which oversees and manages the GF capital programme referred to above.
- We supported the organisation on major projects to help to drive forward progress in other areas.

- We carried out a number of member training sessions that were well received.
- We developed and promoted internal staff into more senior roles when they became vacant, demonstrating a desire to nurture and develop our own people.

Revenues and Benefits

- We implemented a single in-house service to replace the multiple arrangements that were in place on vesting day whilst delivering a £200,000 annual saving in service costs as a result.
- In doing so, we wound up the lead authority (ex-LGSS) arrangements that were in place, closed down a TECKAL company and moved across staff that were already delivering the service in house.
- We have started to improve the level of performance and backlog of claims that were inherited from predecessor councils. The 'true' extent of the backlogs and performance inherited not being known until the services came under our direct control on 8 November.
- We are beginning to streamline systems and processes so we are more efficient and can provide a better level of service to the public.
- We successfully administered numerous multi-million pound grant schemes to businesses across West Northamptonshire.
- We successfully delivered the annual Council Tax and Business rates billing exercise which is a mammoth task.
- We gained support for an improved and more straight forward Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Internal Audit

- We made an early decision to cease the inefficient and overly complicated lead authority arrangements for Internal Audit bringing the service in house and dedicated to this Council.
- We appointed a new Chief Internal Auditor.

Procurement

- We brought together and quickly reorganised four separate teams into one team to give stability to staff as soon as possible.
- We strengthened contract management arrangements.
- We set up and drove forward good governance under the procurement board.
- We drove forward the adoption of an approach to Social Value.
- Our Head of Procurement – Gus De Silva - received national recognition at the UK GO Procurement Awards where he picked up the procurement “Individual Achievement of the Year” award.
- We are carried our first supplier events in May 2022.

Pensions

- We achieved a smooth and seamless change of administering authority to West Northamptonshire for a £3bn fund.
- We re-structured the service to provide greater stability and improve the service delivered.
- We increased cyber resilience through a new cyber strategy, data and asset mapping, supplier questionnaires and cyber training.
- We developed and agreed an Enhanced Responsible Investment Policy, alongside a Climate Action Plan and decarbonisation pathways.
- We provided member training which was well received on Socially Responsible Investments.
- We improved Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard accreditation illustrating improved customer journeys.



Service Team Highlights

The first year of the new council has been quite a journey but it feels as an organisation and as the finance directorate that we have made great strides and not made any major errors or encountered any significant problems that we have not been able to navigate around or deal with head on over the year.

Within the year-end discussions that have been held there have been many positive comments about the emerging culture of the organisation as one that is open, honest, supportive and not afraid to deal with difficult issues.

Service transformation has taken place in almost all areas of the Finance Directorate ranging from implementation of interim structures to wholesale change in two areas.

All service transformation has taken place to stabilise and improve services with financial savings also being delivered.

Major transformation has taken place within the Revenues and Benefits Service and the Internal Audit Service, as we have moved away from lead authority and Teckal company arrangements, to deliver a single target operating model.

Finance: Our Priorities 2022/23

The key priorities that we will deliver in 2022-23 are set out below:

1

Moving from an interim structure within the finance team to a permanent structure to give more certainty and stability to staff and learn from the experiences of the first year.

2

Preparing for the implementation of a new income management system to replace the existing systems. This is a major project.

3

Streamlining systems and processes generally across the directorate but particularly within the Revenue and Benefits service.

4

Automating processes wherever possible. There are basic manual processes being delivered that should be automated.

5

Streamlining of contracts wherever possible.

6

Reduction in outstanding levels of historic debt.

7

Improvement in performance levels across the directorate.

8

Consideration of an improved asset management system.

9

Developing Housing Revenue and Housing Capital reporting.

Finance: Looking Ahead

Within the next three years we will aim to:

1

Gain greater stability and certainty in the budgets set across the authority.

2

Obtain greater funding certainty from the Government in respect of issues such as the fair funding review and business rates re-baselining.

3

Achieve continual improved performance in all services.

4

Fully harmonise systems and processes so that they are operating with greater efficiency, which also delivers a better service to the residents and businesses in the area.

5

Achieve the timely production of West Northants Councils accounts and unqualified opinions on them.

6

Develop, nurture and grow our internal talent to aid with succession planning. A desire to keep our 'rising stars'.

7

Continue to establish West Northants as a place where people want to work because of the culture we are promoting, and because of the reputation we are building, so that we are an employer of choice.

8

Continue the transformation of services, not for the sake of transformation, but to make them more efficient and to improve the service delivery offer.

Financial and operational challenges 2022-23

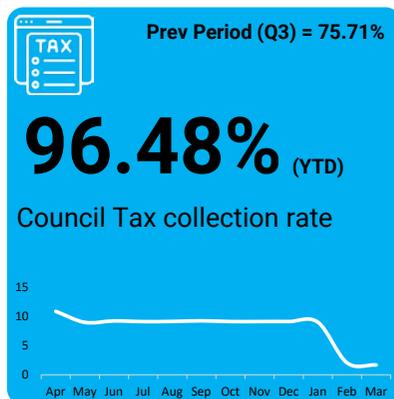
Within the Finance Directorate there are no specific concerns we are currently aware of in relation to the 2022-23 budget.

From a Corporate point of view there are concerns about:

- The current level of inflation being encountered across a range of supplies (utilities, building materials, cost of living increases etc.) outstripping the assumptions built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- Ongoing costs associated with dealing with the pandemic and the financial aftermath of the pandemic (for example car parking levels not returning to pre-pandemic levels) for which there is no specific government funding being received, and therefore may have to be contained within existing resources.
- Increase in the demand for services having a financial impact greater than that assumed in the budget.

Finance: 2021-22 Quarterly Performance Reporting

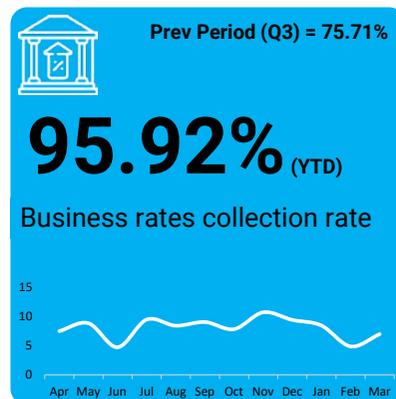
Priority 6 - Robust Resource Management - Finance



The Council Tax collection rates have, over the previous two years, been impacted by the covid pandemic particularly as a result of the hold that was placed on recovery action.

The end of year collection rate for 2021-2022 is 96.48% against a target of 98% (a monetary variance of £4.2m).

Despite the challenges during 21-22 this is an improvement on the end of year figure for 2020-2021 which was 96.17% against a target of 98%. Full recovery action is now taking place and will continue in 22-23.

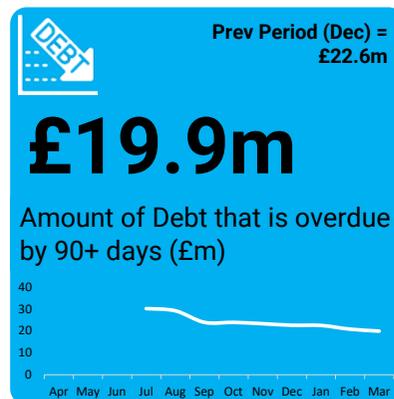


As well as the challenges presented by the covid pandemic the Revenues and Benefits team restructure took place in November 2021.

At the point of the restructure the collection rates were 55.64% against a target of 65.44% - a shortfall of £16.1m.

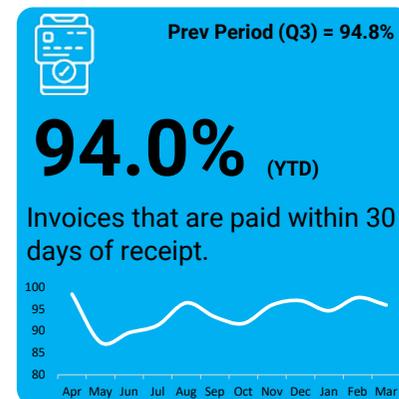
The end of year collection rate for 2021-2022 is 95.92% against a target of 98% which is a variance of 2.08% (£3.2m in monetary terms).

This is a considerable improvement from November 2021 and is an improvement on the end of year position for 2020-21 which was 95.62%.



There has been a reduction in the aged debt (90+ days) in each month since the last report, resulting in an overall reduction of £2.7m from £22.6m to £19.9m.

This continues the positive trajectory in the management of the councils aged debt, which has reduced by over £10m since the start of the year.



6,351 of the 6,618 invoices paid during Q4 were processed within 30 days resulting in an outturn of 96% for the quarter. It should be noted that the volume of invoices paid during Q4 was the highest quarterly total processed during 21/22.

Across 2021/22 a total of 24,679 of invoices were paid, with 23,205 paid within 30 days. This resulted in an annual outturn of 94%. Although annual performance narrowly missed its target (this indicator has a 95% monthly performance target) performance has generally improved during the second half of the year, with performance for four of the last five months exceeding target.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

Overview

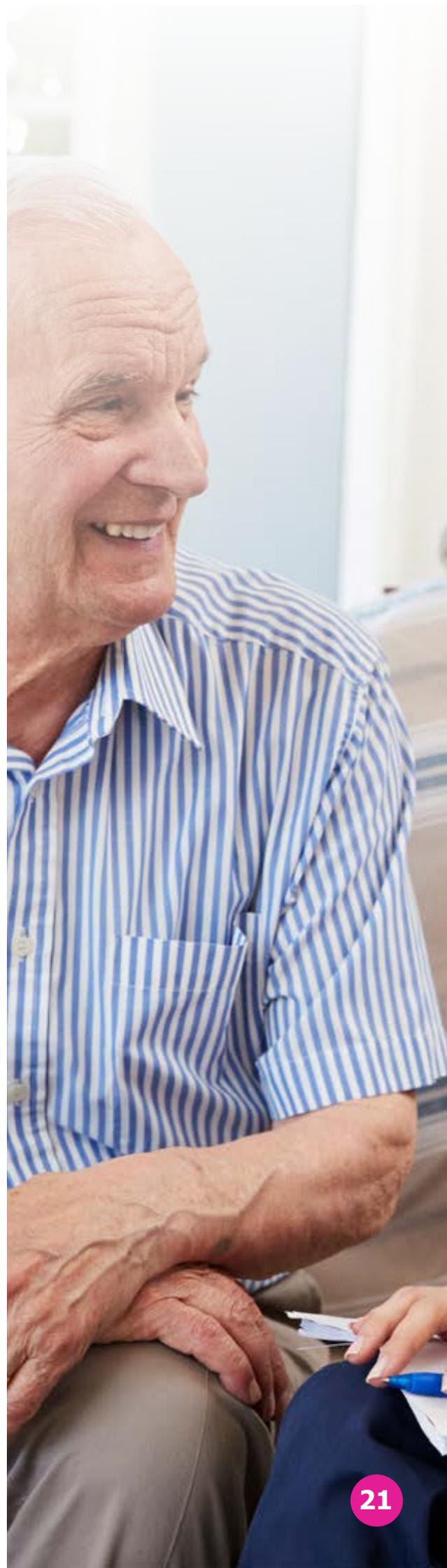
As with many of our teams in West Northants this year has also been about settling into our new organisation and making new links and reaching out to our partners.

We have developed new pathways to support discharges to home from hospital, and direct referrals from our hospital colleagues. We have weekly meetings to provide a more responsive service to those people in our local hospitals and who need major adaptations.

This has enabled us to not only meet the immediate needs of people to ensure they are discharged safely, but to also address their long-term needs which in turn reduces the risk of returning to hospital or requiring increased care support. We are proud of our progress as a service this year and hope to continue making improvements and being innovative with our wide skillset.

We are continuing to identify more ways to attract suitable candidates to work within the local authority, which will allow us to increase occupancy within the services. The local authority has employed a recruitment team to focus on filling vacancies.

The future looks bright for the people of West Northants. With the development of our new Integrated Care System, coupled with the new digital age, we are enabling more people to be supported at home with more advanced assistive technologies that support local people to live their best Life.



Our Performance and Achievements

Across the year we have focused on delivering the best outcomes for local people. Three significant areas of work highlighted here, involved staff from different teams coming together to demonstrate the values and behaviours which we as new Council, aspire to deliver in everything we do.

Omicron Major Incident

During the major incident in January 2022 across West Northamptonshire, we put measures in place and re-deployed staff so that we were able to keep people safe. Intense support was provided to the independent sector enabling us to intervene prior to provider failure, helping us to maintain uninterrupted service delivery to our most vulnerable residents. Significant support was provided across the hospital settings to create capacity for ongoing clinical treatment in the acute settings.

Social Care Remembrance Day

West Northamptonshire Council worked with regional partners (skills for care) and the independent sector to host an event on March 17th, 2022, that recognised the efforts of social care and to remember those front-line carers who lost their lives during the pandemic. The event was held at Abington Park and was a fitting tribute to allow residents across Northamptonshire to pay their respects. The event was attended by over 200 children and adults and will become an annual event for the Council.

Afghan Resettlement

We supported with the arrival and provision of wrap-around care for 379 Afghans. Of this, we have so far supported 138 to move on, with the majority moving to permanent accommodation.

Comprehensive wrap-around care has been provided to the guests working with partners to include:

- Public Health – support with weekly COVID testing and outbreaks, vaccinations, and blood screening.
- CCG – working with the GPs to support local registrations.
- NGH – Midwives visiting the hotels regularly.
- NHFT – weekly mental health sessions during the first few months, and 0-19 team and sexual health team visiting weekly.
- Dentists – initial visit to the hotels to complete check of all guests – referrals made to local practices for urgent work.
- Education – arranged tutors in the hotels initially – leading to school placements – all children are in school.
- Adult Learning – ESOL classes – weekly in the hotel and cultural awareness sessions weekly also.
- DWP – visiting the hotel weekly during the first few months and when we receive new arrivals to ensure all have access to full benefit entitlement.

The Salvation Army and British Red Cross together with several community and voluntary organisations supported with immediate needs such as clothing and essential items etc.



Service Team Highlights

Adult Services

- The Adult Services teams have settled into their community bases with only 2 now remaining at Angel Square, and we are continuing to pursue options to enable them to also move. Whilst it's taken longer than anticipated, Community Hub 2 will move to their newly renovated hub at the Drayton Centre in April. This will provide the opportunity for Adult Social Care, Housing and police colleagues to be located in the same building that is at the heart of the community. Links and relationships are being made with organisations in the community and further work is planned over the next year to improve on these and enhance the community work that has started.
- The social care Hospital team moved from NGH and are now based in the community completing assessments after people have been discharged. This has been a momentous change and one that the team has taken in its stride. The Care home Review team has worked closely with Safeguarding and Quality colleagues to support independent providers, and delays for people whose assets have reached the threshold has reduced dramatically.
- Since re-structuring in October 2020, the teams have continued to form their new identities as part of West Northants Council and are embedding the 3 conversations model as their new way of working. This is despite the challenges they are facing with increased demands and vacancies due to the difficulties in recruiting to the sector. The new structures have identified where pathways are not working as streamlined as planned, and a review of the TOM is going to take place with the teams to identify how improvements can be made and to ensure the teams are structured proportionately to match the demand in each area. Acknowledging that there also needs to be a focus over the next year on improving scheduled review activity and progression work with individuals.
- This year Adult Services have received a total of 9,169 requests for support and advice. On average the Adult Services social work and assessment teams have 5,900 people allocated to them at any one time, with 2,195 having active involvement from an allocated worker.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

- Since April 2021, the Adult Services teams have completed:
 - 6,861 Conversation 1s
 - 3,583 Conversations 2s
 - 1,904 Conversation 3s
 - 3,778 Reviews
- There have been countless examples of where staff have supported people to achieve improved outcomes and an improved quality of life.
- Since becoming WNC, all Adult Services' policies, guidance and procedures have been reviewed and organised more clearly on the intranet, including a new induction pack for staff.
- The system Learning Disability three year strategy has been written, and there are a number of workstreams now in place to support the priorities and aims contained within, which link to the community and neighbourhood work.
- The Adult Services staff have supported in a number of cases where there has been quality or safeguarding concerns regarding independent providers. Whilst this is not positive in itself, it is positive that the concerns were identified, and work was completed to ensure the people who were supported were safe. It also evidenced the commitment of our staff who worked extremely hard, including volunteering out of hours.
- This year links have been made with several organisations due to being part of the Kings College University Communities of Practice "Opening the 'too difficult box': strengthening Adult Safeguarding responses to homelessness and self-neglect". This was in part because of a Safeguarding Adult Review, and as the government wanted to identify a consistent plan as to how all Local Authority's work with regard to Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH) and Safeguarding.
- This led on to groups being set up, consisting of Adult Social Care, Housing, Voluntary organisations, and Probation looking at how we can all work together to ensure we provide some consistency for MEH and safeguarding. The aim is to remove thinking by professionals and others

such as "they are too difficult to engage with" or "they have said no and can make an unwise decision". These groups identified that Adult Risk Management (ARM) was not always being considered and tools not being utilised. As a result, ARM Training has been created and presented on a large scale to numerous organisations and internal staff. This has also developed further connections and relationships with NGH, NHFT, Carers Trust, Age UK, Voice, Probation, Housing, Hope, Trinity Haarp and this will continue. This has led to other partners recognising their responsibility and duty to take the lead with ARM and ensure safeguarding is everyone responsibility.

- Learning and development for MEH and Safeguarding is now being produced for all organisations to access, and this is again being created collaboratively with various partners. This is to be launched at a Homeless and Safeguarding Event on April 11th at the Guildhall. There will also be various organisations present talking about what they do and how they support Homeless People.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing Service

Assisted Technology Team (AT)/ Call Care

This team provides equipment and technology responses enabling people to remain safe and independent within their own homes.

Throughout the pandemic and following it, the team increased the number of referrals from the previous year. They exceeded their targets and installed over 1000 pieces of equipment across Northamptonshire, providing support to over 4000 people on a regular basis.



Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

This team provides equipment and technology responses enabling people to remain safe and independent within their own homes.

Throughout the pandemic and following it, the team increased the number of referrals from the previous year. They exceeded their targets and installed over 1000 pieces of equipment across Northamptonshire, providing support to over 4000 people on a regular basis.

In partnership with Health, we will be providing telehealth to customers in the community through a proactive approach, providing customers/patients with equipment and access to clinical advice to manage their conditions at home, and increasing their levels of independence.

We have transferred 750 of our targeted 1500 Lifeline customers to Call Care. Call Care is a West Northants internal control room, TSA accredited, with an enormous amount of knowledge across the team. The work is expected to be completed in May 22.

The central call hub will support this and will be provided by the council through the Call Care team and they will be supported by clinical staff from NHFT.

Call Care

Call Care is a West Northants internal control room, TSA accredited, with an enormous amount of knowledge across the team Call Care that provides a response service to customers who use life-lines in the community. During the last year they have responded to 68,000 calls. Over the last 6 months they have been working hard to transfer NCC lifeline customers over to their service so. The transfer of around 1500 customer is nearly complete.

The services annual survey conducted in March/April 2022 shows a high level of customer satisfaction:-

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

Call Care Annual Survey for Private Lifelines

Service quality	Speed of response	Staff helpful?	Good value?
96%	93%	93%	96%

The team also provide the majority of the councils out of hours call support and the activity over the last year has been:-

Call Care out of hours service April 2021 - January 2022 (10 months data)

Approx yearly calls of which were:	17,220
Repairs	3,656
Homeless	600
EDT	10,313
Remaining calls can vary from Highways, car parks, stray dogs, EH to parks and more	

We have transferred 750 of our targeted 1,500 Lifeline customers to Call Care. Call Care is a West Northants internal control room, TSA accredited, with an enormous amount of knowledge across the team. The work is expected to be completed in May 2022.

Visual Impairment Service

We have supported over 256 people across the county with all aspects of life that a visual impairment can have an impact on. The business support team have been busy streamlining and uploading over 5,427 paper Certificates of Vision Impairment (CVI) to Eclipse, our WNC internal electronic information system.

This previously formed the Visual Impairment Register. This piece of work has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the Visual Impairment Team.

Combined with the completion of a prompt and timely registration process, we can offer the person coming to terms with a newly registered vision impairment a much slicker and efficient service.

Therapy Teams

The Therapy Teams have worked hard on reducing the waiting times for people living in West Northants. The team has developed an internal referral hub to serve our Social Care Hubs with a responsive service, allocating cases to the team on a weekly basis.

When West Northants Council came into existence in April 2021, the waiting list was 26 weeks for external referrals for traditional occupational therapy. By the end of March 2022, the waiting list will be around 4-6 weeks, with 94% of people being seen within a 6-week period.

The Specialist Moving and Handling Team have also worked hard on reducing the waiting time and becoming more responsive. On 1st April 2021 people were waiting around 18 weeks for an assessment, today this stands at 2 weeks for the assessment, with many people receiving an almost immediate response to moving and handling issues, which can be quite serious and cause immense pressure on families and carers.

All these efforts are massive achievements by the Therapy Teams, an achievement to celebrate. Based on last month's figures we have seen outcomes such as, 700 people receiving equipment to meet their immediate needs, 330 people receiving minor adaptations to improve their safety and independence at home, and 520 people having been recommended major adaptations to meet long-term needs.



Internal Provider Services

Our five long term care homes have managed to continue to provide support to some of our most vulnerable residents throughout last year. This has involved an evolving requirement to manage infection and control measure and keep people safe whilst really struggling to recruit staff.

These services continue to support demand for long term support for people living in West Northants. The total occupancy rate across our Care Homes is 77%. This is a noted reduction in occupancy due to the pandemic however we continue to receive referrals which we anticipate will increase over next 6 months.

The Specialist Support Younger Adults service offers 941.5 support hours per week. The West team are supporting customers at Eleanor Lodge and have increased occupancy over the last year. The service was rated GOOD by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in March 2022.

Shared Lives

57 people received long term support through our Shared lives scheme with a further 49 people having received short-term respite. The service is rated outstanding with the CQC and currently has three new carers going through the recruitment process, which will further increase our offer locally.

Day Services

The total number of customers being supported by our Day services is 102 across four locations. The number of customers being supported has remained consistent over the last year, despite the services having to diversify to comply with infection control requirements. The number of places has increased slightly within the last year totalling 323 per week. We have also concluded the disaggregation of our LIVE service which will offer more choice and control for West Northants Adults with a learning disability.

Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Team has successfully implemented a revised operating model and ways of working from April 2021. The changes have supported a more streamlined front door process, that has in turn supported a more robust triage process, and the ability to make much more informed and timely decisions. Any concerns received by the team are now triaged within 24 hours and a decision is made on the next steps in the Safeguarding process.

The Safeguarding Team has been embedding the new ways of working, changes to Eclipse and maintaining business as usual throughout the pandemic without compromising our response to safeguarding.

Building good communication links with key partners has resulted in some excellent partnership working. This has resulted in improvements in the identification of risks and mitigations to address, ensuring learning outcomes are embedded and sustained.

Assurance

The Assurance Team have been key to ensuring the administrative processes support our timely responses to safeguarding, requests from Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests and service specific functions such as Protection of Property.

Commissioning and Performance Service

Covid 19 Vaccinations

Throughout the year, West Northamptonshire Council played a significant role in the roll-out of the vaccination programme across Northamptonshire. The Council provided noteworthy support to get care home residents and staff vaccinated as quickly as possible, and by June 2021, 98% of all care home residents had been fully vaccinated. By September 2021, 96% of all care homes staff had received a vaccination. The authority continued to support the programme including Winter and Spring boosters for care home residents.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund

In December 2022, West Northamptonshire Council announced their Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund. This was an offer of up to £600 to all frontline care staff who were delivering CQC Regulated Activity up to 31st March 2022, or to new recruits coming into the care sector. The scheme was concluded successfully and generated 376 new recruits into the care sector, at a time when the sector was under tremendous pressure to meet demand.



Government Covid Grants

During 2021/22, there were several grants issued to support the care sector across Northamptonshire totalling £12.5m. The Council administered all these grants to enable the care sector to have additional funding to be able to pay for Infection Control measures to help to keep people safe.

Quality Monitoring

During the pandemic, professional visits into care settings were suspended and this meant that our staff who monitored care quality were unable to undertake their duties. When visiting restrictions were lifted, there was a significant backlog of care providers who needed a full monitoring visit. The Quality Team has worked exceptionally hard to catch up on backlogs this year and identified some significant concerns with care delivery along the way. These concerns have all been managed effectively, and people have been kept safe.

We have provided intense support to those care providers who have been struggling to maintain adequate performance and this has been very well received across our market. We have finished the year with 98% of all working age adult providers being monitored, and 48% of all older people's providers being monitored, with plans in place to hit 100% in the next year.

Disaggregation

Disaggregation has been particularly complex for the Commissioning and Performance services due to the contractual and transactional nature of their work. The staff have battled through this to set up robust new relationships with partner organisation to ensure effective contract management, as well as to navigate new arrangements relating to legacy financial matters. At the same time, completely new teams were formed to undertake roles specific to West Northamptonshire; these team have developed well over the year and are effective and delivering to good levels.

Direct Payments Monitoring

The Direct Payments Team went above and beyond this year to clear significant legacy backlogs in returns monitoring. This generated £1.5m against a savings target of £750k, so doubling Council revenue.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

Specialist Builds

Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) have worked with the Council to create two purpose-built projects and one refurbishment project for adults with social care needs:

- **Oak Tree Rise** - developed in partnership with Northampton Partnership homes to provide specialist accommodation for people who have complex support requirements due to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The facility was launched April 2021 and has eight purpose-built bungalows that can meet high level needs. The scheme has largely been a success and has meant that we have been able to secure permanent homes for people who have struggled to settle into accommodation-based support services in the past. There are currently six residents residing at Oak Tree Rise.
- **Moray Lodge** - developed in partnership with Northampton Partnership Homes and opened in October 2021. The scheme was designed to support people who have Mental Health concerns (ten flats) as well as people who have an acquired brain injury or a physical disability (ten flats). The scheme was designed as a step-down facility to prevent people from having to access their support via a traditional care home package. The scheme has been successful, and the current occupancy is nineteen residents, with one vacant property.

Housing and Communities Service

The West Northants Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board has been established and a Needs Assessment completed to identify gaps in support; especially for those who are in specialist domestic abuse accommodation, having left an abusive relationship. We have produced a Domestic Abuse Strategy to meet our statutory duties in relation to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

We have achieved the following:

- Through our 16 days partnership group we delivered our 16 Days of activism annual campaign which included a 'Reclaim the Night' march and a candle-lit vigil at All Saints. We also ran a number of pop-up drop in events with Domestic Abuse (DA) and Sexual Violence (SV) organisations, in-person and virtual discussion events and a social media campaign was developed and delivered through WNC social media channels to raise awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence and to educate and promote the local and national support services.
- Successfully delivered our Hate Crime Week of Action, including engagement stands in high footfall areas in Northampton and Daventry, ward visits from Northampton Partnership Homes and the Northampton Partnership Homes Daphne bus. Information was sent to schools to support them to take part in a hate crime activity. Third Party Reporting line for victims of Hate Crime was commissioned to Stop Hate UK.
- The Partnership tackled disability hate crime which was a main topic during the Disabled People's Forum virtual event for International Day of People with Disabilities on 4 December. Speakers from Police Hate Crime and Voice came together to educate viewers around hate crime and hate incidents and encourage them to file reports if they experienced any.
- A virtual 'I'm Still Me' LGBTQ conference was delivered with over sixty school staff signing up to take part in the event.
- A virtual International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBiT) event was delivered via West Northants Council social media channels.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

- We delivered and supported community engagement events, bringing our communities together, including Holocaust Memorial Day, International Women's Day, Srebrenica, International Youth Day, International Men's Day, and World Aids Day.
- We continue target hardening properties of vulnerable residents that have been victims of anti-social behaviour, hate crime or domestic abuse.
- We have promoted and supported Police with ten knife amnesty events.
- The Council was successful in the Safer Streets bid for Home Office funding, bringing £513k into Northampton town centre specifically to improve the safety of Women and Girls.
- The funding has supported twenty specific projects, including:
 - £291,488 on Environmental improvements for Closed Circuit Tele Video (CCTV) coverage of the Racecourse, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) in the car park, improved lighting, fencing, trimming of shrubbery and crown lifting.
 - £112,000 on Capable Guardianship including University of Northampton student safety schemes, Park Safety Ranger to cover the two parks and Park Watch schemes.
 - £109,722 on Education & Awareness for producing security packs for students and the community, bystander programmes delivered by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, various community engagement events, drama production and campaign materials targeted at students.
- Through the funding secured from the Home Office's Trusted Relationships Fund, Free2Talk continued to deliver youth services in four of our priority neighbourhood areas, increasing the support available to the town's most vulnerable young people. Delivering interventions and mentoring to young people most at risk of getting involved in knife crime and anti-social behaviour.
- We supported Northants Police with bike marking events at the University and Northampton General Hospital and Op Push in Northampton town centre, where officers stopped cyclists on Abington Street, to give words of advice and educate.



Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

- A Public Spaces Protection Order was approved enabling us to install gates at Jeyes Jetty and Dunster Street. These have blocked off the alleyways, disabling anti-social behaviour and criminal activity that was taking place.
- Two new CCTV cameras were installed at anti-social behaviour (ASB) hotspots in Towcester. These are now linked back to the control room.
- We achieved Purple Flag re-accreditation scheme for Northampton Town Centre.
- We have jointly funded with the Office of the Police and Fire Crime Commissioner, Knife arch and additional policing resources deploying them during the night-time economy during December 2021.

We continue to work at a neighbourhood level, responding as a partnership to neighbourhood issues and critical incidents, focused on knife crime and gangs, youth violence and anti-social behaviour. In our priority areas we have developed action plans, established partnerships with schools and there is an identified focus on contextual safeguarding. Some of the activity delivered through these groups include:

- 15 partnership engagement events, working with Northampton Partnership Homes and Northamptonshire Police held.
- 18 bike marking events held, these have involved the distribution of bicycle crime prevention packs to residents and the marking of several 100's of bikes.
- Specific engagement work in Blackthorn/Maidencastle/Goldings/Rectory Farm to encourage reporting which has resulted in an increase of almost 42% in anonymous reporting to Crimestoppers.
- Contextual safeguarding work with primary schools. A 'reporting leaflet' developed for the area is now being used in other neighbourhood priority areas.
- A youth project has been set up in Thorplands and following consultation with the community, basketball is being delivered by sports coaches and supported by youth workers. Partnership working is proving successful and being used as a model of good practice to run in other areas.

- In Daventry, Operation Unite is addressing persistent anti-social behaviour from a large group of young people, which included disruption of and damage to retail premises. Criminal charges have been brought against some individuals and work is ongoing to issue (ABCs) and Community Protection Notices (CPNs) to others. In addition to enforcement measures, partners are looking at a range of diversionary activities. We have begun working with Designated Safeguarding Leads in Daventry's schools to identify individuals in need of early intervention.
- The Rural Action Group has continued to meet virtually. Although lockdown has curtailed planned activities, the new Beat buses have been well received and we are currently looking at a revised Action plan for rural crime.
- The annual 'Comfort and Joy' campaign provided gifts and treats to everybody in Refuge and many others besides, through the generosity of members of the public and officers alike.
- Our anti-social behaviour officers, working with the Police have issued more than one hundred and fifty warning letters, Community Protection Notices, Criminal Behaviour Orders, and injunctions to tackle offenders and support victims of cuckooing, anti-social behaviour, youth violence and theft.
- The production of an Anti-Poverty Strategy and supported the establishment of a Poverty Truth Commission in West Northamptonshire.

Private Sector Housing and Home Adaptations

Private Sector Housing

- We continued to undertake visits to support tenants experiencing poor housing conditions, acting where necessary to secure improvements to their housing conditions.
- We intervened with tenants who were facing illegal eviction or harassment from their landlord, taking action to prevent the illegal eviction, and seeking to secure security of tenure for private rented sector tenants' conditions.
- We took formal action through the Magistrates Court against those landlords who operate outside of the legal framework.
- We took formal action through the issue of financial penalty notices against those landlords who have operated outside of the legal framework.
- We licensed and monitored standards in over 1200 houses in multiple occupation across West Northamptonshire.
- We implemented a new policy to ensure consistency of approach to private sector housing across West Northamptonshire.

Home Adaptations

- We have provided over £2m of investment in owner occupied and private rented properties to support disabled residents to continue to live safely in their homes. This has included the provision of stair lifts, level access bathrooms, hoists, and extensions providing ground floor bedroom and bathroom facilities.
- We determined 100% of home adaption grant applications within the statutory six-month timeframe.
- We implemented a new policy to ensure consistency, and to bring a range of new discretionary housing assistance grants which has provided additional support and ensured consistency for residents across West Northamptonshire.

Sport and Leisure

- The team have reviewed all leisure contracts across our three leisure operators to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet WNC expectations. Work has been completed to extend Moulton Leisure Centre contract to come in line with Daventry LC and Sports Park (March 2026) all under the portfolio of SLM Everyone Active. The council owned leisure centres are seeing a positive recovery from Covid with swimming lessons in particular reaching above pre-Covid levels by the end of March 2022.
- We have spent time establishing relationships with key National Governing Bodies of Sport to ensure West Northants benefits from high profile NGB programmes and major sporting opportunities. NGB's include the FA, Football Foundation, Lawn Tennis Association, British Cycling. Working with local professional sports clubs including
- Northampton Saints and Northants Cricket Club to support sporting priorities and strategy development. Building on this the Sport & Active Lives Service has set up a Football Facilities Working Group to deliver on the councils' commitment to improve grass roots football through playing pitch improvements and facility development.
- We have also submitted successful bids and supporting key partners to be a host for international tournaments for women's rugby and men's hockey world cups in 2025 and 2026 respectively. We are currently awaiting confirmation from these sport's national governing bodies to confirm the UK as host country.
- In addition, we have supported leisure facility development by providing expertise to projects including Weston Favell Wellbeing Hub and Northampton Bike Park.

Town and Parish Councils

- Over the last couple of months, we have been completing a review of the different ways we interact with town and parish councils across West Northamptonshire with a view to creating a forward plan to keep parishes informed and

strengthen the way our authorities work together to provide local services.

- Discussions with clerks are under way to understand what works well and what could be improved in the interactions between West Northants and parish councils across our three broad locality areas of Daventry, Northampton, and South Northants. The results will be used to help us shape how we work with parish councils in the future, including our approach to parish forums. The aim is to identify and replicate areas of best practice that are aiding how we collaborate to provide local services and address any inconsistencies or challenges that are slowing preventing collaborative working.
- A set of recommendations will be presented to the Executive Leadership Team in due course, which will outline how we can sustain and improve our working relationship with parish councils as we look to build a comprehensive engagement framework to help colleagues make best use of partnership working.

Library Services

- The Library Service achieved a full post-lockdown recovery of services as soon as possible with visits and income increasing month on month from August 2021.
- A new partnership brokered with Barclays bank means customers now have access to banking services at Weston Favell, Daventry, and Towcester where physical banks have closed. This is bringing in an additional £25k income for the service in space hire.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing



- A successful new partnership with DWP has seen the “Youth Hub” launch at Central Library providing access to one-to-one support, workshops, mental health support and job fairs for young people 18 – 26 years old seeking employment. Services can be accessed 9 – 5 Monday to Friday at the library and so far. A Kickstarter event on February 10th saw 62 young people attend 145 mini-interviews with 20 different local employers.
- Completion of £270k S106 funded project enabled us to completely refurbish Brackley library and convert former storage space into a new hireable community hall facility. The refurbished library was officially re-opened in September.
- Partnership working with Adult Learning has led to the funding of refurbishment and installation of smart screens for teaching at Weston Favell Library, Brackley Library and East Hunsbury Library to create learner friendly spaces for our customers.
- Further progress was made on the library transformation programme with Abington Library and Wootton Library successfully transferring to become community managed. Following the withdrawal of offers to community manage the two remaining libraries at St James and Kingsthorpe, work is well underway to find alternative arrangements for these libraries.
- The Business and IP Centre Northamptonshire has had another successful year including the administration of 19 grants to small businesses in Northamptonshire, the fitting out and launch of 2 new local BIPC local service points at Brixworth library and Towcester Library via DCMS funding and the launch of a new website.

Homelessness and Housing Solutions

- The teams have formed a positive collaboration to meet the needs of our customers as we work to align as one service, this includes:
- Co-produced (with NCT & NNC) Care Leavers Protocol in final consultation.
- Co-produced Care leavers Transitions Accommodation Panel set up and due to commence 21st April 2022.
- Co-produced (with NCT & NNC) 16/17-year-old protocol in final consultation.
- A new Homeless Prevention Network (HPN) has been developed with the first meeting having taken place on 28th January to bring together all voluntary and statutory partners in the Daventry area. These meetings will now run consecutively every six weeks, with our HPN in the South Northants area.
- 'Duty to Refer' training has been delivered to diverse partners via National Safeguarding Adults Week, and continue to Northampton Carers, and Library Managers across the West to encourage engagement from all our partners so that we can intervene at the earliest opportunity to prevent homelessness.
- Discretionary Winter Provision was provided to keep rough sleepers safe and provided wrap around support throughout the winter period from December 21 to 31st March 22. Our Street Services Team successfully delivered Housing-led solutions and rapid rehousing pathways to meet the needs of 40 rough sleepers, to help prevent them from returning to the streets. This included the provision of an on-site Adult Social worker which significantly helped rough sleepers with complex issues including mental health and institutional care.
- Our Rough Sleeper Initiative 22/25 bid was submitted with a self-assessment to identify gaps and attract funding to fill those gaps. Alignment was achieved of the SWEP protocol across all three areas including smooth operating procedures for triggering the protocol.
- We have supported Operation Uncanny, an innovative measure set up by the Police to tackle prostitution in residential areas. WNC Street Services Team, Northampton Homeless Treatment Team and NAASH provided partnership advice and support for this operation.
- We have had Key involvement in the Northampton's Women at Risk MDT initiative which was developed by DWP to provide a holistic approach to helping women at risk of involvement in sex work or county lines criminal behaviour through exploitation in Northampton, whose needs could not be met without a multi-agency approach.
- We have brought together the 3 former district and borough areas to produce a combined annual rough sleeper count which was previously administered using different methodology.
- We are drafting a submission of the Ending Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan which outlines our plan to contribute to preventing single homelessness and ending rough sleeping with a target to reduce our annual rough sleeping snapshot figure to 9.
- 628 households had their homelessness prevented.
- 572 households had their homelessness relieved.

Northampton Partnership Homes

A significant amount of the Councils Housing duties, responsibilities and stock are led and managed through its 'Almo' Northampton Partnership homes. The Directorate has invested significant capacity in building a relationship with NPH that enables both the Council and NPH to deliver its aspiration around Housing for local people. Achievements to date include;

- 61 new properties in 2021-22 (includes 29 supported housing)
 - Housing Management Team won the Chartered Institute of Housing's 'Housing Heroes Awards'
 - Achieved Housemarks ASB accreditation with the highest attainment level
 - Accredited as an outstanding housing support provider for the 3rd year running by EROSH
 - In 2021-22 51 survivors of Domestic were supported to ensure they were able to live free from further harm.
 - Supported tenants to access £246,000 benefit payments
 - 341 tenants engaged in support with 99% still successfully sustaining their tenancy.
 - Offered 658 new tenants in 21-22.
 - Developed a pre-tenancy programme to support vulnerable applicants as they transition to manage their own tenancy.
 - Reviewed the model offered to tenants in older persons housing.
 - New customer charter and service standards launched.
 - Developed our resident involvement offer and expanded volunteers to support the work of the CIC.
 - Employed 24 apprentices
 - Introduced a new Fire Risk Assessment tool with was shortlisted for a national housing industry award.
 - Launched the CIC community paint shop and handy man service.
- Led on Community events such as litter picking with WNC, Litter wombles and Veolia.
 - NPH continue to be a successful inward investor on behalf of WNC to increase house building opportunities and have secured £23.8m to date:
 - £1.8m NHS funding secured to deliver two supported housing schemes
 - £9m funding from BEIS for decarbonisation works
 - £1.4m Homes England funding for supported housing
 - £6.2m Homes England funding for general needs housing
 - £1.4m Homes England funding for Next Steps Accommodation for rough sleepers (NSAP)
 - £550k Homes England funding for Rough Sleepers Accommodation project (RSAP)
 - £450k One Public Estate (Cabinet Office) Brownfield Release funding.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

Public Health

Health Inequalities

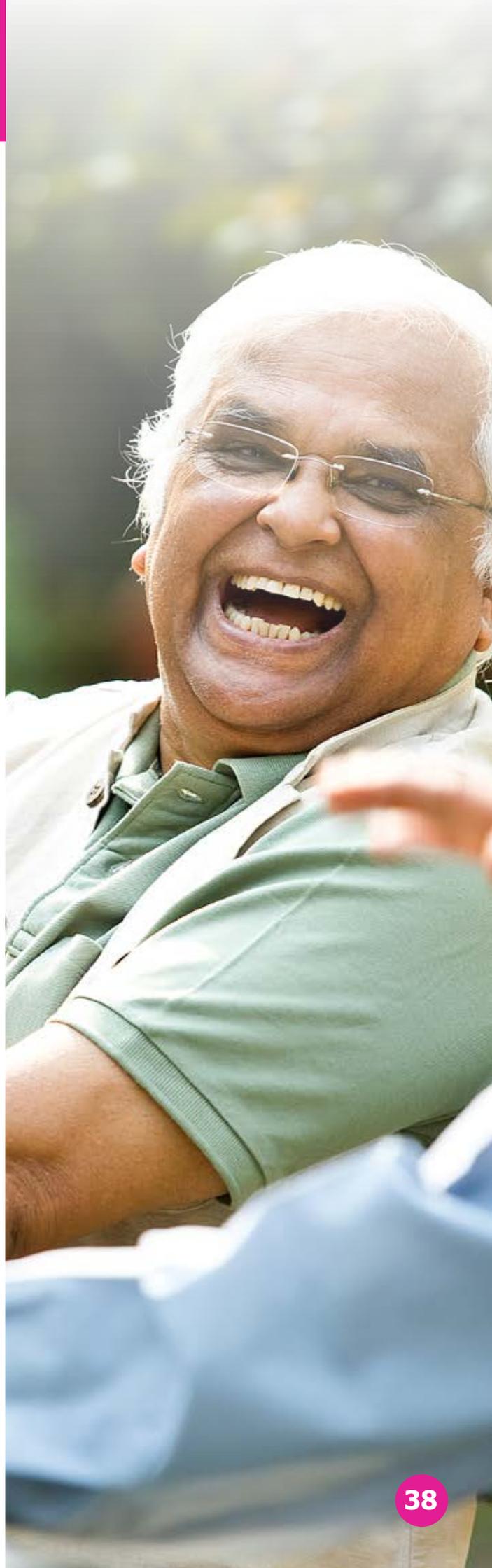
Addressing health inequalities is at the heart of public health work and as such the Directors of Public Health have been asked to lead on the development of the Integrated Care System's Health Inequalities Plan which sets out how we are going to work together as a system to understand and address inequalities. The plan will include principles that all organisations need to sign up to alongside specific priorities for action and will be published in July 2022, but regularly updated to reflect the place and neighbourhood priorities as they form. To support organisations to implement the principles Public Health have produced a health inequalities toolkit which can be accessed at [Health inequalities - Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership](#).

Well Northamptonshire Programme

In 2022 the Well Northamptonshire Programme was launched, which works with communities who are most at risk of health inequalities. Three Community Development Workers are working in and around Northampton and with inclusion health groups to understand what impacts their health and wellbeing and to work with them to address their needs. Empowering communities is central to this programme, which is why a participatory budgeting model is being used. The Community Development Workers will be able to put in place interventions to address local need, designed in partnership with communities, this will be launched later this year.

Health Protection

The team have continued to work hard to support the required response to the Covid Pandemic. This has been achieved alongside many other colleagues and partners across the system in Northamptonshire. Plans are underway to move into more of a recovery phase in line with changing government guidance. A great deal has been learned as part of the response and the recovery plan will embed this into ongoing strengthening of Health Protection, targeting of our most vulnerable groups and building on wider community engagement.



Holiday and Activities Food Programme

Holiday and Activities Food Programme

The Holiday and Activities food program also known as HAF is primarily for children and young people eligible for free school meals. Funding was allocated totalling £2 million to coordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities. Public health managed the delivery of the HAF programmes for the 3 school terms, Easter, Summer, and Winter 2021. They were free to attend and included 1 free meal during the day and access to enriched activities, encouraging physical activity, healthier eating, and reduced isolation. The summer evaluation reported outputs were:

- 18,000 child sessions attended,
- 3,000 individual young people attended,
- 50+ providers over a 6-week period.

Outcomes were:

- Eating more healthily over the holidays
- Increased levels of Physical Activity
- Reduced isolation

The program has been extended for a further 3 years and the Easter program is currently running across West and North Northamptonshire, delivered by Nsport.

Healthy Start Vitamins

In late 2021 Public health established a new online postal service to increase accessibility to the Healthy Start Vitamins for eligible pregnant women and children under 5. This service is managed by Strong Start and it has the potential to increase the uptake of the vitamins and Healthy start vouchers, which many are currently missing out on. There are plans for a national campaign which will be tailored locally to raise awareness amongst the residents and community sector.

Healthy Schools Service

The Healthy Schools service was established in August 2020, to support schools to improve the health and wellbeing of their children. In October 2020 they quickly reprioritised their work due to the pandemic and adapted their service to deliver the DfE 'Welcome to Education Return and Recovery (WER)'. The team have delivered this program over the last 18 months and have seen an increase in demand for support for teachers, children, and parents, and have been able to adapt the material from DfE to create two webinars that meet the local need. These webinars are available online for all schools to access as required. The service has delivered training to over 2,000 staff from 220 schools across the county.

Pause for a Fresh Start

Pause for a Fresh Start project is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS), that started in September 2020. Pause is a specialist intense preventative intervention programme that works directly with women who have had multiple children taken into care. The service has supported their first cohort of 23 women, these are women with complex and chaotic lifestyles that have previously had their children removed by social services. The successful outcomes and impact of this program to date has seen women:

- registering with GPs to look after their health,
- they have worked with practitioners in the team to rebuild their confidence and trust in services
- regained work /volunteering opportunities

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

- secure rental tenancy, as housing /accommodation has been a key issue for many of the women,
- reconnecting with the children who have been removed through the letter box contact initiative.

The service is now in the process of recruiting their second cohort of women.

Health Improvement

Workplaces

The importance of workplace wellbeing has grown over the years as employers have come to realise it can impact individual employees, their families, their communities, and the business themselves. The workplace wellbeing team have been working as part of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team to develop West Northants Council's workplace wellbeing strategy as well as supporting staff and their teams through training and interventions.

Alongside this we also provide support to external businesses and have recently launched the 'Road to Wellbeing programme' which is a partnership between Public Health and Northamptonshire Sport. A simple online self-assessment helps businesses to identify opportunities to improve wellbeing and is followed by a one-to-one session with the team to co-create a plan for the organisation. The services are tailored to the needs of the businesses and could include support to develop appropriate policies and procedures, Health MOTs, NHS Health Checks, Healthy Lifestyle Programmes, and free Stop Smoking Services.

Healthy weight and physical activity

This year has seen the further development of a whole systems framework to map and plan for action in partnership to promote healthy weight across the life-course, drawing on the systems strengths. The system mapping of activities, groups, communities that are already existing highlight areas that could bring a positive contribution to this work while at the same time identifying key gaps and issues. The year has seen extensive networking across the system including NHS partners; Primary Care; Local Authority Planning; Transport; Education; Nsport; the Voluntary and Community Sector and the University of Northampton.



Adults, Communities and Wellbeing

Development of weight management services and pathways

April saw the new tier 2 adult weight management contract go live with three providers for tier 2 services, which are: Slimming World and Northampton Town Football Club, as well as a digital offer from Solutions for Health – all self-referrals. Public Health are working in partnership with the CCG on a clear weight management pathway from universal to tier 4 service.

In-year extra funding was also received to increase the reach of adult tier 2 services and target specific groups not currently engaging with services. Public Health used this fund as a grant opportunity to identify and build capacity in local community groups and providers and to particularly work with targeted groups. This increased our providers by 9. One key outcome of the work is the need for community groups and providers to have a grounding in nutrition to be confident to deliver this work and so we developed a training the trainer programme and this trained up participants from a further 8 organisations in the West Northants area.

Development of community food model

To ensure a tier one offer on the healthy weight pathway an opportunity was developed for a provider to apply to run a grant to coordinate, nurture and support targeted community cooking and growing projects. The applications are currently underway and a 'go-live' date for the work is planned for May 2022.

Northamptonshire Physical Activity Network

As a key aspect of the whole systems approach and to bring together various strands of development. The Northamptonshire Physical Activity Network was launched and combines partners across the council; CCG; University of Northampton; voluntary sector and business links. The aim is to consolidate the different actions and draw things together; to identify opportunities where we can work together and utilise capacity and skills. The group is currently looking at a refresh of the Northamptonshire physical activity framework, active travel and development of active maps and green social prescribing.

Active Quarter

The University is leading on the 10-year programme to develop the 'Active Quarter', an area from the University up to Brackmills that utilises the assets to engage people across communities and business to get active. An asset-based approach. Public Health are part of the steering group and ensuring that the actions are set against the health needs in the area.

A Physical Activity activator post has been co-funded to develop the staff aspect of the University being an active campus. This is a 2-year project, and the learning can be shared across the council footprint on ways to engage staff in being active.

West Northants Sustainable Food Place (WNSFP)

In West Northants a group of key organisations representing a wide range of interests in good, sustainable food have come together to inspire and co-ordinate work and produce a sustainable food strategy for the West. Several subgroups have been set up and Public Health are chairing the Food and Health Partnership Group which has held its first meeting.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of residents has been particularly significant therefore work is underway to complete a new mental wellbeing needs assessment and partners are preparing to make a commitment to sign up to the Mental Wellbeing Prevention Concordat. This means working together to promote mental wellbeing and particularly working to target our communities who are most vulnerable to poor wellbeing because of their circumstances.

Wellbeing Services

Supporting Independence

Supporting Independence Programme (SIP), continues to support residents of Northamptonshire with Mild Frailty who may be showing signs of reduced independence, by maintaining independence in their own homes and community as long as possible. As a direct result of the pandemic, clinics changed through the year to offer telephone support, however normal services have now resumed, offering face to face appointments for their customers. These consist of up to 12 weeks of personalised support in areas of health and wellbeing. SIP's offer has increased over the last year to provide customers with an opportunity to "Walk & Talk" with their advisor. This need was identified because of lockdown with the aim of customers becoming more active, reducing the risk of falls, reducing levels of anxiety, and increasing socialisation."

Northamptonshire Stop Smoking Service

The Northamptonshire Stop Smoking Service has had a very busy year and has achieved the following:

- The Service achieved our annual target of 3000 quit dates set. This year the Stop Smoking service achieved it highest performing year since 2017.
- We received 6932 referrals for the same period.
- Since transitioning to mainly telephone support we have been able to reach more clients who would have struggled with face-to-face clinics.
- We have been working closely with specific groups which include Routine and Manual, Drug and Addictions and Maternity.

Falls Prevention

During the last year falls prevention has continued to be a focus of public health activity. Promotion of evidence based, strength and balance has taken place via Northamptonshire Sport, who we commission to provide a network of local sessions – called “Get Up and Go” – across the county.

Group sessions have been relaunched following the end of Covid-19 restrictions, and currently there are 19 sessions happening every week with approximately 200 people taking part. Our plan is to extend these sessions considerably over the next year.

In addition, we launched a new Falls Management Service in April 2021. This service compliments the preventative work undertaken by the Supporting Independence Programme and provides specialist assessment and management expertise to people at risk of having an injurious fall. Following on from the launch of this new service we are aware of a significant increase in referrals in comparison to previous requests for support and advice (50%+), and so we are looking at the most effective way of developing this service in the future.

Our priorities for 2022/23

As we move into 2022- 23 the directorate will be re-shaped to include responsibilities that support the Children’s Trust and Children’s Education, so becoming a People directorate. This will mean that the Housing and Communities elements of the directorate will transfer to the Place directorate, whilst operational connectivity will be maintained through shared governance.

2022-23 will see some of the most significant changes to our sector and will require us to strengthen our local partnerships and relationships with local people more than ever if we are to continue to deliver compliant, sustainable, and effective support to local people. In that context, the key priorities for the directorate are set out below.

In parallel, we will also maintain a focus on doing the basics well. This means sound financial management and decision making, with timely and appropriate responses expected in everything we do.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing: Our Priorities 2022/23

The key priorities that we will deliver in 2022-23 are set out below:

1

Reablement West – We will continue to support the capacity and effectiveness of our service to enable more people to go home following discharge from hospital. This will also enable us to provide increased support to people in their own homes to prevent admission to either hospital or care home settings. To do this we must align our teams with health partners to ensure we deliver the best possible outcomes for local people.

2

Specialist Care Centres – We will maximise use of our Specialist Care Centres to provide further capacity to support hospital discharges and step up from our communities. Again, these services must be aligned with health partners to ensure we make best use of local resources.

3

We will take forward our **Directorate Digital and Technology strategy** to ensure that we have the right systems in place to enable us to meet our statutory duties and enable efficient management of data.

4

We will continue to prepare for the implementation of **Liberty Protection Safeguards**.

5

We will drive forward our contribution to the creation of our **local integrated Care System**. This will mean we develop our Integrated care Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board to enable the development of local Neighbourhood partnerships, which will allow us to be better co-ordinate our support to local people through integrated service delivery.

6

Social Care Reform - Quality and Assurance – We will work locally and regionally to ensure we are compliant with the forthcoming regulation of Adult Social Care.

7

Care Home delivery – we will evaluate the local care home market to develop proposals which would look to increase the Councils Care home offer.

8

Strength's Based Working – We will further progress Strength's based working in not just our social work teams but also our housing teams.

9

Learning Disability and Autism Strategy – We will implement our local strategy to improve the lives of people with learning disability and autism.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing: Our Priorities 2022/23

10

Mental Health Collaborative
– We will continue to support the collaborative to better join up services for adults with mental health needs.

11

Social Care Reform – We will ensure we deliver the legislative requirements of Usual Cost of Care, Market Sustainability and Care Cap.

12

Commissioning strategy - We will deliver care services that are good quality and sustainable for both the Council and local providers.

13

Disaggregation of Public Health and interim structure
– The split of Public Health will be completed, and a new West Northants structure implemented.

14

Health Inequalities Strategy
– We will develop and implement our local strategy to ensure we prioritise intervention to address local inequality.

15

Housing Strategy – We will complete our Housing strategy, using it to enable the development of increased accommodation for local people.

16

Anti-Poverty Strategy – We will deliver against the priorities of the strategy.

17

Embarking on a Housing Solutions Transformation Programme to ensure we provide the best housing and support outcomes for local people.

18

Implementing a **Sport and Leisure Strategy** encouraging as many people as possible to live active lifestyles and making best use of the area's green space and initiatives.

Financial and Operational Challenges 2022-23

As we move into 2022- 23 the directorate will be re-shaped to include responsibilities that support the Children's Trust and Children's Education, so becoming a People directorate. This will mean that the Housing and Communities elements of the directorate will transfer to the Place directorate, whilst operational connectivity will be maintained through shared governance.

2022-23 will see some of the most significant changes to our sector and will require us to strengthen our local partnerships and relationships with local people more than ever if we are to continue to deliver compliant, sustainable, and effective support to local people. In that context, the key priorities for the directorate are set out below.

In parallel, we will also maintain a focus on doing the basics well. This means sound financial management and decision making, with timely and appropriate responses expected in everything we do.

Removal of National Discharge Funding

During the pandemic, the Government has been providing additional funding to Health and Social Care systems to maximise acute discharges and to allow people to return home safely, where possible. It was announced in February 2022 that the National Discharge funding would not continue past April 2022. This has meant that West Northamptonshire Council is without funding for required discharge pathway services, which has meant there is a financial risk.

However, it has been agreed that 2021/22 Winter Pressure Funding can be rolled over to help System Partners to continue to meet demand using existing commissioned services, and to allow sufficient time to be able to develop new pathway models which are financially sustainable. This includes maximising in-house care service provision. The service will continue to frequently review the revenue position to understand concerns at the earliest point to allow for remedial action.

Impact of Social Care Reform and Care Market Pressures

The Government has mandated that all Local Authorities who have responsibility for Social Care must undertake a 'Fair Cost of Care' exercise in 2022/23, in recognition that Local Authority fee rates are often below the actual cost of delivering care. This is likely to mean that the West Northamptonshire Council will need to increase the contractual care delivery fees across most service types.

It is important that this work is completed as the impacts of Social Care Reform would otherwise cause sustainability concerns across the independent care market. Without remedial action, this would likely cause a significant financial pressure.

The Council has been provided with a Fair Cost of Care & Market Sustainability Grant of Circa £990k to help to mitigate the pressures of this exercise. However, further analysis is required to confirm whether this amount is sufficient, based upon the outcome of the cost analysis. There will also likely be a requirement to undertake significant market shaping for West Northants Council to control the cost of care, so that most placements are accepted within the Council's contractual rates.

The cost of care has significantly increased due to inflation and the increase to the National Living Wage. West Northamptonshire Council has offered most contracted providers a fee increase of 6.26% to help to mitigate these increases. All providers can undertake an open book exercise should they feel that they are not financially sustainable.

Staffing Pressures and Resourcing

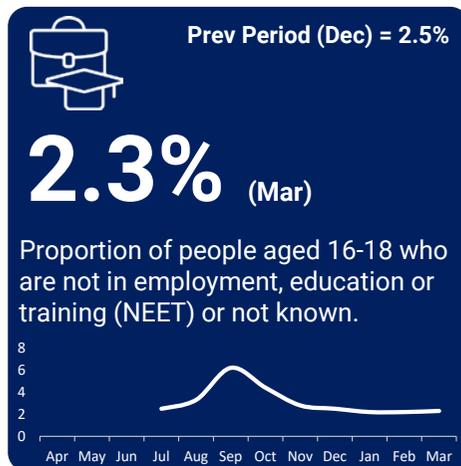
Due to the nature of the current recruitment market, the services have found it difficult to recruit to a number of positions, predominantly front-line care staff and Social Workers. This often means that statutory posts must be filled with the use of high-cost agency staffing above budgeted staffing resources.

West Northamptonshire Council has agreed an additional pay increase for front line care staff which has allowed recruitment to improve however, agency usage in provider services remains high. A review of the Social Work progression strategy is being undertaken so that recruitment can be undertaken without the usage of agency staff and consultants.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing: 2021-22 Quarterly Performance Reporting

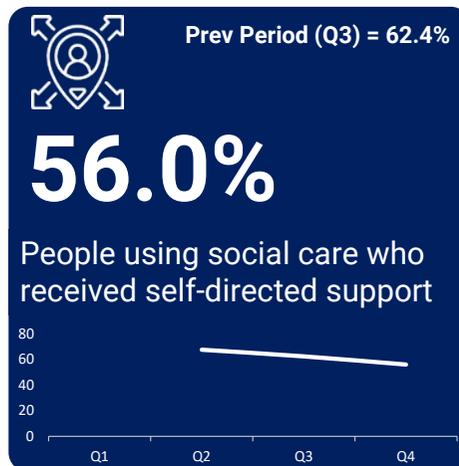
Priority 2 – Improved Life Chances

Health Social Care and Families - Adult Social Care

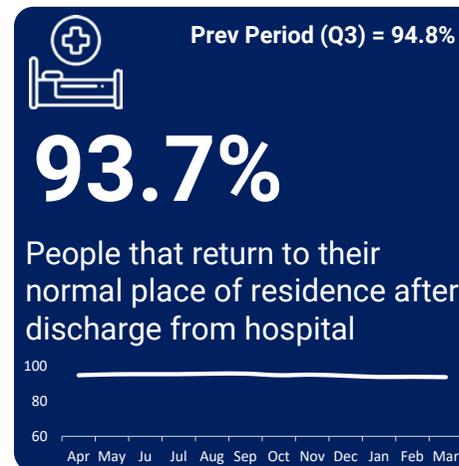


This is a new indicator included in this quarters report, but has been collected for a number of years. Whilst there is data going back prior to April 2021, that data is not split to the unitary council area in a way that enables comparison's to previous years.

The latest position at the end of March shows that 2.3% are either NEET or not known, this is a reduction from December (2.5%). Each year Q2 shows a large increase due to a brand new cohort and initial reporting having to be collected from schools in Sept.



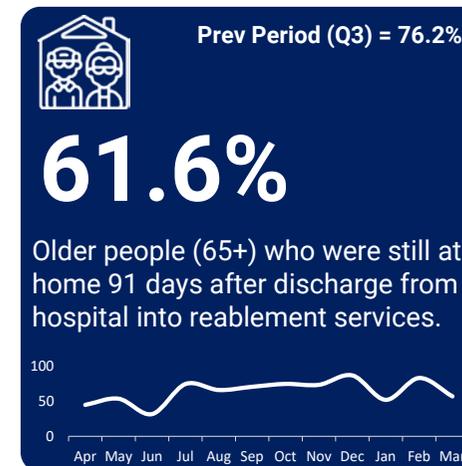
A statutory reported measures in the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF), it measures of those in receipt of social care that have a direct payment or a personal budget which results in the outcome of people managing their own support as much as they wish, so that they are in control of what, how and when support is delivered to match their needs. Following the implementation of the new social care system we are in the processes of updating our collection and reporting tools in order to accurately reflect our actual performance in this area. Once implemented we would expect our actual performance to be exceeding 90% in this area as self-directed support is the default option for our community teams when placing outside of residential.



This indicator is a new measure for the local authority this year and looks to measure the proportion of people that return home after a discharge from hospital.

Date for this indicator at local authority level is available from the NHS Digital Secondary Uses Service (SUS) database. The SUS database is a repository for healthcare data in England which supports the NHS in the delivery of healthcare services.

Performance of this indicator has remained relatively static across quarter (Jan: 93.8%, Feb: 93.9%, Mar: 93.7%) and is a small decrease from the Q2 position of 94.8% to a final quarter outturn of 93.7%.



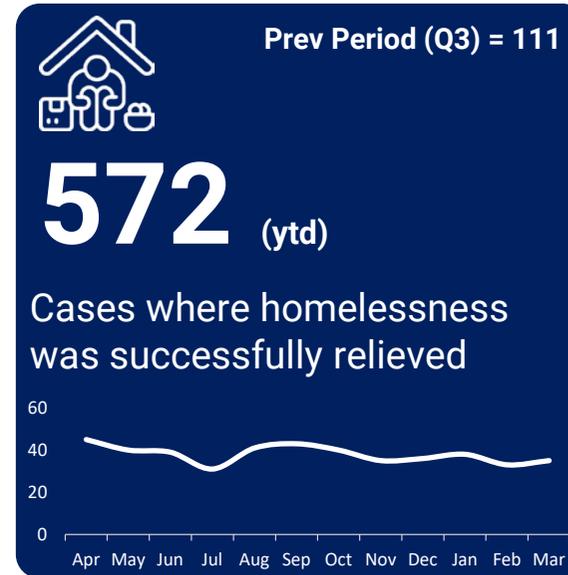
This indicator is one of the measures from the Better Care Fund (BCF) in the current year and measures those people (aged 65+) who were still at home 91 days after left hospital and had some form of reablement service.

Performance in this area has decreased in the final quarter of the year, following usual annual pattern of a dip in the final quarter of the year due to seasonal impacts of the winter months.

The national comparison for this indicator looks at the discharges in the 3 months between October and December only, so whilst not directly comparable due to the time of year the national average last year was 79.1% and the WNC outturn for that period was 76.2%.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing: 2021-22 Quarterly Performance Reporting

Housing and Homelessness



The council has a duty to support people and families from becoming homeless.

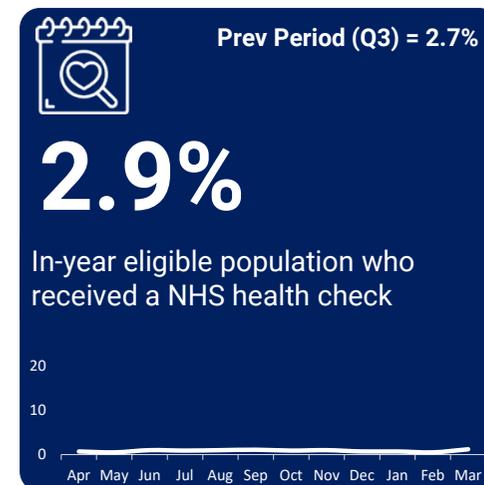
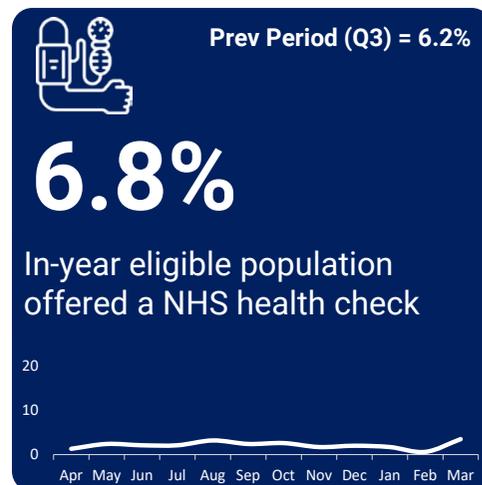
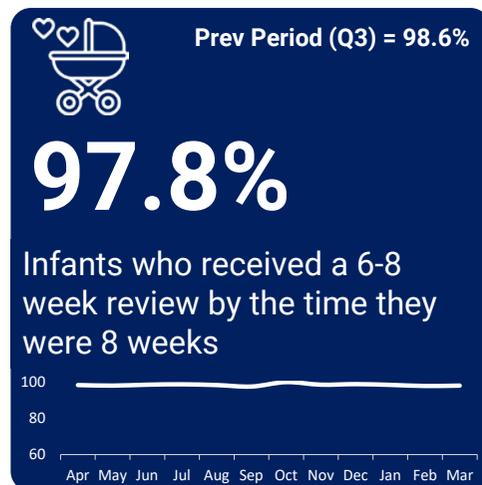
During the Prevention Duty we must take reasonable steps to prevent any eligible applicant from becoming homeless, regardless of priority need status, intentionality and whether they have a local connection. This can involve assisting you to stay in your current accommodation or helping you to find a new place to live. Under this part of our duty we have prevented 103 households from becoming homeless in Q4, with the total this year of 628 preventions.

If we have not been able to prevent you from becoming homeless under the Prevention Duty, you will be owed the Relief Duty. During the Relief Duty we must take reasonable steps to help you to secure suitable accommodation. The Relief Duty lasts for up to 56 days and is available to all households who are homeless and eligible, regardless of whether they have a priority need. Under this part of our duties we have had 106 cases where homelessness was successfully relieved in Q4, with the total number in the year to date at 572

Combined under the two duties we have supported 1,200 households across the authority area from becoming homeless across the reporting year.

Adults, Communities and Wellbeing: 2021-22 Quarterly Performance Reporting

Public Health



The health visiting service leads on the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme (HCP), which was set up to improve the health and wellbeing of children aged 0 to 5 years. This is achieved through health and development reviews, health promotion, parenting support, and screening and immunisation programmes.

The health visiting service consists of specialist community public health nurses and teams who provide expert information, assessments and interventions for babies, children and families, including first time mothers and fathers with complex needs. The indicators included here are for both new birth assessments and the check at 6-8 weeks.

There is good performance in both of the measures reported here, with the new birth visits completed within 14 days reporting at 96.9% for quarter 4, a small decrease from the 97.5% reported in quarter 3. Similarly an increase in the 8 week reviews completed, reduced from 98.6% in quarter 3 to 97.8% in the latest period.

Both of these indicators perform well in comparison to national averages of 88% for 14 day visits and 80.2% for the 8 week visits.

The NHS Health Check is a health check-up for adults in England aged 40-74. It's designed to spot early signs of stroke risk, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. Each year we are required to invite 20% of total eligible population to a health check, for the purposes of targeting this has been split equally per quarter, however here are seasonal changes in performance due to availability of appointments.

This service, like many others has had a direct impact from the covid-19 pandemic. Appointments with GPs and other healthcare practitioners remain limited as focus on the rollout of covid-19 vaccinations and now moving into the season flu vaccinations. This is very obviously impacting on the health checks being offered and completed across the year.

The year to date has seen 26.1% of eligible population offered a health check with 10.8% having received a health check.

Looking at the latest published information we can see that in the second quarter (latest available) of the current year 1.7% across East Midlands and 2.0% across England have been invited and 0.8% of who have received a check.

Children's Services

Overview

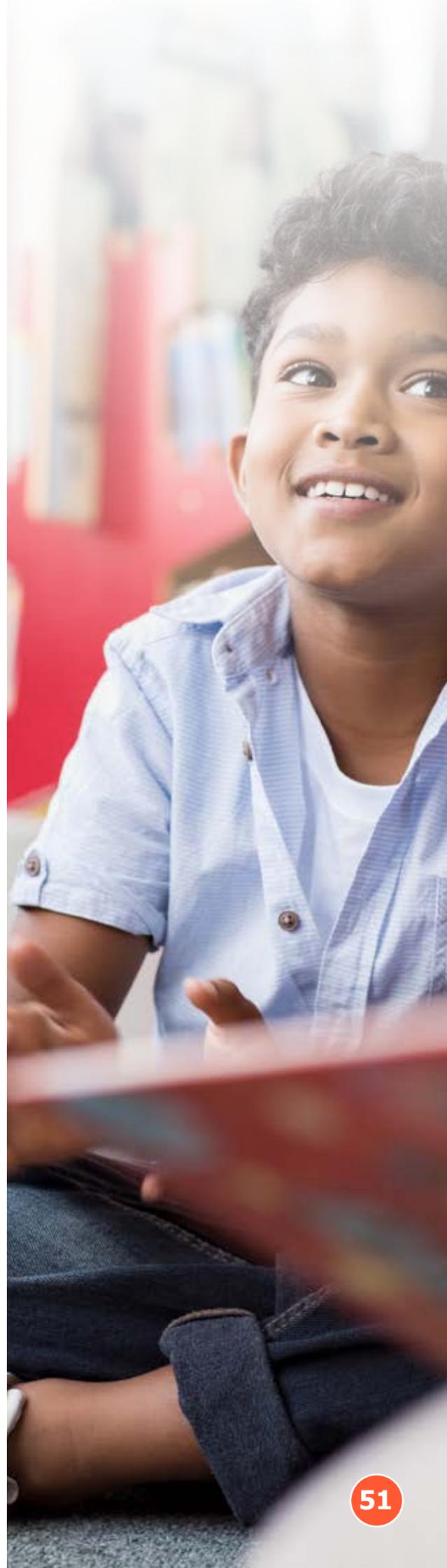
The education service, while newly formed, has confident and forward-looking managers and staff. A recruitment process has been recently completed for a substantive Assistant Director (AD).

The Service Managers are experienced officers, who have embraced reporting directly to the Assistant Director rather than a head of service, and the new Service Manager, Place Planning and Admissions, a successful and experienced officer, joins the team in May. We have been successful in recruiting and retaining staff across the whole service.

The only area of concern is our ability to recruit sufficient Education Psychologists (EP), given the chronic national EP shortage. But to mitigate this, the Principal Education Psychologist (PEP) has reached agreement with a major provider, to outsource EP advice for Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) assessments. This will provide more timely advice and free EP time supporting schools and pupils directly.

Members and service users should feel confident about our plans and management because our education service has highly capable managers and staff. There will shortly be a new Assistant Director, Education in post and there are appropriate service plans in place, which are clear in terms of process and intended outcomes.

In respect of children services: it has been agreed that the council's statutory Director of Children Services (DCS) should be a 'dual' role, alongside adult services. This arrangement should work well, as we have a good, well-performing Trust and sound commissioning arrangements which are currently hosted by North Northamptonshire Council (NNC). Further information on this can be found in the Northamptonshire Children's Trust section of this report.



Our Performance and Achievements

- We have put in place an education strategy for the area, based on the key role of the LA in education as set out in the 2010 white paper.
- We have managed the funding of schools for 2022/23, including the agreement of schools' forum to funding specialist services (achieving a £1.5m saving in the High Needs Budget (HNB) and £630,000 saving for the GF).
- We have finalised a high needs block recovery plan, including a proposal for a significant capital programme for the 500 additional places required.
- We have resolved the Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) funding dispute, achieving agreement about the 2022/23 budget allocation and a three-year plan to ensure the fair distribution of the MNS subsidy.
- We have managed the process for disaggregating three services, which are currently managed by NNC, and the recruitment of a new service head for place planning and admissions.
- We have restructured the education service, flattening the structure through the removal of the head of service layer, with service managers accountable to the AD, Education for school effectiveness, special educational needs, educational psychology, and inclusion.
- We have commissioned key education services for vpupil admissions and place planning, safeguarding and specialist impairment services from North Northamptonshire council. The outcome of year 7 (secondary) admissions for September 2022 is given in table 1. National Offer Day.
- We have commissioned the Northamptonshire Children Trust, with the assistance of a specialist commissioner, to provide most children social care functions.

Table 1. National Offer Day - 1 March 2022

Applications for Year 7 places in secondary schools – September 2022

	WNC	NNC	
	2022	2021	2020
Total number of applications	4786	8931	8854
Online secondary applications %	98.7 (4722)	98.8 (8820)	98 (8703)
1st preference %	79.4 (3798)	80.7 (7203)	79 (6999)
2nd preference %	12.8 (612)	11.7 (1049)	13.1 (1160)
3rd preference %	3.6 (175)	3.3 (294)	3.9 (344)
One of the three preferences %	95.8 (4585)	95.7 (8546)	96 (8503)
Alternative school offer %	4.2 (201)	4.3 (385)	4 (351)

Service Team Highlights

- We made good use of the Covid-19 grant and maintained positive relations with schools, which in turn assisted inclusion and enabled other officers to signpost support for vulnerable pupils.
- Faced with a shortage of specialist places, we took immediate action to commission 500 new places through new resourced units, special school expansions and a new free special school.
- We successfully implemented the new SEN assessment staffing structure and recruited staff to 11 new posts.
- We have drafted a revised and agreed 'high needs block recovery plan' to achieve a net zero balance in the block by the end of the 2025/26 financial year.
- We have reviewed all service structures in the education services and put in place and recruited to posts where necessary.



Children's Services: Our Priorities 2022/23

The key priorities that we will deliver in 2022-23 are set out below:

1

Additional resourced places in mainstream school and expanded special schools will create 250 extra high-needs places in the state-funded sector, starting in the 2023/24 school year.

2

A new free special school will be commissioned, to provide 250 high- need places for pupils on the autistic spectrum, plus a small number of additional places for pupil with severe learning difficulties

3

Ensuring the smooth transfer and immediate efficient operation for the 2023 pupil admissions round of school admissions staff from NNC on 1 September.

4

Increasing to at least the national average by July of education, health, and care plan (EHCP) assessments on time.

5

Planning and implementing the planned transfer of the safeguarding and specialist impairment services provided this is agreed by the joint (NNC / WNC) member board.

6

The implementation of new arrangements for the provision of psychological advice for EHCP assessments and SEND tribunal support.

7

The continued successful commissioning of NCT.

8

The submission of a bid for WNC to form a multi academy trust.

9

Preparing for the inspection of Special Educational Need Disabilities (SEND) services by Ofsted.

Children's Services: Looking Ahead

Our aims and outcomes for our Directorate over the Mid Term Financial Plan (MTFP) – next 3 years are:

1

The full and successful implementation of the SEND strategy, 2022/25, which is currently subject to co-construction with parents and partners.

2

Sufficient places for all children in West Northants, including specialist places in the stage sector for all whose parents express a preference for such a place.

3

The tracking of all pupils without a school place or on part-time timetables, including, ensuring a place within six weeks for all pupils without a school place, and a plan for a return to a full-time timetable for all educated part-time for any period.

4

Putting in place a local authority multi-academy trust (MAT) for all schools currently maintained by the council and academy schools that seek to transfer from another trust (as proposed in the 2022 schools' white paper).

5

The continued successful commissioning of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust.

Financial and Operational Challenges 2022/23

- The failure to successfully implement the transfer of the admissions function promptly, resulting in failures in the 2023 planned admissions round and term-time admissions.
- Poor or failed implementation of the SEN capital programme, leading to delays in implementation, costs overruns, lack of appropriate pupil placements and poorer pupil outcomes.
- Continued poor performance of the SEN section in finalising assessments on time, resulting in parental dissatisfaction, and the risk of a poor outcome in any Ofsted inspection of SEND.

Mitigating actions being taken:

- The transfer of all transformation work, which include the transfer of all services currently commissioned from NNC, will be prioritised by the Assistant Director, Education, and the relevant Service Managers those being for school effectiveness, pupil place planning and admissions and inclusion.
- The SEN capital programme is a key task under the performance management scheme for the AD, Education and the Service Managers for SEN and pupil place planning and admissions respectively.
- The SEN section is now fully staffed, and the preparation of draft and final EHCPs on time, including all advice, is a priority for the service manager for SEN and the principal educational psychologist (PEP).

Working with Northamptonshire Children's Trust

The Northamptonshire Children's Trust's (NCT), Senior leadership team are working hard to ensure its workforce feel supported as Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted. We aim to maintain a positive trajectory of the ongoing improvement work, ensuring readiness for the full inspection due to take place later in the year.

Our Work and Achievements

Practice

- During week commencing 14th March 2022 we undertook positive activities to promote excellence in practice, with opportunities for learning and development for all practitioners linked to World Social Work day on 15th March.
- We finalised our Participation & Engagement Strategy 2022- 25 which will ensure the voice of children is central to all we do.
- Lincolnshire Partners in Practice completed a front door review as an external scrutiny of our services. This was in addition to a review of placements and commissioning completed by People Too, where strengths were identified in services alongside development areas. The recommendations are being implemented to ensure further improvements are made.
- We have put in place a contract for two new emergency children's homes and a new planning application is also in process, to address the challenge of sufficiency of placements.
- We have commenced research with the University of Northampton that will be completed over the coming year, looking at the impact of using Signs of Safety (SoS) a practice model adopted by NCT, with children, young people, and their families within NCT.

Inspections

- NCT's Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA) had its first inspection 31 January- 4 February 2022. The report has been published, with the overall experiences and progress of children judged to be Good.

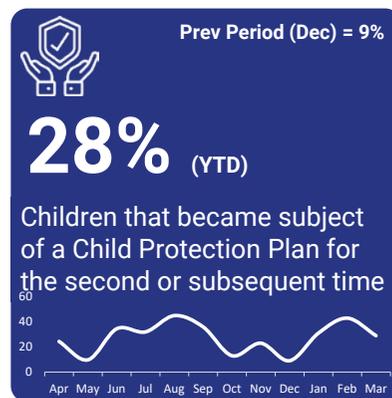
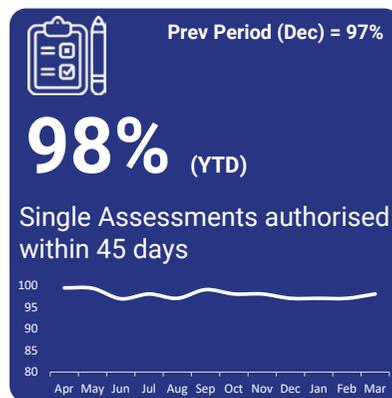
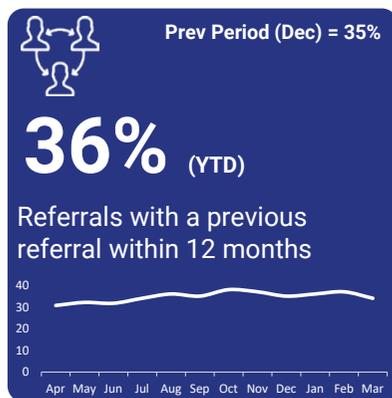
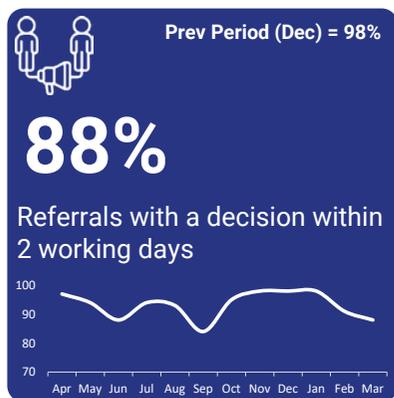
- The Inspection of Thornton House Children's home report was published in January 2022. The inspection took place on 14 - 15 December 2021 and concluded with a judgement of 'Requires Improvement' to be good in all areas. A further interim inspection in March 2022 by Ofsted judged that the home has improved effectiveness.
- The first Inspection of Phoenix Children's home was conducted with a positive outcome, the report is yet to be published.
- We have been preparing for a full Inspected Looked After Children Services (ILACS) inspection with a focus on improving the quality and consistency of practice. Self- evaluation has been completed and will be used in regional peer challenge events. A 'Requires Improvement' to be 'Good' would be positive outcome on consideration of inadequate position prior to constitution of the Children's Trust.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspection of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) is overdue and preparation for this is ongoing.

Leadership

- We achieved our 100% Supporting Families Payment by Results target. This is significant achievement, Northamptonshire in the previous years has not performed well both regionally and country wide ranking 3rd from the bottom in the reporting tables.
- We have completed a 9-month Leadership Development Programme for all leaders in NCT which is aimed to impact practice and culture, focusing on empowering staff.
- We have focused on recruitment and retention and achieving stability within the workforce, in particular social worker teams. In February 2022, we operated with 17.0% agency staff which is a reduction from 21.7% in November 2020.
- We have been working to improve relationships and creative efforts to attract and retain staff. This has seen the partnership between NCT and Opus being shortlisted in the Annual PPMA Excellence in People Management 2022 Awards. Winners will be announced on the 28 April 2022.

Children's Services: 2021-22 Quarterly Performance Reporting

Priority 2 – Improved Life Chances - Health Social Care and Families - Adult Social Care



The performance has decreased since the end of quarter 3, 98% to 88%. The service continues to work diligently on ensuring timely decision making is maintained.

The service continues to work hard on ensuring timely decision making is maintained. Cases that are rag rated RED are prioritised and decisions made within 1 day. There is ongoing improvement work in the MASH to continually increase quality and enhance performance.

Recent peer review has identified improvements and strengths. Areas for development are currently being actioned. Consideration of changes to MASH operations (MADRA) in light of PIP review findings.

Audit and review for learning is ongoing. It is anticipated that the strengthened model in MASH will continue support appropriate reduction going forward.

Steps have been taken to strengthen the Early Help partnerships with Partnership Support Team (Early Help MASH) being placed in the MASH pods and a leaner step down process. The high number of cases stepping down continue to present challenges in regards to capacity in Family Support/Early help partnership.

Recommendations from the PIP peer review are being implemented.

Assessment timescales remain consistently good and well above the minimum performance threshold of 85%.

All managers monitor this very closely via daily reports. A narrative is provided for cases that go beyond 45 days and this remains a very small minority. In addition to timeliness, we work on increasing the quality of assessments and more effective use of SoS in our interventions. PIP peer review has identified improvements in the quality of assessments.

This indicator has been variable across the year and on occasions too high.

In quarter 4 a total of 66 of 189 (34%) plans started in this period had been on a plan before. The full year has seen 28% of plans started in the year having been on a plan previously.

A review of cases in March will be completed, and initial indication is that the pandemic may have contributed to increased stresses and pressure for families, consequently escalating their needs.

Positive work is being undertaken to identify families for children in a timely way enabling placement with adopters as soon as possible after the placement order is granted. There are factors which influence this KPI including the needs and individual characteristics of children and delays within care proceedings. The latter continues to be monitored and work with judiciary is ongoing

Excluding exceptions, performance is 100% for the 2nd quarter this year. In addition performance of this indicator can fluctuate hugely from quarter to quarter as it relates to a relatively small number of children – quarter 4 relates to a cohort of 4 children placed for adoption.

Chief Executive's Office

Overview

The Chief Executive's Office includes:

- Communications and Engagement
- Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance
- Executive Support
- Lord Lieutenancy

We are exceptionally proud of everything that has been achieved in our first year as a new council and all the effort that colleagues, and councillors have put in to achieve a positive start for our communities. We are excited about the opportunities ahead as we continue to work together to develop our organisational leadership, culture, and values to ensure we can make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive.



Our Performance and Achievements

Key achievements in our first year include:

- Developing and launching our first Corporate Plan to set out the council's strategic vision over the next four years for making West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive. The Corporate Plan sets out six key priorities that will guide policy, service planning and budget setting going forward:
 - Green and Clean
 - Improved Life Chances
 - Connected Communities
 - Thriving Villages and Towns
 - Economic Development
 - Robust Resource Management.
- Launching our thrive values: Trust, High Performing, Respect, Innovative, Value, Empower. We have actively promoted the values throughout our first year through using an appreciative inquiry model to celebrate examples of our values in action every week, culminating in our first annual Thrive Awards at the Northampton Museum hosted by the Council Leader and Chief Executive.
- Ensuring our first elections were delivered successfully and hosting a welcome event for our 93 councillors.
- Delivering high quality internal communications including all colleague briefings, Anna's blog and vlog, coffee and chats with directors, keeping our colleagues informed and to support the development of our new organisational culture.
- Developing our weekly Members briefing with feedback from our councillors, to ensure they receive proactive communications and are supported to keep residents informed.
- Launching our parish council briefing to keep our local councils up to date with information and to support effective engagement with communities.
- Submitting a city status bid celebrating Northampton's heritage, culture, pride, and ambition with the unanimous support of full council on 2 December 2021. This followed a public engagement campaign that attracted overwhelming support from communities, the media, and partner organisations. The campaign, which also featured videos of local figures, venues and landmarks promoting what Northampton has to offer, reached thousands of people.
 - The council even made its own cheeky bid directly to the Prime Minister, when Cllr John Shephard and his wife Judy took advantage of a lunch event with the PM to present him with a 'Northampton -Back the Bid' beanie hat.
 - Achieving city status would put Northampton on an international standing, attracting investment, creating new jobs, and bringing economic and cultural benefits to communities right throughout West Northamptonshire and the wider county. The bid is a celebration of the people of Northampton, what they have achieved, and everything that is still to come.
 - "The overwhelming support we have received shows we have the hearts of the county backing our bid, and we feel confident our submission will demonstrate that Northampton is an exemplary case for city status." Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader
 - "As someone born and bred in Northampton with long family history here, I couldn't be prouder to support our bid for city status." Cllr Gareth Eales, Leader of the Labour Group.

Chief Executive's Office



- Establishing our West Northants social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tik Tok, helping us to reach a wider audience and engage effectively with residents and business where they are, without requiring them to come to us.
- Launching our new West Northants Website successfully with over 1.5million page views across the site in our first year and over 65% visitors viewing on a mobile device. We have been working with residents and councillors to develop and improve our new site.
- Joining the Local Government Association's National Graduate Development Programme and welcoming our first National Management Trainees into the council and empowering them to work on key initiatives such as our city status bid and sustainability strategy, helping to grow our future leaders.
- Successfully completing our statutory returns to government for all services.
- Actively promoting equalities through celebrating key events in the year including Pride, International Women's Day, Holocaust Memorial Day, Black History Month, Disability Awareness Events. Launching our staff networks for women, LGBTQ+, carers, disabilities, armed forces community, early careers, ethnic diversity, mental health, and wellbeing. Establishing our member equalities champions.
- Reorganising our Executive support service to ensure that our Leader, Cabinet, Chief Executive, Leadership Team and Lord Lieutenant receive a consistent high-quality level of support and creating new apprenticeship opportunities for young people who are care experienced, helping them to develop thriving careers.
- Supporting the Lord Lieutenancy with 10 Royal Visits across Northamptonshire, helping to raise the profile of the many outstanding examples of public service in our county.
- Planning our county-wide celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee including promoting the Queen's Green Canopy Initiative, leading to the planting of 100s of new trees in West Northants.

Service Team Highlights

- The launch of Sustainable West Northants – an ambitious new approach towards protecting and improving the local environment, economy, and society for future generations. The initiative, which is being spearheaded by West Northamptonshire Council and partners across the area, aims to ensure everyone is working towards the same objectives and targets for developing sustainability, which are being mapped against global goals set by the United Nations.
 - We have developed three key Sustainability Pledges – our primary commitments alongside the beginnings of a bold new strategy for steering forward resources and actions – with more pledges expected to be developed in the future.
 - Net Zero the Council's own emissions by 2030 and those of residents and businesses by 2045.
 - Take a community leadership role for Sustainability in West Northants.
 - Ensure all Council strategies and policies are aligned to and contribute to the delivery of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
 - We have been admitted to the UK100, the network of most ambitious authorities for progressing the climate and sustainability agenda.
- Launching our new Performance Framework and Corporate Dashboard, providing transparency and openness in how we are performing against our corporate plan and developing our baseline performance data for our new organisation.
- Working in partnership with the Local Government Association to review and redesign our communications and engagement service, ensuring that we are delivering a high-quality service. Establishing a member task and finish group to develop our approach to resident and parish communications.



Chief Executive's Office: Our Priorities 2022/23

The key priorities that we will deliver in 2022-23 are set out below:

1

Together with our councillor working group, taking forward our Sustainability West Northants Initiative to raise awareness across our communities and make progress against the delivery of our pledges.

2

Launching our resident newsletters and continuing to grow and promote our communications channels to reach out to a wider audience.

3

Developing a strong Corporate and Place Narrative for West Northants, helping to raise our profile nationally and internationally.

4

Redesigning our Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance service to support effective decision making and improved outcomes. This is the final area of the directorate to be reorganised and will be completed in 22/23 ensuring all colleagues have clarity on permanent structures and roles.

5

Promoting the outcome of our city status bid, helping to raise the profile of West Northants and the many outstanding features of our place.

6

Delivering our Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations including our Military and Community Parade and our Community Big Lunch at Delapre Abbey for up to 5000 people.

7

Continuing to provide effective leadership for the development of our new organisational culture, ensuring all colleagues can thrive, taking pride in their work and feeling a part of our new council.

8

Additional investment in our communications service will enable us to continue to enhance and develop the service to reach wider audiences.

9

One off investment has been agreed to enable the redesign of our business intelligence service to enable us to establish the service design and costs for future years.

Financial and Operational Challenges 2022-23

- Financial pressure around Tier 1-3 unfunded savings to be addressed through budget setting.
- Additional investment in our communications service will enable us to continue to enhance and develop the service to reach wider audiences.
- One off investment has been agreed to enable the redesign of our business intelligence service to enable us to establish the service design and costs for future years.

Corporate Services

Overview

Year 1 has been a year of stabilisation, building strong foundations and looking to integrate our corporate services. It has been a hugely challenging year, due to the demand from both internal customers and from communities.

The first half of 2021 - 22 was reactive, dealing with stabilisation issues. Q3 and Q4 have been more proactive, with actions to create Corporate Services that meet the Council's priorities over the next three years. There is now significant confidence that plans are in place to take services from the 'coping with challenges' phase to services which are high performing.

Our Performance and Achievements

Human Resources

- We negotiated and paid a locally agreed pay rise for all WNC staff, above that awarded to those elsewhere on national pay arrangements, and agreed to setting the minimum wage in WNC at £10 an hour from April 2022.
- We have established great foundations and made progress to becoming an Employer of Choice, setting a positive and productive culture with our THRIVE values, the creation of the People Strategy and undertaking our first all-employee survey.
- We created and ran our new THRIVE awards for employees and our VIP End of Year conversations.
- We created a Ways of Working programme to support agile working and living through and with Covid.
- We introduced our first tranche of employee benefits – IKOM workplace benefits, Tusker Car Lease, Cycle to Work and purchasing of additional annual leave, Introduction and launch of Pennies from Heaven charity scheme.



Corporate Services

- We took our first steps towards building a specialist recruitment function to better support our services and managers in the current recruitment market. Our headline achievements include:
 - Increasing visibility of WNC as an employer e.g. Company Reviews on: Glassdoor being 4.4/5 which is great and 88% saying they would recommend working with us to a friend. Indeed being 4/5 with 4.5 for job security and advancement.
 - We created a Facebook Careers page and have developed a more focussed use of LinkedIn to publicise us as an employer.
- We attended two local careers fair events and have more planned for 2022 - 23 to increase our visibility in the local market including school leavers and graduates.
- We launched a dedicated recruitment campaign for the Adults Directorate and supported them with open days. The service has fed back that they have noticed an upturn in candidates for a variety of their roles.
- We delivered the first new payrolls across two new clients (WNC and NNC) accurately and on time for the first payday. The Election payroll was delivered successfully across North, West and MKC and every payroll has remained above 99% accuracy, despite having difficulty to recruit for most of this year. We have delivered a payroll service to Schools and Academies across Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes.
- We have produced forty-three HR policies and procedures, ten new Health and Safety policies both of which were consulted upon with the Trade Unions and have been published.
- We have continued to effectively manage staff relations including difficult appeals and grievances, numerous interview panels, a Transformation review, TUPE transfers and supporting people in the restructuring of 400 roles.

- We launched the Employee Assistance Programme which 7.2% of the WNC workforce have accessed, including 195 calls, and counselling (16 face to face, 42 via telephone and 16 online sessions) and managed 81 Referrals to Occupational Health.
- We have rolled out mandatory training and designed and rolled out our first management "Managing and Leading Performance Excellence (MALPE)" which is designed for experienced managers looking to refresh skills and learn new ones. We have also commenced a pilot mentoring scheme.

Customer Services

- We have supported local people, particularly the vulnerable through Covid and their access to support and advice and key services with the One Stop Shop (OSS) remaining open throughout the pandemic with increasing footfall.
- The Customer Services hubs have answered an average of 27,000 calls a month, with an additional 9,000 enquiries per month being handled via email.
- Our Customer Experience Strategy was signed off by Cabinet and launched. This puts the customer at the centre of everything we do and how we behave, providing a new standard of customer experience in local government.
- A team of advisors from across all our Hubs, including Complaints, have and continue to meet regularly and focus on a particular customer journey via our website. These ideas, suggestions and alternative routes are then communicated to the Web Team, whom we have built a good rapport with, and content changes are completed on the back on this.



- The wider Customer Services team have been involved with user testing and gathering feedback on proposed changes (School Admissions, Trading standards, Licensing, Highway's harmonisation), User testing on 'Apply', 'Pay', 'Renew', 'Report' buttons being added to the top of the website, replacing trending items. Continuous review of services that sit under the listed buttons and supplying suggestions for more.
- We ran our Clever Together first ever Big Conversation receiving 6000 contributions, 5188 votes, 286 ideas, 310 comments looking at the future of West Northants and Council. Contributions and responses were uplifting in tone, and expressing a clear interest in our eco agenda, low carbon and the environment.
- We supported the return of existing and new Partners into the OSS to ensure early support is available to prevent debt, homelessness, and increased vulnerabilities. Partners currently based in the hub includes Supporting Independence, Community Law Service, Migrant Help, Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service, Northampton Partnership Homes, Goodwill Solutions - Building Better Opportunities and Northamptonshire Police.
- The service also works with the Hope Centre who supply us monthly food packages that are available within the Guildhall, One Stop Shop. These are given out to customers in need to ensure that they have immediate support.

Digital, Technology and Innovation

- The service has supported all employees with their day-to-day ICT needs and supported agile working through Covid and now, living with Covid.
- The division has been reconstituted as 'Digital, Technology & Innovation', with a new senior management team appointed to oversee its six new unitary services: Digital, IT Operations, Strategy & Architecture, Business & Projects, Cyber Security & Risk, Enterprise Applications.
- Aggregation: The merging of numerous separate authority systems into one: unified PSN access; internet services; technology procurement (over 2,000 invoices, 500 contracts); single GIS database; single BACS bureau; unification of all authorities onto ERP Gold.

Corporate Services

- We have successfully managed disaggregation projects performing technology splits with NNC for CapitaONE Education, Customer Contact Centre, Abacus and Caspar systems.
- We successfully launched the following new systems:
 - Mailbot which has replied to 20,000 customer emails
 - Garden Waste system deflecting 8,000 calls per week from contact centre
 - Xpress elections system
 - CivicaCX for trading standards
 - Mileage and expenses systems
 - Office 365 apps for whole organisation (including Teams in Citrix).
- We effectively dealt with an unexpected power loss at One Angel Square due to electrical fire, and the Log4j cyber incident.
- We launched a full project governance apparatus, ensuring all business projects requiring technology are subject to full technical and resource planning and governance.
- We have developed WNC's telephony strategy for the next five years.
- Improved capability and clarity by restructuring services. Six clear services with clear mandate have been formed, to provide more specialised and targeted support to customers in DTI.
- Improved governance and created new functions. The creation of a Technical Design Authority, an IT Portfolio Board and associated governance creates the apparatus to check and challenge incoming business projects to ensure that the technology investment improves service rather than hinders it, and that solutions represent value for money.
- Reviewed contracts and service delivery models across the directorate. A full review of DTI contracts is underway and has already delivered £370k per annum savings, with more expected.
- Used support and skills from Transformation internal staff and external service matter experts where appropriate for projects such as the Ways of Working programme, Pay and Grading.
- The early automation projects that we undertook such as Mailbot and Garden Waste are now successfully reducing staff burden, and opening opportunities for WNC to become more efficient.

- We started and continue using, a simple model across the directorate to explore the main themes of increasing productivity in a consistent way and in doing so exploring all avenues.

Legal and Democratic

- We successfully ensured our Council was safe and legal from Day 1 of its existence and continued to support the council with the aggregation and disaggregation of services, multi-partnership arrangements and contracts and legal advice.
- Through Covid restrictions, we ensured that the weddings and civil ceremonies backlog was cleared, and the registering of births and deaths continued. We conducted increased weddings and other ceremonies to address Covid backlog. We prepared for GRO Stock and Audit with positive outcome.
- Centralised the registration of marriages and Designated Offices to comply with legislative change. Worked with the Medical Examiner's Office for rollout of the community Medical Examiner service.
- We made an Order for a single Coronial area for Northamptonshire. We established the Leys and provided Covid safe Jury Hearings with digital facilities and cleared coroner hearing backlog. We moved Coroner hearings to Guildhall and implemented a joint public health/coroners bereavement referral process.
- We delivered the Council's first elections, creating a single electoral register for West Northants. We conducted the first annual canvas and publication of the updated register and conducted several parish by-elections and neighbourhood planning referenda.
- We created and updated a new Constitution and created a governance framework for West Northants Council. We held the first annual meeting of the new Council in a Covid-safe environment and successfully onboarded 93 councillors.

- We set up an integrated information governance and data protection office and cleared the backlog of Subject Access Requests, reduced data breaches, published transparency data and data protection policies, and installed an electronic system for information requests and created a new records management function for the council.

Transformation

- We delivered an initial Year 1 Transformation Programme, starting with a successful Vesting Day on 1st April 2021 and supporting the aggregation and disaggregation of services.
- We delivered numerous projects including the aggregation of the Revenue and Benefits Team contributing to a £200k efficiency, the successful review of the Exec Support Team, Communications Team as well as Internal Audit.
- Within wider programmes, we delivered several key products. For example, in developing and consulting staff of worker profiles in Future Ways of Working and planning for large scale change needed in directorates.
- We supported the directorates in their response to the critical Covid Emergency incident in January 2022, providing expertise in planning and coordination.
- We created refreshed medium-term Grand Design Transformation Programme.
- We created and maintained a network of change champions across the organisation to provide a forum for engagement.
- We supported the development of Inter Authority Agreements and transitioned this into business as usual.
- We undertook a review of service and developed a directorate-centred model, refocused the programme on the big-ticket projects and programmes and supported its efficiency delivery through streamlining the governance framework.

Corporate Services: Our Priorities 2022/23

The key priorities that we will deliver in 2022-23 are set out below:

1

To be focused on delivering better outcomes for local people by:

Delivering against key strategies (Customer Experience, People, Transformation Grand Design, and emerging DTI Strategy) and their detailed action plans.

2

To continue to drive continuous service improvements within the directorate (Productivity, People, Contracts), looking at end-to-end customer journeys (internally and externally) and supporting all customers/clients with their support service requirements.

Examples include the:

- Restructure of HR, productivity squad creation for automation, new recruitment solutions project, helpdesk implementation and hub transition onto a single Customer Experience Management (CXM) platform resulting in three out of the four hubs using the one platform from May 2022, increasing performance deliver across our service and the delivery of a new Contact solution (telephony system) across Customer Services Implementation of key Transformation programmes and projects e.g. pay and grading programme, implementation of new ways of working and systems improvements.

4

Council size Submission to the boundary review Summer 2022, and the ward boundaries review thereafter.

5

Extend our partnership collaboration and continue with good relationship management, embracing connectivity to prevent the impact of increased vulnerabilities and debt management and debt advice function, delivered in conjunction by Customer Services Improved self-serve technology within One Stop Shops and across our outreach surgeries.

6

Build the basics of a robust and successful transformation programme for WNC and create a forward looking and outward facing.

7

Support the directorates with their Mid Term Financial Plan (MTFP) proposals in the future years and encourage a sense of continuous improvement in the teams supported by a sound methodological approach and tools.

8

Support the further integration of the PMOs across the directorate exploring an enterprise model to coordinate and maximise the change resource across the service.

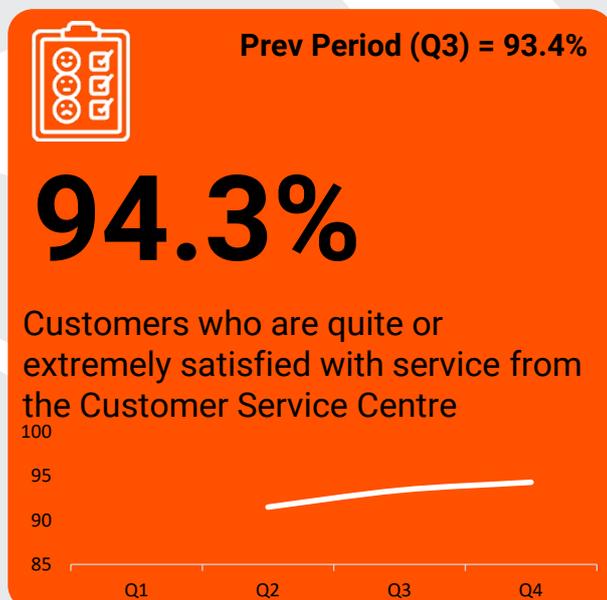
Financial and Operational Challenges 2022-23

- Our Pay and Grading project, complexity and size of project and legal risks.
- The impact of external inflation, energy costs, on the more vulnerable in West Northants and those fleeing Ukraine and from other vulnerable international countries.
- Consideration for future models of working for services (e.g., legal services model).
- Future productivity of business Systems (DTI) and ability to flex and improve and become more agile, under the constraints of a shared model.
- Additional workload created by transformation and pay and grading activities. Additional funding has been secured to support both these activities.
- The buoyancy of job market and filling of difficult-to-fill posts and continuing with targeted interventions.

2021-22 Quarterly Performance Reporting Against Corporate Priorities



Priority 3 – Connected Communities - Customer Service



This is a new indicator being reported from Sept 2021 within the Customer Service Centre that seeks to gather feedback from customers on their satisfaction with the service received.

The final quarter of the year has resulted in a small increase in the satisfaction level in the Customer Service Centre – up 0.9% to 94.3% when compared to the previous quarter.

In total 1,261 customers took part (Q3 was 934) in the survey and of those asked 94.3% of those were either quite or extremely satisfied.

Place, Economy and the Environment

Overview

Overall, we are making incredible progress in identifying and prioritising what will make the difference for our communities going forward and we have made significant steps in creating the infrastructure to deliver on these opportunities.

We have taken some bold and ambitious decisions rather than just accept what has always happened; and in some areas are being seen as developing best practice. Not everything has unfortunately gone as well or as quickly as first hoped, however when this has occurred, action has been taken and plans developed to get back on track as soon as possible, with increased outcomes as a result.

There is still lots to do and many challenges, but the momentum created both internally with staff and externally in working with partners, sets us in good stead for a positive and prosperous future.

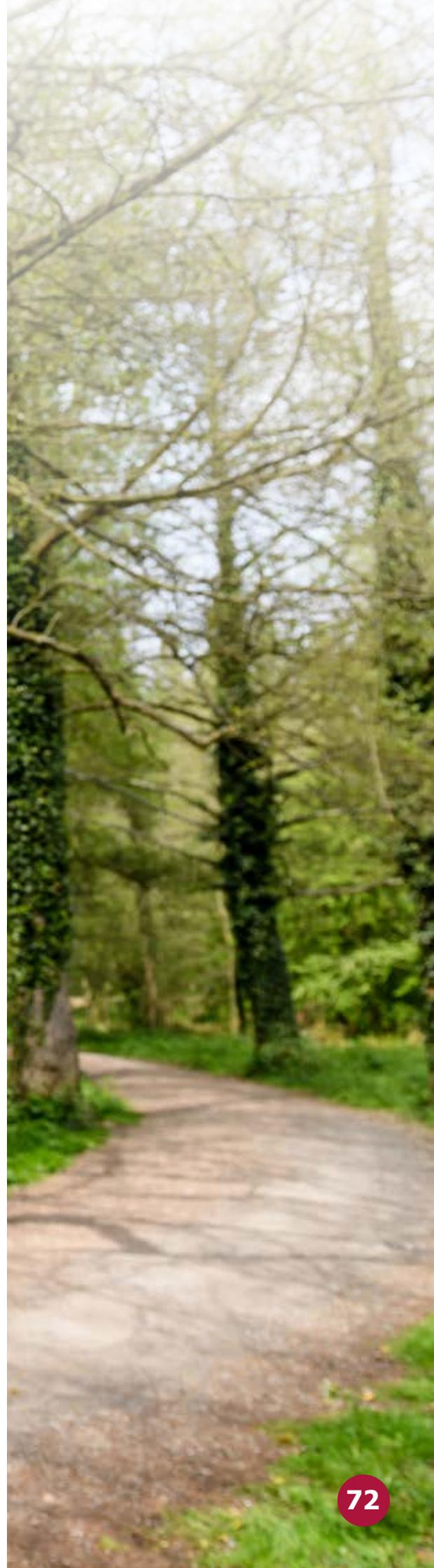
2021 – 22 will be a year that no one will forget, and this is particularly true in West Northants where not only did we do a tremendous job in managing the pandemic, supporting residents and businesses; but we went through a Local Government Review bringing 4 councils together in what can only be described as a challenging financial backdrop.

In Place, we have seen some real progress regarding the aggregation and disaggregation of service, whilst at the same time moving forward some of the real legacy issues that have been challenging for some years and delivering against the many priorities the new council has set.

It has been a difficult transition for some staff, many of whom had worked in their previous authority for many years and had seen the change as losing what they held dear. It is important that we recognise this in moving forward and that we build on the many great things that have been achieved. West Northants Council brings together the strength of all the Councils and provides a single voice for our area, a clear strategy, and a more efficient and effective way forward.

To this end we produced our first economic prospectus, setting out the ambition and potential that we have as a new authority and what this might mean for stakeholders, businesses and for Government. This prospectus has been welcomed by many of our partners who have helped to shape it and are now backing us in our conversations with government.

This sets the foundation for future years for strong partnerships, developing a pipeline of opportunities, and ensuring we punch above our weight going forward in terms of delivering against our priorities and accessing the funding to achieve our goals.



Our Performance and Achievements

The first year was all about stabilising and getting our budgets in place and provided the milestone to really start to move the services forward with the full knowledge of the constraints, and as it turned out, the opportunities and investment that this would provide.

We are now moving forward, getting the structures in place whilst at the same time looking to implement the new ways of working that will create a more effective and efficient way of working. We are looking at best practice, reviewing processes, harmonising systems, seeing an increase in productivity.

In reviewing the Blueprint, we have identified new opportunities in how we deliver our services and meeting the priorities of our residents and businesses in joined up way. We have introduced a new focus on our neighbourhoods, understanding place and the needs of the people who live there. The new Communities and Opportunities directorate will, as part of Place, ensure that we have clear intelligence of the issues relevant to an area, and a partnership response to the priorities and actions to be delivered.

There are so many benefits to hybrid working to the business as well, as staff and each service will have their own needs and requirements. Getting back into the office has many opportunities for effective working, however, we will ensure we balance this with the opportunities working from home has demonstrated through these past 2 years. But to get back into the office will assist the collaboration and networking we all enjoyed pre-pandemic, and we all benefit from hearing the experiences and issues from colleagues, in particular for the apprentices and those setting out on their career, it is essential. There is still lots to do but in terms of stabilising the directorate and preparing for the next phase we are well on our way.

As a management team we have had a series of sessions that are bringing the corporate values to life, ensuring they are authentic to the services and for our people. This work is starting to flow through and set the culture and identity of West Northants as a place to do business, that has a can-do attitude, does what it says and adopts a solution-focused, outcome-driven approach. This will create a working

environment that people will be proud to belong to with the benefits of a council approach of shared aims and objectives, that comes with a unitary authority. There is still lots to do but we are on the road and we have set the direction.

Service Area Highlights

Throughout all of this change, we have kept things moving and have a fantastic record of achievement which bodes well for future years and is down to the hard work and determination of everyone involved. This includes new policy development, supporting businesses and residents, bringing in much needed grants and finance ensuring we continue to deliver safe and valued statutory services, and working across both west and north councils, in preparation for transformation. Some of the highlights include:

- We have continued with the great work to deal with the Covid pandemic, providing advice and support to workplaces and schools across the area.
- We have achieved excellent progress with food hygiene visits, ensuring businesses could get back to work.
- We have progressed the development of a unified taxi and private hire policy and an updated Gambling Policy.
- We have received a DEFRA Air Quality Grant.
- We launched a consultation on a Public Spaces Protection Order to address dog fouling and dog control issues in the rural parts of the area.
- We produced Litter and Fly-Tipping Charters.

Place, Economy & the Environment

- We have continued with the great work to deal with the Covid pandemic, providing advice and support to workplaces and schools across the area.
- We have achieved excellent progress with food hygiene visits, ensuring businesses could get back to work.
- We have progressed the development of a unified taxi and private hire policy and an updated Gambling Policy.
- We have received a DEFRA Air Quality Grant.
- We launched a consultation on a Public Spaces Protection Order to address dog fouling and dog control issues in the rural parts of the area.
- We produced Litter and Fly-Tipping Charters.

- We successfully disposed of land at Buckton Fields for £13m, progressed with resolving long-standing land issues at Sixfields and the agreement of a site for a new secondary school.
- We delivered new and enlarged schools and improvement works.
- We successfully acquired the Avenue Campus, Northampton for affordable housing development.
- We completed the cinema and other aspects of Mulberry Place, Daventry.
- We have worked on developing the Estate Climate Strategy and a new parks strategy.
- We have secured an agreement to, and are now implementing the process, of bringing all WNC's country parks together under West Northamptonshire Council management.
- We have started work on the Northwest Relief Road and completion of the improvement of the Cliftonville Corridor.
- We have made progress towards an integrated travel strategy with the development of the Bus Service Improvement Plan; with work starting on a new active travel strategy; as well as partnership development with our rail operators understanding future opportunities.
- In terms of planning, we have published the Strategic Plan for West Northants and carried out a comprehensive consultation on which will identify the development in the right places ensuring a sustainable future going forward.



Place, Economy & the Environment

- We have adopted a new enforcement policy and concluded the examination which will lead to the adoption of the Northampton local plan, as well as continued to reduce backlogs and improved the service regarding planning applications.
- We have designated Conservation areas for Spratton and Hellidon, made Neighbourhood Plans for Ashton, Clipston, Hackleton and Overstone and adopted a Village Design Statement for Deanshanger.
- The council has been successful in allocating significant finance to businesses including the Welcome Back Fund, Employment Support Grant, and Business recovery support.
- The opening of the new museum has been followed by it being selected as one of 12 partners across the UK in the National Portrait Gallery's Skills & Knowledge Exchange Programme; and winning Heritage Organisation of the Year at Northamptonshire Heritage Forum awards and accreditation from the Arts Council.
- In Northampton Town Centre we are progressing in the delivery of the towns deal with business plans now agreed or developed which will see 10 major projects come forward including the new marketplace, street works on Abington Street and the re-development of the old Marks and Spencer's and BHS stores.
- Investing in our culture will ensure the town attracts people into its centre with new developments at Guildhall Road underway and the Vulcan Works now complete, creating new space and improvements to this sector to grow and flourish.
- Sitting alongside the new developments is the Cultural Compact, a partnership bringing together the Cultural sector to develop a vision, strategy, and action plan to benefit future town and neighbourhood regeneration and cohesion; as well as helping to change the perception of Northampton as a place to live, work and spend time.
- We are now very close to signing a new highways contract which will change the way our highways are maintained and will be more responsive to the demands of West Northants
- Last but certainly not least, the things that matter most to our residents is the state of the roads, cleanliness of our streets and whether our bins are collected on time. This has been a challenging time through the pandemic and generally we have done a great job in keeping these services delivering to a high standard. When things have been difficult, when we struggled to have enough staff at work, we kept residents informed, worked quickly to find solutions, and mitigate the problems.

Communities and Opportunities

Significant changes in how services will be delivered in our communities will become a reality through this ambitious and challenging plan. By adopting a neighbourhood approach, we will have clarity of priorities that exist within specific areas with a joined-up approach to fulfilling the potential of each neighbourhood.

This will not only provide synergy between council services but also with our health and blue light services, providing a true multi agency approach on a consistent basis.

This year will see the development of a coherent evidence base and the priorities, action plans for each area to be developed and the alignment of services in respect of delivering long term sustainable change.

This is a long-term commitment and will see a gradual shift in the positioning of our communities. Changes will see housing and leisure come across to Place assisting in the overall establishment of a single view on place and how people use the physical environment linking with the Regeneration and Economic Development services the new Communities and Opportunities directorate will raise the opportunities and accessibility to support in living their best life.

This will be complemented by a single board governance that ensures that the join up between people and place directorate work together in supporting people and their communities going forward.

2022-23 will see the completion of our aggregation and disaggregation, with all services having a clear service improvement plan, ensuing that data, processes and priorities are clearly stated and owned by the staff and stakeholders as we adopt and develop best practice.

With our project pipeline development, we will be working with partners and stakeholders and will prioritise a long list of projects that will form the basis of future funding requests and opportunities across all sectors.

Place, Economy and the Environment: Our Priorities 2022/23

Looking ahead we are very quickly moving from stabilising the directorate to setting our long-term objectives and opportunities. We will be focusing on getting the strategies in place that will focus on the needs and opportunities of our residents, help support and grow our businesses and that set a clear direction regarding where we want to develop as a successful and sustainable place. Building on the 'one council' approach we will be looking at developing a framework that will identify the strategies we need to develop and ensure that we do this together and that they align. The strategies and projects to be developed and implemented will include the following:

1

Skills strategy – bringing together partners from business, higher and further education, schools, economic development in the region. The strategy will align the skills and career development required by our businesses; to the courses delivered by our colleges and university, to ensuring a better awareness and ambition for our residents. The strategy will focus on enabling all our residents to maximise their potential whether that be in accessing the higher-level jobs, upskills to move on their career development or getting on to the jobs ladder in the first place.

2

Regeneration strategy - focused on the opportunities of each of our towns and main villages, the regeneration strategy will look at the opportunities of each community in developing a pipeline of developments particularly focused on our town centres and job creation.

3

Economic strategy – ensuring we support our existing businesses and attract inward investment into West Northants. Developing a partnership with our businesses in ensuring we target investment and capacity in growing and retaining these companies. We have one of the largest start-up rates in the country. We will work to ensure more of them reach maturity and continue to grow longer term. The strategy will also develop a clarity in attracting new businesses, building on our strengths and locational advantage aligned with government agenda.

4

Cultural strategy – building on the work of the cultural compact the strategy will enable all communities to realise the potential of cultural activities in regenerating their areas, building capacity, and developing people as well as promoting West Northants as a great place to live.

5

Waste strategy – will provide a long-term approach to how we deal with our waste with the potential of developing commercial opportunities of recycling more locally.

6

Assets management strategy – providing the clarity of what we own and how these assets can assist in delivering the corporate plan and regenerating our communities.

7

A range of transport strategies that will ensure we have a credible, single understanding of the potential of all opportunities including active travel, the future of public services including bus, rail and new innovations including electric scooters, walking and cycling, and future road investment.

8

Continuation of the Spatial Strategy and developing **Local plans**, following consultation, a revised strategic plan will be developed taking on board the views and concerns of local residents, ensuring we have the right development in the right place maximising the opportunities for our residents in creating a sustainable future.

9

Sustainable West Northants – having adopted a new approach to looking at sustainability, we will deliver a clear action plan of how the council will work in partnership with communities, businesses and stakeholders. We will ensure we all play our part in delivering our ambitious strategy that includes environmental, economic, and social sustainability and value.

Financial and Operational Challenges 2022-23

There are significant risks and opportunities regarding the financial performance and operation of the Place directorate going forward.

In bringing our teams together there will be more efficiencies and commercial opportunities that will be realised, whilst some teams will require investment to ensure we meet our statutory obligations. The development of these teams will also offer greater capacity to deliver much more.

In terms of better use of our assets, bringing four councils into one and adopting a neighbourhood approach to delivery, will bring our frontline closer to our communities whilst providing better strategic co-ordination and management across West Northants. This will enable significant savings, but also opportunities in bringing more services to our town centres.

The development of clear and deliverable strategies alongside a prioritised pipeline of projects will provide a better context in which to attract investment from both government and from inward investment.

The current economic situation will continue to challenge the directorate in delivering on its priorities. We have increased costs in construction, recycling, energy costs and fuel which we will continue to monitor and work hard to mitigate.

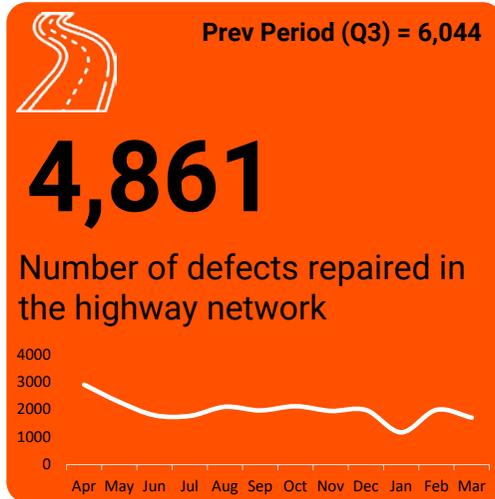
The jobs market in recruiting highly skilled and experienced people is presenting challenges in particular areas. We are however in the longer term looking to develop our own interns of apprenticeships and upskilling existing staff, as well as using innovative ways to recruit and attract new people in the short term. The increasing stability and reputation of the new council is also assisting in the recruitment process.

We continue to assess the opportunities of procuring new contracts based on the needs of the new council, which in many circumstances will provide economies of scale and therefore savings. Obviously, disaggregation of the former county council has the opposite impact, which aligned with the challenges of the economy, now is leading to increasing costs.



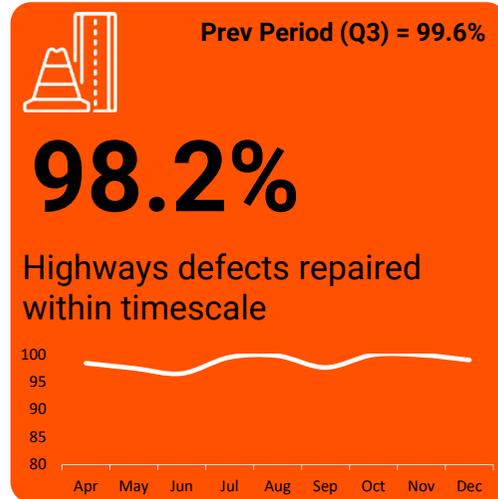
Place, Economy and the Environment: 2021-22 Quarterly Performance Reporting

Priority 3 – Connected Communities - Transport and Connectivity



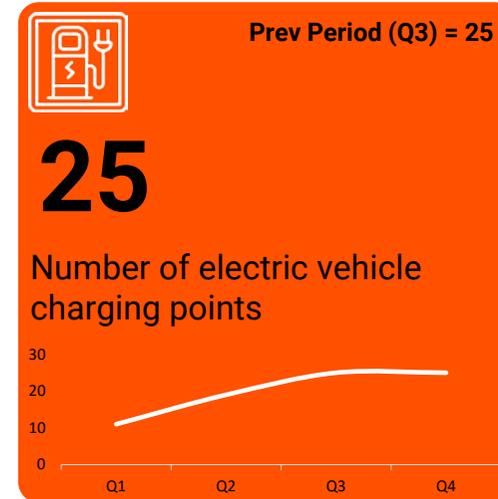
Repairs to the highways network are always needed, nationally there is a backlog of outstanding repairs with increasing traffic volume and changeable weather conditions, of which both contribute to the deterioration of the road network.

The number of repairs undertaken has seasonal fluctuations due to different programmes of work that highways undertake. The total number of repairs undertaken in quarter 4 was 4,861, a reduction from the 6,044 repairs undertaken in the 3rd quarter of the year. The full year has seen 23,694 repairs undertaken in West Northants and at the end of March there were 1,069 reported repairs outstanding on the highway network.



Highways defects are split into 4 separate categories, depending on their severity, each of these categories has a different timescale for repair from the most severe (P1) repairs that are required to be completed within 24hours to the least severe (P4) which have a 28 week repair timeframe. The vast majority of repairs that are completed fall within the P3 (28 days) or P4 (28 Week) categories.

Of those reported repairs that have been completed this quarter 98.2% of those have been repaired within the required timescale, whilst this is a decrease from the position of 99.6% in the past two quarters it remains a high performing metric. The full year has seen 98.8% of repairs completed in timescale.



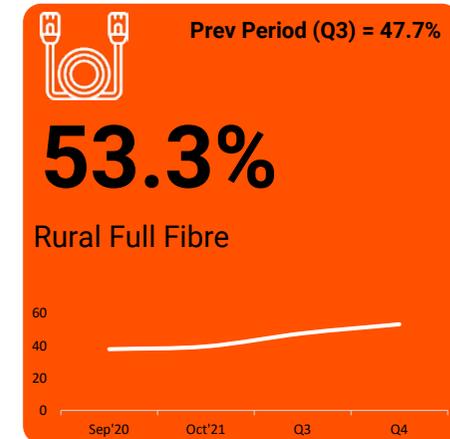
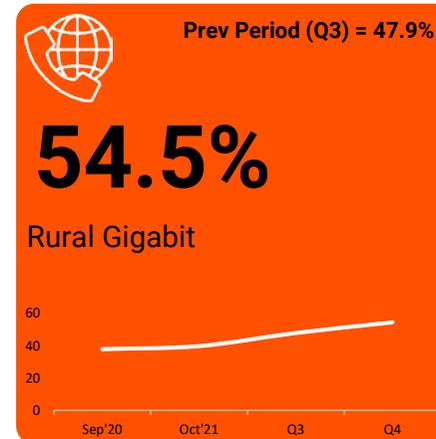
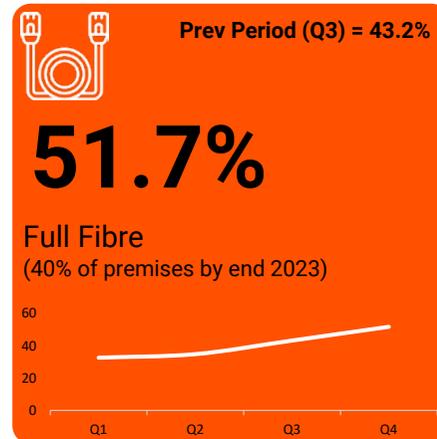
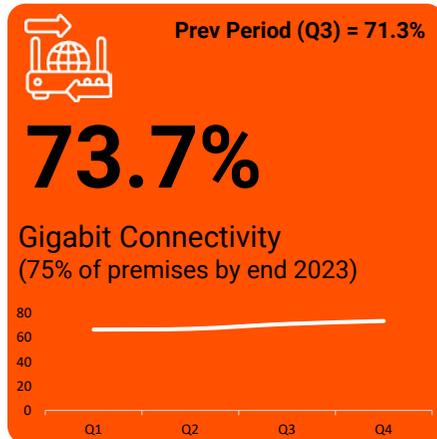
WNC has 25 electric vehicle charge points in place on our premises or property that are available for electric vehicles, this is the same position as reported in the previous quarter.

Additionally the total charging point access for West Northamptonshire as at April 2022 shows that there are 107 public charging devices of which 39 rapid charging devices. This is an increase since January of 14 charging points.

The West Northamptonshire area has 26.3 charging points per 100,000 population which is lower than the East Midlands (33.4) and England (45.2) averages.

Place, Economy and the Environment: 2021-22 Quarterly Performance Reporting

Growth & Regeneration



Broadband coverage in West Northamptonshire is performing strongly. At the end of Q4, full fibre broadband was available to almost 52% of WNC premises (the optimum broadband technology); this is an increase from 43.2% at the end of Q3 and compares to just 32.5% on average for England. The Urban / Rural coverage figures reveal the positive position in the rural areas for Full Fibre and particularly when compared to England. Gigaclear's rural focus has contributed to this performance. Urban gigabit coverage is also strong in comparison. There is a competitive Full Fibre market in the area with commercial investments by Openreach, Gigaclear and CityFibre in particular. It is worth reflecting that just three years ago less than 7% of Northamptonshire premises were served by full fibre.

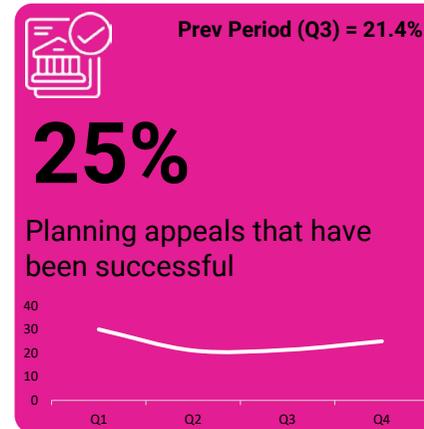
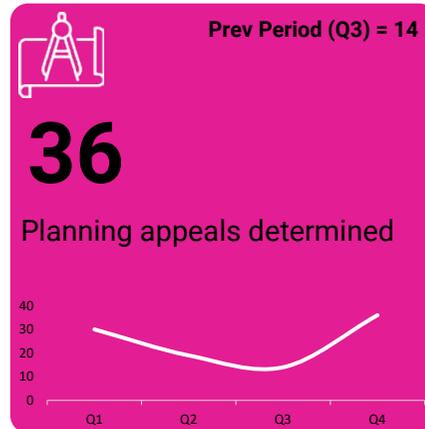
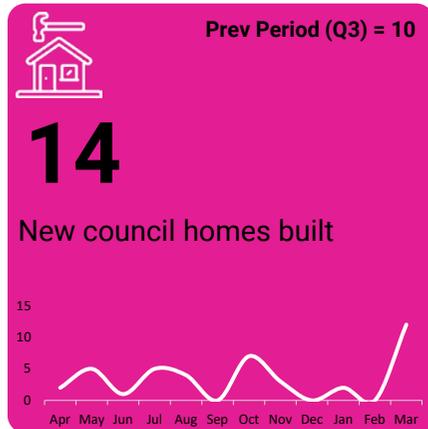
Over 73% of premises in West Northamptonshire now have access to gigabit capable broadband (this includes Virgin Media's cable); this compares to 68% for England. 99% of premises have access to superfast broadband (≥ 30 Mbps). End of 2023 countywide coverage targets for Full Fibre (40%) and Gigabit capable broadband (75%) have now both been achieved.

The trajectory is good but there is more to be done, including to tackle those who suffer from the poorest speeds. A boost in commercial telecoms investment in the next few years, along with Project Gigabit, should support continued progress to deliver against local targets. These are for at least 80% of premises to have full fibre connectivity and at least 90% served by gigabit capable broadband by the end of 2028.

Updates on Project Gigabit are available here: <https://www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net/how-we-are-delivering/Pages/building-digital-uk-project-gigabit.aspx>

Place, Economy and the Environment: 2021-22 Quarterly Performance Reporting

Growth & Regeneration



The West Northamptonshire Council corporate plan commits to build 500 council homes over the next 5 years. Currently in West Northamptonshire only Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) are the only builder of council homes that is contributing to this indicator.

The most recent quarter has seen 14 council homes completed an increase from the 10 completed in the previous quarter and taking the year to date completions to 41 homes.

In addition to council homes we have also seen 355 affordable homes completed in the quarter and a year to date figure of 660 affordable homes completed.

These indicators show the number of appeals that have been heard in the current quarter along with the percentage of those appeals that have been successful.

Planning appeals are a useful indicator to support the robustness of the planning process and decision making of the authority, a high proportion of planning decisions that are overturned at appeal could point to a less robust decision making process. The Government measures performance in this area over a rolling 24 month cycle to more accurately judge the robustness of local planning process, this allows for those months/quarters which result in a spikes in applications, decisions and appeals.

The most recent quarter has had 36 such appeals and of these and 25% (9) have been successful in their appeals. This is an increase in the rate of appeals being successful when comparing to the previous quarters outturn of 21.4%.

The full year to date position for these indicators is 99 planning appeals with 25.3% (25) of appeals being successful to end of March 2022.

Supporting the Local Visitor Economy

The Economy Team have been pro-actively doing all that they can to support the visitor economy restart the local economy following the impact of the pandemic. The team have been effectively managing and administering the Welcome Back Fund to deliver highly impactful initiatives such as:

- The successful Small Business Saturday December campaign ,
- An ongoing "Think Local" campaign, including a largescale marketing project which received over 3,000,000 views
- Local events such as the Northampton Museum Fashion Show and Paw Patrol Trail
- Professional cleaning of local high streets

Building on these activities, the Economy Team have procured a new digital app, "Explore West Northants", which will help local businesses to grow, nurture the local economy and further drive footfall into our towns. This new app will be a lifeline to our West Northants community, promoting local events, walking/cycle routes, all of our businesses/ attractions and much more.

On top of the increased footfall, spend and reputation enhancement through the Welcome Back Fund, the Economy Team has been further supporting the Visitor Economy by celebrating English Tourism Week, 18-27 March.

Working closely with colleagues in the Communications Team, a comprehensive marketing campaign showcased the many attractions and reasons to visit this area across all of our marketing platforms. This included setting up a profile on the highly popular app Tiktok, to target a wider audience using video content and boost visitors to West Northamptonshire.

Building on the Small Business Saturday campaign a "Love Your High Street" campaign has also been delivered promoting the benefits of supporting local, independent businesses and investing in the community. The long-term "Think Local" campaign will continue to be promoted across all platforms all year-round.

Place, Economy and the Environment: 2021-22

Quarterly Performance Reporting

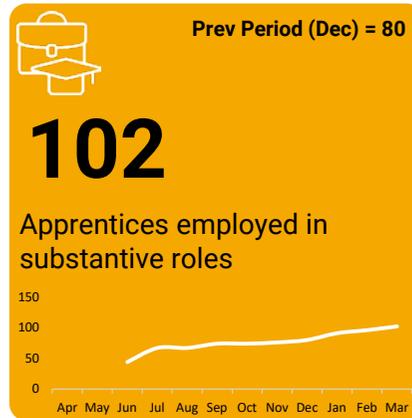
Priority 5 - Economic Development - Growth and Prosperity - Growth and Regeneration



The rate of people aged 16-64 who are in employment in West Northamptonshire remained at 75.7% in the latest quarterly information (to Dec 2021).

Nationally, 75.1% of 18-64 year old are in employment, putting West Northamptonshire 0.6% above the national average. The change nationally since the last quarter was a 0.5% increase in employment.

Regionally the latest figure decreased by 0.1% to 74.1% to the end of December 2021.



The government introduced a number of changes to encourage employers to offer more apprenticeship opportunities to both their current employees and to new staff joining their organisations.

The council currently supports a variety of different apprenticeship schemes in order to offer opportunity and development to new and existing members of staff.

At the end of March West Northamptonshire Council had 102 apprentices employed in substantive roles, this is up from 80 at the end of December.

Supporting West Northamptonshire Businesses

The Economy Team continue to support local businesses to recover from the pandemic and develop growth plans. This has included supporting employers to access the Additional Restrictions Grant administered by our Revenues & Benefits Team, and triaging employers that could also utilise the two funds administered by the University of Northampton on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council.

As the gateway for businesses to access funding and business support, we continue to nurture the local economy and enable employers to grow their workforce and re-invest in the local economy. The Economy Team act as the face of West Northamptonshire Council to the business community, doing all that they can to show we are dedicated to supporting businesses, attracting investment and growing the local economy.

The team continues to support employers by being active publicly, as well as working with partners to promote WNC as a key delivery partner of business support. This includes supporting recruitment, identifying commercial premises, accessing funding/training, exploring corporate social responsibilities and any challenges our businesses need to overcome, or opportunities they wish to explore.

WNC Employment Support Activities

To promote the free support available through our West Northamptonshire Employment Support Service, the Economy Team have arranged for information to be made available in all 16 libraries in West Northamptonshire. This has increased engagement for our employment support services and has enabled the broadening of our reach in the area, to ensure we are helping as many people as possible.

The Economy team send a monthly e-newsletter which includes information on the latest local vacancies, along with information about employment support available from our Employment Support Partners. Plus, the Economy Team are regularly meeting West Northants businesses to discuss the support available from the team to support the business with their recruit and enable connections with the local labour market and provide for sustainable, local employment.

Additional Information

Appendix – Performance Against Corporate Plan Detailed Score Card

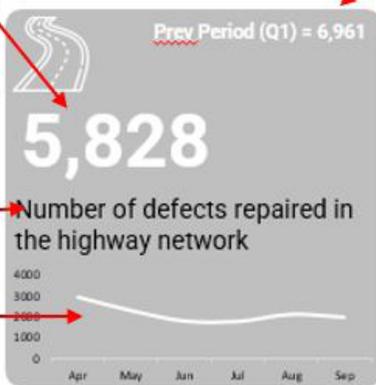
Report Layout and Guidance on Performance Reporting

The current performance.

This will be the period for the current report, unless otherwise stated next to it. The current period can always be found in the bottom left corner of each page.

The previous period's performance

The last period, will be stated if that is a quarter or a specific month.



Indicator Name

Number of defects repaired in the highway network

Indicator details

This section includes the indicator name, the priority it is relevant to in the corporate plan, the lead directorate plus if it is better for the performance to be higher or lower.

Trend Chart

This will show the recent trend, either by month (if available) or by quarter.

As this is the first year of West Northamptonshire Council there is no data prior to 1st April that is presented.

Performance Data

This section includes the target and current performance data broken down to month where available, quarterly and year to date (YTD).

In addition benchmarking information is included on the right hand side covering regional, national and statistical neighbour groups. There are and will continue to be a number of indicators that have no published data in order to benchmark against.

Corp Ref:	Metrics (Number / Rates / Financial)	Priority	Directorate	Better to be?	Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	YTD	Regional	National
1.2	Percentage of household waste sent for recycling or composting	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher		50.85%	52.32%	56.42%	53.33%					53.33%		
1.3	Percentage of waste from HWRCs diverted from landfill								71.50%							
1.4a	Net trees planted this year												-140	-91	n/a	n/a
1.5	Council vehicles that are electric or hybrid	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher									22			
1.6	Council owned parks and green spaces that have Green Flag accreditation	1. Green & Clean	Place & Economy	Higher	10 in 5 years				5				5	5		

Temporary image as an example only

Additional Information

Appendix – Performance Against Corporate Plan Detailed Score Card

Corp Ref:	Metric Title	Priority	Better to be?	Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4	YTD	Stat Neighbour	Regional	National	
1.2	Percentage of household waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting	1 Green & Clean	Higher					50.00%				50.90%			45.90%							-	43.4%	41.2%	
1.3	Percentage of waste from HMRCs diverted from landfill	1 Green & Clean	Higher		73.00%	68.50%	72.60%	71.50%	72.40%	70.80%	72.40%	71.80%	69.40%	70.20%	64.60%	60.40%									
1.4a	Trees planted this year	1 Green & Clean	Higher					49				2			487					263	601	-	-	-	
1.4b	Trees Removed this year	1 Green & Clean	Higher					0				142			9					77	228	-	-	-	
1.5	Council vehicles that are electric or hybrid	1 Green & Clean	Higher									22			22					22	22	-	-	-	
1.6	Council owned parks and green spaces that have Green Flag accreditation	1 Green & Clean	Higher	10 in 5 years				5				5			5					5	5	-	-	-	
2.1a	Percentage of all referrals with a decision within 2 working days	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	65%	57%	54%	66%		94%	93%	84%		95%	96%	96%		96%	97%	86%			-	-	-	
2.1b	Percentage of referrals with a previous referral within 12 months	2 Improved Life Chances	Lower	29%	37%	32%	32%		34%	36%	35%		36%	37%	37%		36%	37%	34%		36%	23%	26%	23%	
2.1c	Percentage of Single Assessments authorised within 45 days	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	65%	99%	99%	97%		98%	97%	99%		98%	98%	97%		97%	97%	98%		98%	-	-	-	
2.1d	Percentage of children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent year	2 Improved Life Chances	Lower	20%	24%	10%	35%		32%	45%	36%		13%	23%	15%		37%	43%	29%		28%	22%	24%	22%	
2.1e	Percentage of children in care who were placed for adoption within 12 months of an agency decision that is not in employment, education or training (NEET) or Non	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	72%				64%				54%			100%					100%	67%	-	-	74%	
2.3	Proportion of young people (aged 16-18) who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or Non	2 Improved Life Chances	Lower		-	-	-		2.5%	3.3%	6.2%		4.4%	2.8%	2.5%		2.2%	2.2%	2.3%						
2.4	Proportion of people using social care who receive self-directed support	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	91.9%							67.6%	67.6%	66.8%	65.1%	62.4%	62.4%	-	-	56.0%	56.0%	56.0%	-	94.0%	92.2%	
2.5	Proportion of people that return to their normal place of residence after discharge	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher		94.8%	95.3%	95.4%	95.1%	95.4%	95.7%	95.7%	95.6%	94.8%	95.1%	94.5%	94.8%	93.8%	93.9%	93.7%	93.7%			-	-	
2.7	Proportion of older people (65+) who were still at home 31 days after discharge from hospital in	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	73.2%	44.7%	53.5%	31.6%	43.5%	74.4%	65.5%	70.5%	70.2%	74.6%	73.3%	66.7%	76.2%	51.5%	63.0%	56.8%	61.6%			-	62.3%	79.1%
2.8a	Number of homeless preventions	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	265	51	35	33	123	35	24	32	91	25	48	94	87	33	32	32	103	404	-	-	-	
2.8b	Number of cases where homelessness was successfully relieved	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	312	45	40	39	124	31	41	43	115	40	35	36	111	36	33	35	106	456	-	-	-	
2.10a	Percentage of in-year eligible population offered an NHS Health Check	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	100.0%	1.3%	2.4%	2.1%	5.7%	2.1%	3.2%	2.4%	7.4%	2.6%	1.7%	2.0%	6.2%	1.7%	0.6%	3.5%	6.8%	26.1%	-	1.7%	2.0%	
2.10b	Percentage of in-year eligible population who received an NHS Health Check	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	60.0%	0.7%	0.5%	1.0%	2.2%	0.3%	1.0%	1.1%	3.0%	0.3%	1.0%	0.7%	2.7%	0.7%	0.5%	1.2%	2.5%	10.6%	-	0.6%	0.6%	
2.11	Percentage Smoking quit rate at 4 weeks	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	60.0%	67.5%	63.3%	63.7%	64.7%	55.0%	57.6%	60.5%	60.1%	61.3%	64.8%	61.5%	62.9%	66.3%	57.7%	58.7%	61.4%			-	-	51.0%
2.12	Breastfeeding rate at 6-8 weeks	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher	55.0%	52.0%	53.9%	53.5%	52.1%	55.5%	55.7%	53.1%	53.6%	57.5%	53.9%	54.6%	55.3%	50.9%	53.9%	52.9%	52.9%			-	n/a	47.6%
2.13	Number of school aged children who receive weight management advice and support 1:1	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher		62	138	291	491	223	179	273	675	70	87	136	293	178	112	272	562	2,021	-	-	-	
2.14	Percentage of mothers known to be smokers at the time of delivery	2 Improved Life Chances	Lower	11.0%				11.9%				11.0%			11.2%					10.7%		-	11.4%	9.6%	
2.15a	Infants due a new bath visit that received a new bath visit within 14 days of birth	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher		97.5%	97.9%	98.0%	97.8%	96.4%	97.2%	96.6%	96.8%	96.3%	98.3%	97.7%	97.5%	98.2%	97.2%	96.9%	96.9%	97.3%	97.3%	-	91.8%	88.0%
2.15b	Infants who received a 6-8 week review by the time they were 8 weeks	2 Improved Life Chances	Higher		98.1%	97.8%	98.3%	98.1%	98.5%	98.1%	97.3%	98.0%	99.7%	98.3%	98.6%	98.6%	98.2%	97.6%	97.8%	97.8%	94.8%	94.8%	-	85.8%	80.2%

Additional Information

Appendix – Performance Against Corporate Plan Detailed Score Card

Corp Ref:	Metric Title	Priority	Better to be?	Target	Apr	May	Jun	Q1	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4	YTD	Stat Neighbour	Regional	National
3.1	Number of defects repaired in the highway network	3. Connected Communities	Higher		2,900	2,271	1,790	6,961	1,766	2,097	1,965	5,828	2,117	1,947	1,960	6,044	1,171	1,987	1,703	4,861	23,694	-	-	-
3.2	Percentage of defects repaired within timescale (P1-P4)	3. Connected Communities	Higher		99.4%	97.43%	96.54%	97.63%	99.43%	99.76%	99.39%	99.56%	99.95%	99.90%	98.99%	99.62%	98.12%	99.14%	96.95%	98.2%	98.0%	-	-	-
3.3a	Broadband gigabit connectivity	3. Connected Communities	Higher	75% by end 2023				66.7%				67.3%			71.2%				73.7%	73.7%	73.7%	-	-	68.2%
3.3b	Broadband Full Fibre	3. Connected Communities	Higher	40% by end 2023				32.6%				34.8%			43.2%				51.7%	51.7%	51.7%	-	-	32.5%
3.4a	Rural Broadband Coverage - Gigabit Connectivity	3. Connected Communities	Higher									39.8%			47.9%				54.5%	54.5%	54.5%	-	-	35.9%
3.4b	Rural Broadband Coverage - Full Fibre	3. Connected Communities	Higher									39.6%			47.7%				53.3%	53.3%	53.3%	-	-	29.8%
3.5	Number of charging points	3. Connected Communities	Higher					11				19			25				25	25	25	-	-	-
3.6	Percentage of customers who are quite satisfied and extremely satisfied with the service received from the	3. Connected Communities	Higher									91.5%			93.4%				94.3%	91.5%	91.5%	-	-	-
3.7	Percentage of contacts received within Customer Services for the first time (unavoidable contacts)	3. Connected Communities	Higher									87.0%			78.5%				87.0%	87.0%	87.0%	-	-	-
4.1	Number of new council homes built	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Higher		2	5	1	8	5	4	0	9	7	3	0	10	2	0	12	14	41	-	-	-
4.5	Number of affordable homes completed	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Higher					60				64			81				355	660	660	-	-	-
4.4a	Total number of planning appeals received	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	No Tolerance					30				19			14				36	99	99	-	-	-
4.4b	Proportion of planning appeals that are successful	4. Thriving Villages & Towns	Lower					30.0%				21.1%			21.4%				25.0%	25.3%	25.3%	-	-	-
5.1	Percentage of people (aged 16-64) who are in employment	5. Economic Development	Higher	No Target			74.1%				74.1%				75.7%				75.7%	75.7%	75.7%	-	74.1%	75.1%
5.5	Number of apprentices employed in substantive roles	5. Economic Development	Higher	No Target			44		67	67	74		74	76	80		91	96	102	102	102	-	-	-
6.1	Net Revenue budget delivery - Projected surplus/deficit (£m)	6. Robust Resource Management	Lower					0.00				0.00			0.00				0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-
6.2	Council Tax collection rate	6. Robust Resource Management	Higher	85.21%	10.85%	19.61%	29.02%		38.1%	47.23%	56.46%		65.96%	74.66%	83.76%		92.75%	94.80%	96.46%	96.46%	96.46%	-	-	-
6.3	Business Rates collection rate	6. Robust Resource Management	Higher	83.39%	7.46%	16.28%	20.99%		30.43%	38.82%	47.84%		55.64%	66.32%	75.71%		84.12%	88.97%	95.82%	95.82%	95.82%	-	-	-
6.4	Amount of debt owed to the council that is overdue by at least 90 days (£m)	6. Robust Resource Management	Lower						30.2	29.2	23.9		23.9	23.3	22.6		22.5	20.8	19.9	19.9	19.9	-	-	-
6.5	Percentage of invoices that are paid within 30 days of receipt	6. Robust Resource Management	Higher	95.0%	98.4%	87.4%	89.6%	91.2%	91.3%	96.4%	93.2%	93.5%	91.7%	95.9%	96.9%	94.8%	94.6%	97.6%	95.9%	96.0%	94.0%	-	-	-
6.7a	Number of Employee's - Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	6. Robust Resource Management	No Tolerance	No Target	2,410.30	2,396.49	2,388.49		2,369.32	2,353.17	2,338.15		2,337.80	2,340.53	2,328.64		2,339.20	2,356.18	2,356.13	2,356.13	2,356.13	-	-	-
6.7b	Number of Employee's - Headcount	6. Robust Resource Management	No Tolerance	No Target	2,705	2,699	2,680		2,656	2,636	2,620		2,617	2,618	2,606		2,613	2,631	2,633	2,633	2,633	-	-	-
6.7c	Average number of days lost due to sickness	6. Robust Resource Management	Lower		0.63	1.36	2.24		3.21	4.16	5.16		6.32	7.47	8.66		9.76	10.99	12.08	12.08	12.08	-	-	-
6.7d	Projected sickness	6. Robust Resource Management	Lower		11.2	8.3	8.7		9.5	10.3	11.1		12.0	12.4	11.8		12.0	12.0	12.1	12.1	12.1	-	-	tbc
6.7e	Rolling Annual Staff Turnover	6. Robust Resource Management	No Tolerance		16.0%	14.0%	14.1%		15.1%	16.7%	17.0%		16.9%	17.2%	16.7%		16.2%	16.6%	15.7%	15.7%	15.7%	-	-	tbc